



Reg. charity no: 1196804

Agenda, Minutes and Reports for the

Annual Parish Meeting & Annual Parochial Church Meeting

4 May 2025



THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, TAUNTON

[Reg. charity no: 1196804]

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2025
Sunday 4 May 2025, at 11.00 (approx.), in Church
following the 10am Eucharist**

AGENDA

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of Minutes of meeting 28 April 2024
4. Election of Churchwardens

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Item 3: Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting – Sunday 28 April 2024

Vicar, the Rev'd Robin Lodge in the chair; approx. 25 members attending [not listed].
(The meeting was not live-streamed on Facebook, although the preceding service had been.)

1. Apologies for absence
June Acreman, Alison Aish, Steve Aish, Mike Chapman Ruth Cook, Alan Cook, Lesley Gold.
2. Meeting of APM 30 April 2023
Minutes had been sent out with the other papers; there were no comments.
The Chair signed the Minutes as a true account of the meeting.
3. Election of Churchwardens
David Budd, having been properly proposed and seconded, and having indicated his willingness to serve, was duly elected unopposed. This is his second consecutive year as Churchwarden.

Robin thanked David for his willingness to serve, supported by the usual team.

The local custom at St Andrews has been to allow a person to be elected as Churchwarden for no more than 3 consecutive years. The national standard is 6 years. After some exposition and discussion, the meeting voted on the following:

Proposal: Any individual may stand for annual election for Churchwarden for a period of six consecutive years, with effect from APCM 2025.

Proposed: Jeremy Harvey / Seconded: Henry Haslam

Voting: All in favour, no abstentions.

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ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2025
Sunday 4 May 2025 In Church,
immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting
Papers attached.

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Approval of Minutes of meeting 28 April 2024
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Report of Electoral Roll officer, & new E R
- 5 Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024 *[separate bundle - Report to be adopted by the meeting]*
- 6 Annual report on the proceedings of the PCC 2024.
- 7 Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church, including Inventory *[also includes New St Andrews report this year.]*
- 8 APCM to receive the following reports for 2024:
 - a) New St Andrews - financial summary
 - b) Safeguarding
 - c) Church Hall - including financial statement
 - d) Choir and music
 - e) Fundraising and social
 - f) Community outreach
 - g) Children and young people (all activities)
 - h) Bell-ringing
- 9 Report on the proceedings of the Taunton Deanery Synod, 2024
- 10 Election of PCC members, 2025-26.
- 11 Appointment of Independent Examiner to the PCC.
- 12 Any other business as notified to the Secretary by **Monday 28 April 2025**. (Send to Sue Goodman, suegoodman61@outlook.com or ring 01823 256724.)
- 13 Vicar's report – including St Andrews Church School, LPAs, LWA and Ministry team.

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Item 2 – Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting - Sunday 28 April 2024

Vicar, the Rev'd Robin Lodge in the chair; approx. 25 members attending [not listed].

(The meeting was not live-streamed on Facebook, although the preceding service had been.)

- 1 Apologies for absence - as at APM (above).
- 2 Minutes of the APCM 30 April 2023
Minutes had been sent out with the other papers; there were no comments; they were **accepted** by the present meeting, and signed by the Chair as a true record.
3. Matters arising
None
4. Electoral Roll report
Full details in Ruth Cook's written report, which had been circulated. The number on the Electoral Roll is currently 102. The Roll is displayed in the narthex.
The ER officer also maintains a "members list" of people who wish to keep in touch with life at St Andrews more informally.
5. Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31 December 2023
Papers had been circulated before the meeting.
The Treasurer thanked Lizzie Budd for her work as assistant treasurer, and David Bridges of St John's, Staplegrove, for acting as Independent Examiner.
He also wished to remind the meeting of the practical reasons for the concerning nature of our current parish finances:
 - Legacies recently received have helped to keep us "in the black"; however, they are not a predictable source of income. If not ring-fenced for a specific project, legacies have had to be used to cover daily running costs. (If they are ring-fenced by the donor it may be that the money cannot be used, if the project specified is not in fact needed.)
 - The PCC oversees use of financial bequests. Minutes of the latest PCC meeting are always displayed in the narthex for everyone to read.
 - Energy tariffs are going up for all customers.
 - The Parish Share went up by 15% in 2024 (an extra £600 pcm); further increases are likely for 2025. These changes affect the whole Church of England.

The Vicar added that no new stewardship campaign is planned at present, it is not the right moment for such an exercise. However, St Andrew's is grateful for all financial support, large or small, regular or one-off.

Query raised: Discrepancy noted between payments for Musical Director and Music Costs.

Response: We had no MD during 2023, so "Musical Director costs" are the individual payments made to our rota of organists, each of whom will invoice us for different fees – there is no set rate. "Music Costs" cover all other music-related payments, such as the licences needed to use recorded music in public, or photocopy the words of hymns.

The Accounts having been accepted by the PCC at their meeting on 12 March 2024, and examined and signed off by David Bridges, our Independent Examiner, the annual meeting **accepted the Accounts**, which were duly signed by the Chair.

6. Annual report on the proceedings of the PCC, 2023

Report previously circulated; no questions or comments from the meeting.

The Chair thanked the PCC Secretary for her work throughout the year.

7 Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church.

The report had been circulated. David Budd outlined some updates and progress made in some areas, notably the new heating system, since the period covered by the report.

There were no further queries.

The Inventory for 2024 had been completed – the first full check since the Covid-19 pandemic - and was duly signed by the Vicar and the Churchwarden.

8. Reports received

All had been previously circulated.

8 a: New St Andrews report, with financial summary

There was no New St Andrews report for 2023 as no meetings had been held.

David Budd outlined the next steps to be taken by the NSA group:

- Check and safely remove old metal radiators from nave and south aisle areas
- Stacking chairs to be purchased for use in the south aisle area – the congregation will have some say in choosing these, and specific fund-raising will be needed.
- Examine the possibility of dividing the Narthex into two rooms using bespoke folding doors.

The financial statement had been circulated. The column headed Standing Orders was queried – Lizzie Budd (NSA Treasurer) explained that these were small regular payments still made by some members of the congregation; she pointed out that NSA funds are ring-fenced for use in NSA projects only, they do not form part of the overall parish finances as managed by the PCC.

8 b: Safeguarding

Report previously circulated, covering calendar year 2023. There were no queries.

Alison Perry had written this report, and has now stepped down from the role of Safeguarding Officer. Stephen Grimshaw has taken over.

8 c: Church Hall, with financial statement

Report previously circulated, produced by Cherry Hingston who had taken over as Hall Manager in August 2023.

Gracie Thistlethwaite is now employed as Hall cleaner, also having started in summer 2023.

The meeting noted that both new employees had made an excellent start, and recorded thanks to both.

Thanks were also given to Lizzie Budd, Hall Treasurer, for the 2023 financial statement indicating that the Hall is on the way to becoming the business arm of the parish, raising funds by commercial enterprise.

8 d: Choir & Music

Darran Chalmers, acting Team Leader, co-ordinator and secretary for St Andrews's choir, produced the report previously circulated.

A comment from a choir member underlined the choir's determination to keep going, while noting that it is difficult to grow and develop without musical leadership; there is currently no structure in place to welcome, nurture and train potential new choir members.

The Vicar replied that St Andrew's is very grateful for the choir members' commitment to music; he reassured them that the PCC has not given up on the idea of appointing a music director, even if a full-time organist is proving very difficult to find. He noted that worship is a priority, and music in worship is still desired, if possible.

8 e: Fundraising & Social

A report from Alison Perry, for 2023, had been previously circulated.

Query raised: Do all funds raised go directly into the main parish finances, or could events support specific projects?

Response: An event could support one particular need, with suitable explanations of the requirement, but this pattern should not become the norm. As with all parish financial decision, the PCC has the final say.

8 f: Children & Young People

A comprehensive report from Sue Lodge, covering Children@10 (formerly Railway Children), Messy Church, and MINT, was previously circulated.

The children's ministry is growing, there are now 12 children on the Children@10 roll.

Further information on Church Mice is included in the Vicar's report, item 13.

Sue Lodge added a few comments from the floor: Thanks are due to Joy Abnett and helpers for continuing support and management of Church Mice, especially provision of a wide variety of games, toys and musical instruments. Concerning the later, some comments had been received from the Sunday congregation about the use of noisy toys during worship – specifically not complaining about the children's own chatter, just the toys. The Children@10 helpers are now trying to ensure that noisy toys are not accessible during worship – many such toys are kept locked in the Marshall Room at this time.

Sue Lodge is giving up her work with MINT, but appealed for others to come forward to continue Easter Cracked and Nativity on the Green – two important local channels for spreading the Gospel among local youngsters.

8 g: St Andrews Church School

No information had been received from the School Governors.

Further details are included in the Vicar's report, item, 13.

8 h: Bell ringing

Henry Haslam's report previously circulated; there were no comments.

9. Report on proceedings of Taunton Deanery Synod.

Darren Chalmers' report previously circulated. There were no questions.

10. Election of PCC members

David Budd, having been elected Churchwarden, remains on the PCC for 2024/25.

The following had been nominated before the meeting:

- Antony Yeo (previously a co-opted member)

No further nominations having been received, Antony was duly elected unopposed; he will serve until 2027. All were in favour.

[The nomination form showing proposer and seconder is filed with this report.]

Two PCC members, Alison Aish and Di Ruff, had completed the 2-year terms for which they were elected in 2022. Both were willing to remain on the PCC for a third year. After discussion the meeting **accepted this decision unanimously.**

The Vicar welcomed and thanked the new PCC members.

11. Appointment of Independent Examiner to the PCC

David Bridges, from St John the Evangelist, Staplegrove, had been agreed to be Independent Examiner for 2024, if confirmed by the APCM. In a reciprocal arrangement, our Treasurer, Antony Yeo, will act as I.E. for Staplegrove.

Appointment confirmed by the meeting.

David Bridges is duly appointed. The PCC will formally send him confirmation of the arrangement.

12. Any other business

None submitted.

13. Vicar's Report

Report on 2022 previously circulated. There were no comments.

Jeremy Harvey, on behalf of the whole St Andrews family, then gave a vote of thanks to Robin and Sue Lodge for their hard work and leadership in maintaining the work and worship of St Andrew's; and also thanks the PCC for their commitment to supporting St Andrew's.

The meeting greeted his statement with applause.

The meetings closed at 12.40 with the Grace.

Item 4 - Electoral Roll 2019 and new Roll 2025

The number on the Roll at the APCM in May 2024 was **102**.

Sadly in 2024, Dot Howe, Margaret (Maggie) Evans, David Howe, Alison Perry, Nancy Holmes, Alan Cook and Lorna Jepps passed away. We give thanks for their faithful devotion and dedication to St Andrew’s over many years.

Also, Theresa Swift and Greta Williams moved away and so the number on the Electoral Roll was **93** at 31st December 2024.

In March 2025, Mary Webster died at the age of 99, our oldest member on the Roll. Therefore, the total at the conclusion of the 2019 Roll stood at **92**.

In April 2025 a complete new Roll was prepared.

The total at this APCM is **81**.

I realised when preparing the Roll that the new form did not ask for telephone numbers. I have kept on the Roll any contact numbers I already held. If anyone does not want me to keep these details on record, then please let me know in writing ruth-cook@sky.com

Ruth Cook
Electoral Roll Officer

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Item 5 – Annual Report and Accounts – see separate document.

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Item 6 - Report on proceedings of the PCC, 2024

The PCC was much diminished this year by the untimely death of Alison Perry in July 2024. We recall with love and gratitude her lifelong commitment to all aspects of St Andrew’s, especially in her role on the PCC and as Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Thus, the PCC ended the year with 12 elected members and one co-opted, plus the Parish Administrator who attends but does not vote. In 2024 we held 7 in-person meetings, all chaired by Rev. Robin Lodge. We have met twice so far in 2025.

Antony Yeo was elected to the PCC at the 2024 APCM, having been co-opted for the previous year. He retains the post of Treasurer. Alison Aish and Di Ruff agreed to remain on the PCC for a third year (having been elected for 2-year terms); this was accepted by the meeting.

The Standing Committee of the PCC had 6 members at the start of the year, later 5. Membership was Incumbent, Churchwarden, PCC Treasurer, PCC Secretary, 1 or 2 other lay members of the PCC. The latter are appointed annually by the PCC; Stephen Grimshaw was re-appointed at the 2024 APCM and Darren Chalmers stood down.

Standing Committee held seven in-person meetings in 2024; and has met twice so far in 2025.

The PCC received reports at each meeting on:

- Finance
- Fabric (site, buildings, and progress of Faculty applications during 2024)
- New St Andrews (when active)
- Church Hall
- Fundraising (for routine parish expenses)
- Safeguarding
- Eco Church
- Vicar's report.

We hope to be able to receive Health & Safety reports at meetings later in 2025.

Minutes of Standing Committee meetings are also reviewed at each PCC meeting.

Regular issues covered during 2024

- Church heating: still the overriding issue during 2024. The new infra-red heating system was in place, but needing considerable adjustment.
- Finance continues precarious. The PCC is very pleased to have Antony Yeo's constant monitoring and advice on budgeting and expenditure and gladly supports him in this stressful volunteer role.
- Annual strategic planning. After the Parish Conference on 17 September 2024, a working group met to draft MAP25; this was accepted by the PCC in November.
- New St Andrews - work is mainly on hold while the church heating situation is resolved, but PCC approved work on new folding doors in the narthex, to allow division of the space into two separate rooms when required. [This work will start in early 2025.]
- Scout hut: Very little progress has been made towards rationalising the scouts' use of the building and agreement of the legal position.
- Policy reviews - an ongoing rolling schedule through the year. A new church lighting policy was agreed and implemented at the start of 2024.
- Safeguarding. Stephen Grimshaw has taken on the role of PSO. He took the PCC through the annual safeguarding review and audit in October.
- Eco Church. Aably led by Alison Aish, the parish achieved the Eco Church silver award at the start of 2025.
- Occasional fees at life events, i.e. payments for organist, vergers, choir and bellringers on duty at weddings and funerals in church, are reviewed annually; no change from 2023.

Other issues

- Prayers of Love and Faith: PCC agreed to opt in to the framework laid out by the Church of England.
- Hall Manager: after 18 months in the job Cherry Hingston is proving extremely capable and has a good relationship with the PCC. Regular cash payments are now transferred from the Hall bank account to the Parish account. Six new regular hires were approved by PCC during 2024.
- PCC supported the introduction of the Parish Giving scheme, which was implemented in October 2024.

Sue Goodman, PCC Secretary

April 2025

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Item 7 - Fabric & NSA Report, APCM 4 May 2025

Heating System

The heating system is still having snagging issues. The heating system is not working effectively in cold weather when the church temperature is less than 13 degrees C. When above 13 degrees the heating system is fine. We are hopeful that with Herschel (who make the units) we can resolve the problem. We were an “early adopter” of the technology, being the second church after St Matthew’s, Bristol, to install the Halo units and so it is in Herschel’s interest to ensure we get resolution. One reason why our Halos take 100 minutes to plateau in temperature (compared to 10 minutes at St Matthew’s which has rooms under the main church acting as insulation) is our concrete floor, which is an immense heat sink. This has meant we are not achieving the savings in electricity we were hoping.

One issue which we were not made aware of when we agreed to proceed with the infra-red heating was our power supply to the church, currently 3 phase supply with 80amp fuses on each phase. It is not adequate to handle all the heaters on at the same time.

However, one of the attractions of infra-red heating was zonal heating so we now have the North Aisle with all wall mounted heaters on 2 (high) and with the Halos on full power and in warm weather the North Aisle is warmer than the south aisle which is limited to the wall mounted heaters on 1 (low).

We are hoping Herschel will upgrade our 7.8kw elements in the Halos to 9.6kw elements, at no cost to ourselves. I now know the energy usage of everything electrical in church and feel confident I can turn off various heaters so no phase exceeds 80 amps and therefore establish whether or not they will work in winter conditions when the church regularly gets down to 7 degrees C. At that point the PCC might have to decide on whether to upgrade the power supply with a new 3 phase with a 100 amps per phase solely for the heaters. National Grid insist we (Richard Council) convert our existing 3 phase in church to a single-phase supply. I am awaiting quotes from Richard Council (REF) and Daley Electrical but am expecting the cost would be around £10,000.

Scout Hut

Still no news on progress to enable us to draw up a lease agreement for the ground rent and then gift the buildings to the scouts.

Quinquennial Works

MR Maintenance are doing some repairs itemised in the last quinquennial inspection dated Dec 2020. We are due to commission our Architect, Michael Vaughan, to start the next QI. We have asked for a quote but as yet have not received one. We will not proceed without knowing the cost as church expenditure is constantly dipping into reserves, which are finite.

New St Andrew’s (NSA)

Tables have been purchased and are kept at the back of the North Aisle for Messy Church. We have now received a faculty to put in bi-fold doors (matching the ones by the porch) to divide the Narthex into two rooms if required. This will be particularly useful to retain heat for meetings such as Tea and Talk, Sunday School and PCC Meetings. Edington Joinery will be building the glass bi-fold doors, work to start in the spring (2025).
The south aisle pews were removed, which has made a large space for Messy Church, winter market and other events. We decided not to proceed to buy chairs for the few occasions that we would need them due the cost, but rather wait until the next phase if and when the remaining pews are removed. However, this will only happen after further consultation with the congregation.

David Budd
Churchwarden 10/4/25

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Item 8 – Further reports

Item 8a – New St Andrews, financial summary – see next page

Item 8b – Safeguarding report 2024

Admin

I had a very comprehensive handover from Ali Perry.

Training and DBS checks required during the year were completed, except for two people who were finding difficulty booking the Leadership course. At least one of them has now completed the course.

Dashboard

This tool, which we were already using has been mandated by the Diocese for all parishes. It is particularly concerned with documentation. It helps to highlight documents that have not been seen by the PCC for over a year, or are incomplete. Ali took all the documents to an autumn meeting of the PCC. I couldn’t do so last year. I intend to do so this summer [2025].

I expect to recommend the PCC remove some activities from the scope of the dashboard, and approve some additions.

One element in the dashboard is Job Descriptions. Last year Robin agreed a new one with the welcome team. I have their signed copies and they have mine.

Background

Changes are afoot in CofE safeguarding but we’re still waiting to hear about them in detail. I had expected to hear from the Diocese by now about some changes, but I haven’t.

Stephen Grimshaw
St Andrew’s PSO.

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Item 8a – New St Andrews, financial summary

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| NSA
Financial
Summary
2024 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Standing
Order | Cash/
Chq/Trf | Other | Bank
Int | Exp | Total | Statement | | |
| | | | | | | 5,930.87 | Carried forward 2023 | | |
| 31/1/2024 | 36.00 | 18.75 | 2000.00 | 21.67 | | 2,076.42 | £18.75 Gift Aid reimbursement, £2000 reimbursement from St Andrew's re loan Dec 2023, £21.67 Bank Interest | | |
| 28/2/2024 | 36.00 | | 735.00 | | | 771.00 | | | |
| 31/3/2024 | 36.00 | | | | | 36.00 | | | |
| 30/4/2024 | 36.00 | | 25.00 | 55.56 | | 116.56 | GA £25, Bank Interest £55.56 | | |
| 31/5/2024 | 36.00 | | 100.00 | | | 136.00 | Donation for Pew | | |
| 30/6/2024 | 25.00 | | 1000.00 | | | 1,025.00 | £1,000 donation | | |
| 30/7/2024 | 37.00 | 20.00 | 157.50 | 68.01 | | 282.51 | £20 kneeler donation, £145 SL Bday donation, £12.50 Gift Aid | | |
| 31/8/2024 | 37.00 | | | | | 37.00 | | | |
| 30/9/2024 | 37.00 | | | | | 37.00 | | | |
| 31/10/2024 | 37.00 | | 18.75 | 60.75 | | 116.50 | | | |
| 30/11/2024 | 37.00 | | | | -2455.20 | -2,418.20 | Purchase of tables and trolley | | |
| 31/12/2024 | 37.00 | | | | | 37.00 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 427.00 | 38.75 | 4,036.25 | 205.99 | -2,455.20 | 8,183.66 | Agrees to Statement
31/12/24 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

Item 8c – Church Hall report for 2024

St Andrew's Church Hall Report for Annual Meeting 2025,

This annual report gives an overview of the hall's activities for 2024.

- Regular Hires – list of regular hall users and detailing those gained and lost.
- Church Events – usage of the hall by the Church.
- Private & Business Hires – month by month usage of chargeable events.
- Operations – highlighting staffing, maintenance, and administration.

Regular Hires

For 2024 the regular hall increased (from nine in the 2023 annual report) to thirteen, bringing these FIVE businesses to the hall:

- The YOU Trust (a private support group)
- Taunton Home Education (for home-school educated families)
- Power Parents *restarted - original hire Jan to Mar 2023*
- Mini Dribblers (toddler football classes)
- Saucery Somerset (food takeaway)

| HIRE DAY | MONDAY
(Term
time) | MONDAY
(Term
time) | MON &
FRI | TUES &
THUR | TUESDAY | WEDNES
DAY
(Term
Time) | WEDNES
DAY | WEDNES
DAY | WEDNES
DAY | THURSD
AY | THURSD
AY | FRIDAY | FRIDAY |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------------|--|---|--|---------------------|
| HIRE
TIME | 9:45-
12:15 | 12:00-
15:00 | 17:45-
20:15 /
17:45-
20:30 | 6:15-
7:30 | 17:45-
20:15 | 9:10-
11:20 | 13:45-
15:15 | 17:15-
18:15 | 18:15-
20:55 | 10:15-
11:15 | 17:45-
21:15 | 7:30-
16:15 | 16:00-
21:00 |
| MAIN
HALL
(MH) or | WR | MH &
WR | MH | MH | MH | MH | MH | MH | MH | MH | MH | WR | WR &
Kitchen |
| BUSINESS
NAME | The YOU
Trust
(Private
- invited
group) | Taunton
Home
Education
(C/A) | Doryoku
Ryn
Karate
Jutsu -
DRKJ Ltd
(C/A) | Power
Parents
(A) | MF
Martial
Arts
(C/A) | Mini
Dribbler
s (C/A) | Adosa
(A) | Workout
Wednes
day's
Fitness
Class (A) | Fitness
with
Carrie
(A) | Gentle
Exercise
- Tai Chi
(A) | Saber
Combat
Academ
y Ltd
(C/A) | OPCMH
T
Taunton
and
West
Somerset
- NHS
(A) | Saucery
Somerset |
| HIRE
START
DATE | 19/02/2
024 | 10/06/2
024 | 02/10/2
020 | 03/09/2
024 | 06/09/2
022 | 11/09/2
024 | 31/07/2
024 | 02/06/2
021 | 02/09/2
015 | 20/07/2
023 | 02/03/2
023 | 08/07/2
022 | 23/02/2
024 |

In addition, the **Weston Room** was used for weekly, but temporary, hires for family contact sessions through FAASS (Family Assessment and Support Services) for Wiltshire Council and Devon County Council.

In 2024 after 6 years of being at the hall, Nikki Mumby who ran Zumba Gold retired, and we wished her well with flowers and chocolates. Nikki's classes were taken over by Adosa, so the regular hire continued until January 2025, where she found a town centre location to run all her sessions.

The following businesses ended their regular hire in 2024:

- Yoga with Amanda – restarted but also stopped due to other commitments.

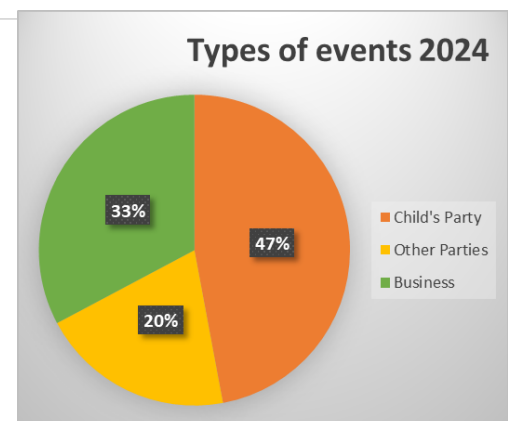
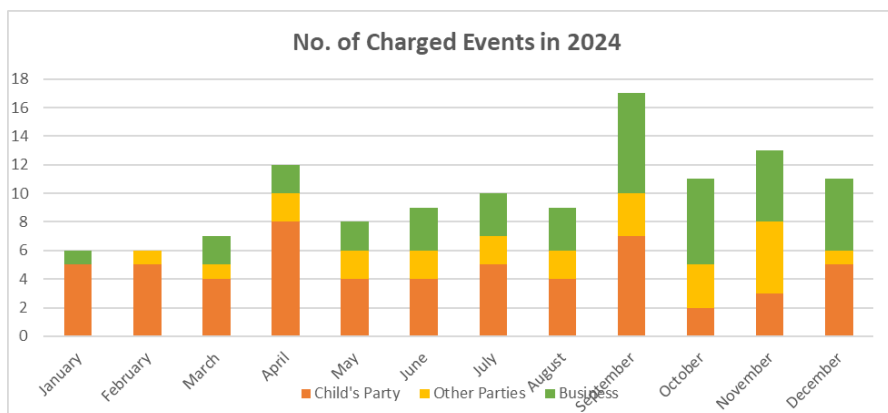
Church Events

- Messy Church – 2 events took place at the hall earlier in the year, which then moved to the Church
- Sunday Church Lunches – 4 events took place at the hall over the year.
- Church Fete on the Green – took place in June (which I attended with my children, it was really busy, enjoyable, and had a wonderful atmosphere).

Private & Business Hires

Below shows the chargeable usage of the hall for private and business one-off hires, which saw a significant increase, from 66 bookings in 2023, to 119 bookings in 2024, more than doubling the number of bookings. Therefore the hall has seen a significant increase in turnover and profit for 2024. There was an unusually high number of hall hires for Polling Station usage, which accumulated to £1200 of income.

| 2024 | | | | |
|------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| TOTALS | Child's Party | Other Parties | Business | Month |
| 6 | 5 | 0 | 1 | January |
| 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | February |
| 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | March |
| 12 | 8 | 2 | 2 | April |
| 8 | 4 | 2 | 2 | May |
| 9 | 4 | 2 | 3 | June |
| 10 | 5 | 2 | 3 | July |
| 9 | 4 | 2 | 3 | August |
| 17 | 7 | 3 | 7 | September |
| 11 | 2 | 3 | 6 | October |
| 13 | 3 | 5 | 5 | November |
| 11 | 5 | 1 | 5 | December |
| 119 | 56 | 24 | 39 | |



In comparison to 2023, we saw an increase of bookings for other parties and business hires in 2024, however child parties still remains the largest use of private hires.

The increase in income and the consistency of the bookings has allowed the committee to decide to start a regular £500 instalment to the Church's bank account – which is excellent news!

Operations

Hall Committee and Hall Staff – Staff and Committee members remained the same for 2024. The working hours for the Hall Manager (Cherry) increased to 30 hours (from 26 hours) per month from August 2024, as each month prior to this overtime was required to keep up with the workload.

Hall Improvements – The highlights include:

- The year started with introducing a new reduced 'Regular Hire' charge of £12 for the Main Hall, as well as regulating the 'actual hire times' rather than class times – keeping the income the same, but making it more consistent and competitive for new regular hirers.
- In March a website was launched for the hall, which included an online calendar and booking system. This is now the main way in which hirers get in touch to book. The online calendar allows all members of staff to view the hall's activities, which is extremely useful.
- The online booking system also provided a means to send invoices and run reports, which the Hall Manager actions and is overseen by the Hall Treasurer. This online system has saved a lot of time.
- A key safe was added by the front door, to allow for hirers to have direct access to a key, which means that the Hall Manager does not need to attend every one-off hall hires.
- The cupboard containing the electrical consumer unit was cleared and offered to the regular hall users as a means of storage, which is in full use now.

Hall Maintenance – The highlights include:

- One major maintenance incident was the leaking roof, causing damage to the ceilings of the cupboards. The repair of the roof cost just over £1500, which was covered by the Hall's maintenance budget.
- There have been ongoing issues with one of the kitchen's water heaters failing, besides several attempts to repair it. (I have since been attempting to get it replaced, and still trying to come up with an affordable and sensible solution for this – apologies this has taken so long to sort!).
- Otherwise, other highlights include:
 - The 5-year Electrical Inspection complete and passed – which required a new electrical supply box for the green.
 - Ceiling tiles were cleaned and replaced where required, and a small supply of tiles still remain for the next time this happens.

Administration and Marketing – The highlights included:

- An updated Hire Agreement was introduced at the start of the year, with two slightly different versions for Private Hires and Business Hires.
- The Hall's branding has been worked on and included on the 'Hall for Hire' advert, and a 'Weekly activities' poster.
- Facebook has been used regularly, every couple of weeks, to promote the hall's activities.

Thank you for welcoming the changes made to the hall's management. It is a wonderful facility which many people often compliment, with businesses and private hirers making repeat bookings. Let's hope it continues to flourish!

Cherry Hingston

St Andrew's Church Hall Financial Report January - December 2024

End of Year Report

| Expenditure | Amount Spent in 2023 | Original Budget | Revised Budget | Actual Spent | Amount committed | End of Year Balance |
|--|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Staff Costs | | | | | | |
| Hall Manager & Hall Cleaner
Real Living Wage £12 per hour from Nov'23 | 7,218.00 | 7,500.00 | | 7,889.00 | | -389.00 |
| Overtime - estimate | No accurate data | 500.00 | | 696.00 | | -196.00 |
| Premises Costs | | | | | | |
| Energy Costs | 7,245.00 | 7,500.00 | | 7,141.00 | | 359.00 |
| Waste Removal - contract with Wasteology 1100L bin collected every fortnight. £65 pm | 721.00 | 780.00 | | 757.00 | | 23.00 |
| Window Cleaner 5 x £21 | 99.00 | 105.00 | | 54.00 | | 51.00 |
| Water Rates - estimate | 178.00 | 200.00 | | 184.00 | 0.00 | 16.00 |
| Electrical including PAT testing | 205.00 | 250.00 | | 1,441.00 | 0.00 | 1,191.00 |
| Handyman | 96.00 | 500.00 | | 495.00 | | 5.00 |
| Gas servicing and Safety certificate | 250.00 | 300.00 | | 124.00 | 0.00 | 176.00 |
| Plumbing | 238.00 | 300.00 | | 221.00 | 0.00 | 79.00 |
| Fire Extinguisher Maintenance | 56.00 | 60.00 | | 70.00 | 0.00 | -10.00 |
| Hall Improvement including decoration | | 2,000.00 | | 1,940.00 | 0.00 | 60.00 |
| | | | | | | |
| Supplies & Services | | | | | | |
| Petty Cash for cleaning and other resources - Cleaner and Hall Manager | 526.00 | 550.00 | | 719.00 | 0.00 | -169.00 |
| Broadband - Plus net 24 month contract @ £24.99 pm | 316.00 | 300.00 | | 316.00 | | -16.00 |
| | | | | | | |
| Phone H3G £9.40 x 4 = 37.6 | 118.00 | 116.00 | | 87.00 | | 29.00 |
| Estimate 4% increase £9.78 x 8= £78.24 | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|--|------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Insurance - Ecclesiastical
£116.28 pm x 8m = £930
presume 4% increase £120.93
x 4 = £484 | 1,362.00 | 1,414.00 | | 1,313.00 | | 101.00 |
| Admin | | 0.00 | | 1,343.00 | | 1,343.00 |
| Total | 18,628.00 | 22,375.00 | | 24,790.00 | 0.00 | 2,415.00 |

| Income | Amount received | Original Budget | Revised Budget | Actual Received | Amount committed | End of Year Balance |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Regular Lets | 16,837.00 | 18,000.00 | | 22,595.00 | | 4,595.00 |
| One Off Lets | 4,504.00 | 5,000.00 | | 8,025.00 | | 3,025.00 |
| Deposits | 755.00 | 0.00 | | 1,265.00 | | 1,265.00 |
| Bank Interest | 71.00 | 70.00 | | 63.00 | 0.00 | 7.00 |
| Total | 22,167.00 | 23,070.00 | | 31,948.00 | 0.00 | 8,878.00 |

Outstanding invoices amount £472.75 plus £237 December'24

There are four hirers who haven't paid their invoices: I am confident that the December invoices will be paid by the end of January

Outstanding Expenditure Total £2,241.58

£1,000 paid to St Andrews Church. REF Electrics - £708 repairs as a result of the Electrical Check, £265.20 - External lighting, £268.38 - PAT test, replacement heating controller, supply & install floodlight

Bank Balance Reconciliation

| Spreadsheet | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Opening Balance | 1,574.00 |
| Total Income | 31,948.00 |
| Total expenditure | 24,790.00 |
| Total | 8,732.00 |

| Bank Statement | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 31/12/24 | 8,732.32 |
| | |
| | |
| Total | 8,732.32 |

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Item 8d – Choir & Music

The Choir and Music Report, APCM 4th May 2025



The Music Ministry at St Andrew’s still goes on, even though we still do not have a full-time Director of Music. However, all members of the Choir have stuck together to provide sustainable singing. Dedication to their ministry does not go unnoticed. The ongoing problem for the Choir is not having regular practices, to polish up our current list of repertoires and to learn new pieces. We have all battled to keep the choir together, but it has not been easy.

I want to pay tribute in this Annual Report to the late and beloved Alan Cook who for so many faithful years until his retirement in 2022 was an outstanding Director of Music, not just here at St Andrew’s, but also St John’s, Highbridge and St Mary’s, Berrow. Alan also used his expertise as Diocesan Music Advisor across the Diocese for quite a few years supporting parishes by holding different workshops and musical events. Alan continued to support the work of the Choir in his retirement and played for us as and when he could until he became unwell to do so. Sadly, in August 2024 Alan passed away and we continue to pray for Ruth.

I also would like to say ‘Thank You’ to Robin who month by month continues to produce a Music Planner, together with arranging organist cover. I fully support Robin in what he does, and it is not an easy job.

Sadly in 2024 Derek Jones, John Young and Ian Gouge who had played for us regularly had to step back due to other commitments. However, September 2024 we welcomed Paul Burnett to the rota who plays for us on 1st and 5th Sundays of the month. ‘Thank you’ to our current pool of Organists who have supported us in 2024: Andrew Carter, Sam Baker, Nathalie Delaney, Paul Burnett. Without all these people we would have to resort to pre-recorded music every week. Thank you also to each and every member of the Choir for their support, with whom I keep in touch by emails with hymns and updates.

Please do keep praying that we can appoint a Director of Music in 2025 and for the right person to lead the Choir and for the continued Music Ministry here in this place.

Darren Chalmers
Team Leader for the Choir

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Item 8e – Fundraising and Social

Fundraising Group APCM Report - 4th May 2025

From January 2024 – December 2024 the events run by the Fundraising Group raised **£4,848.75** and many thanks to all those who came and supported the events and also members of the congregation who were always willing to help.

The Events that we held in 2024 were:

- Late Christmas Lunch £421.72
- Table Top Sale £335.48

- Spring Lunch £391.74
- Summer Fete £1,352.62
- Summer Lunch £270.88
- Harvest Lunch 339.20
- Christmas Market £1,737.11
- We did spend funds on 2 new gazebos and 2 new banners for the Christmas Market in 2024.

My thanks also extend to the Fundraising Group who support the work and events that we arrange each year. A lot of work and planning go in to put these events on and if you fancy the 'URGE' to join the group do have a word with myself or any member of the team for further information. We will be glad to welcome you onboard.

I also want to pay tribute to the late Ali Perry who was the main lead and steer of forming the Fundraising Group and whose dedication and commitment to Fundraising was exceptional, and also very much valued for the work that she put in.

Light Up The Spire still continues to bring in sponsorship and funds for the Church. So, if you would like to remember a loved one, an occasion, etc, do get in touch with the Parish Office.

I have very much enjoyed being part of the Fundraising Group in 2024 and look forward to what will happen in 2025 and beyond. We will continue to put the FUN into FUNDRAISING!

For and on behalf of the Fundraising Team

Darren Chalmers, Lesley and Merv Jones, Bill Perry, Karen Cridland, Sally Kellock and Anna Phillips.

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Item 8f – Community outreach

Tea and Talk - Report to APCM 2025

Objectives

From the beginning the aim has been to offer an open-door session for all of the community. It was hoped to be a form of outreach to local residents and those from further afield, of all ages, including children. Additionally, the aim was quite simple, somewhere for anyone to come for a chat and friendship, to share a cup of tea and cake. To meet old friends and make new.

Results

The sessions, on Thursdays in the Narthex, have been well attended in the last year, with many regulars from within the church congregation, but also others, from within the parish and outside. Some of these have become regular attendees also. Typical numbers are around 25 people per week.

I would like to extend my thanks to my jolly band of helpers, without whom we wouldn't be able to open every week. A special thanks to Bill, Merv and Lesley, for joining the team. This has enabled us to spread the load. But in truth everyone mucks in to help and this creates a family feel.

Please encourage your friends and neighbours, that all are welcome.

Carol Bull
April 2025

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Item 8g – Children & young people

Children @ 10

We continue to grow in our children's work, this is due in the main to our Migrant families. On role we now have 20 children. Sunday attendance average is 3 to 10 children. We needed to recruit more helpers, and we welcome Natalie (Huxley's Mum), Sehrish (Helena's Mum) as helpers. Thanks to Nicola Mitra who sorted lots of our lesson plans. We follow the Gospel reading most weeks, and we always have a Bible based story. Occasionally we like to give the children an Old Testament story.

Last July, 2024, we spent a morning sorting the Marshall Room and with the help of Churchwarden David we now have some shelves and know where all our craft and stationery is. We also share this space with Messy Church supplies, which have moved from the Hall. We have lots of material including Godly Play items, which we would like to expand and use with our children in the future.

The creche has now become a children's corner, in Church. We are encouraging parents to look after their pre-school children in this area, necessary as we could not staff and be responsible for younger children who need more support, though we felt the free flow of play and learning was good for the pre-school children. A wide range of ages in the area during the service did become at times overwhelming to staff. We wanted to give good teaching for the older school age children that now attend regularly, whilst still giving hospitality, a welcome and a sense of belonging to the younger ones. The St Andrew's welcome for parents and their children remains key to our success in this.

We have managed to structure the time on a Sunday so that we now take the school children to the Narthex after the collect for the liturgy of the word. Children and parents are getting used to this. We take an imitation candle for the light to come out with us for the lesson and we return in time for communion and or a blessing. We use the notice board nearest to the north aisle of the Narthex to display the children's work. We also have new children draw round their hand and add their name. The hope is that the younger children will come out to the Narthex once they are school age. This appears to work well and has been successful. We feel we are managing. The children are getting good teaching of the Gospel story from excellent leaders. My thanks to all the team for their hard work, dedication, knowledge, patience and wisdom. These qualities they all bring to the team.

This is work in progress, ever changing and taking on new forms and ways. We are constantly adapting to the growing needs and complexities but, as always, with the Eucharist at the heart of all we do. This is emphasised with the importance of the children returning for their blessing. Our thanks to the live-stream camera operators at the online services, who do not show the children when they come for their blessing. Most of our families appear to place great importance on the Eucharist being central in our worship.

Use of the children's sacks is now in operation. Our welcomers offer these to families on arrival for children who want to stay in church. Welcomers now also remain out in the Narthex for a while at the start of the service, to guide and support any later arrivals. Another new addition is lanyards for the helpers, saying who we are so people can recognise us.

A new system has been implemented for registering the children. My thanks to Ruth Cook for updating our enrolment forms. All the details of families are now added to a spreadsheet held in the Parish Office on the computer. This is for safeguarding purposes. We still have a weekly paper register for attendance in church, kept securely in church. Ideally, we would like to go paperless and use a laptop for registering the children, but with limited funds this is not possible at this time. In future a laptop would help us significantly as technology races onwards, not only for registers but also to access music and stories for the children. However, we would still tell stories and use our resources in the traditional way. The children still enjoy crafts and storytelling, and a mix of formats would be beneficial.

We enjoyed an end of summer term party last July, and at Christmas we had a party with small presents for the children. This was well attended and enjoyed by the children. We had food and party games instead of the usual lesson in the Narthex.

And what next? We pray to continue to grow and spread the Good News of Jesus to our children and families.

Sue Lodge

Messy Church

New ways of working - we are successfully working with Rowbarton Methodist Church (RMC); with sessions alternating between Rowbarton Hall and St Andrew's.

The big change happened when the decision was made to have Messy Church in the south aisle space in church, when it was St Andrew's turn. This was a success and thanks to an organised catering crew and good working relations with Rowbarton we have enjoyed successful sessions. We continue to have around 30 to 40 people with about 20 children. This is not the same families each time, so the register is growing but the regular cohort of families is small. We do not know why this is happening. Everyone who comes says they enjoy the sessions. We continue to be creative and think outside the box. The families are registered on a spreadsheet, held in St Andrew's Parish Office, for safeguarding purposes. My thanks to Lesley Gold, our administrator, who manages this and sends out the email reminders to families of our next date. She also emails the schools for us.

We plan our themes for the year and then organise crafts nearer the time on the theme. This appears to work. The crafts are always fun, and it is wonderful to see families sat around sharing conversations over a

glue stick and a cuppa! Ali Aish gave us a brilliant MC in January with theme around Caring for God’s World. This fitted well, as both St Andrew’s and RMC are eco churches.

We aim to provide a lovely tea and encourage families to sit and eat together with us. We have started to serve tea buffet style, with children and adults helping themselves to the food. Doggy bags are provided for families to take home if there are any left-overs. The food is always appreciated, there is always a lovely friendly atmosphere, and we get super comments and feedback on how much people enjoy the afternoon. We hope to gather some of this feedback by doing a survey at our next MC, asking what people enjoy about Messy Church.

The vital work that Messy Church does is getting involved and talking to people about their lives and helping them to see the love of God through our conversations. We try to show that Christians and non-Christians share the same issues and worries. We truly have some amazing pastoral conversations - people want to talk and share.

We would like to have MC monthly. Unfortunately, we do not have the people to do this. My thanks to the wonderful team we do have who are dedicated in supporting. We continue to pray for us to carry on with this work of bringing the love of Jesus. Both our churches give a warm welcome and hospitality to our North Taunton communities and beyond.

If you’d like to be part of our amazing team, please do not hesitate to contact me. We are always needing more helpers.

Sue Lodge

Church Mice - [See separate page]

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Item 8i – Bell-ringing

Bellringing 2024

We are usually able to ring four or five of our bells on Sundays – and occasionally all six. We have a regular practice on Thursday evenings, and our ringing skills are improving.

Henry Haslam

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Item 9 – Report on the proceedings of Taunton Deanery Synod, 2024.

Taunton Deanery Synod 2024 – Report to St Andrew's APCM 4th May 2025

Taunton Deanery Synod meets 3 times a year and in 2024 met in February, July and October. Each meeting is an open meeting to which anyone can attend. St Andrew's has 3 reps elected to Taunton Deanery Synod: Stephen Grimshaw, Henry Haslam and myself.

This triennium of the Deanery Synod began in 2023 and continues to the APCM of 2026 when a new Deanery Synod will be elected from Parishes in Taunton. If you would like more information and want to stand for election in 2026 do come and have a chat with any of us.

The first meeting of 2024 was on 13th February 2024 at St John's, Staplegrove. The key item on the agenda for this meeting was a talk and discussion about The Common Fund. The Deanery was pleased to welcome Matthew Pinnock, Diocesan Head of Finance, who came to address pre-submitted questions in relation to the changes of the Common Fund and other financial matters within the Diocese.

- One of the questions raised was about the sale of The Old Deanery, as the Diocese has moved to new offices at Flourish House. It was confirmed that The Old Deanery had been sold in 2022 to a private individual. The Funding for Flourish House is a Capital Expense and the interest for the loan taken out to purchase it is being paid out of endowment funds. There is no expense incurred from the Common Fund.
- Another question was around the cost of the current Stipend. The Current Stipend is £29,152 but rising to £30,700 from April 2024. In addition, there are housing costs, training, National Insurance and Pension contributions. In 2022 Pension Costs were 39% but are now 26%. The Pension Scheme is a Defined Benefits scheme. The total cost per Full-Time stipend is £55,000. Stipends are therefore a key cost to the Diocese.

There are 178 benefices; the costs of this total £9.8m and the total Common Fund budget is set at £10.2m. The aim is to match Income with Expenditure. Currently there are approx. 800,000 adults living in the Diocese, of these approx. 400,000 declared themselves as Christian on the last census but only 16,000 are regular worshippers. If all the "Christian adults" contributed to the parish share, then the amount per person would be dramatically reduced.

The number of regular worshippers is declining and aging and the current financial model relies only on those regular worshippers. The amount required per worshipper is therefore increasing.

- a) The Common Fund (CF) income is funded by 75% from the parishes and 25% from Endowments, Occasional Fees (i.e. weddings/funerals) and rents.

That 75% is currently funded by the regular worshippers = £628 per person but this amount is adjusted for socio-economic factors. (10 years ago, the amount per worshipper would have been £478 as at that time we had 21,000 + regular attendees)

Those parishes with a large number of regular worshippers will be asked to pay more than that average amount. Some parishes regard this as a tax on growth as their contribution increases more than that of a static congregation.

The new Common Fund proposal encourages others in the parish to contribute so that the amount per worshipper is reduced.

The new proposal is based on numbers in the parish/benefice including other organisations such as schools and where ministry is needed. It will therefore be based on who the Incumbent will serve. This proposal will not be linked to where clergy are placed, which is a separate matter. Any methodology has to look at how to reduce costs to match income or how to increase the number of regular worshippers.

- b) The Common Fund seeks to support the distinctive vocation of our Clergy, but we need to look at ways of encouraging the community to support us. This may involve encouraging easy ways to give and other opportunities to help and support us. This does take energy but links in with our missional work. How do we evidence that we are transforming our community?
- c) There are standards set by an independent body for the requirements of parsonage houses. The aim of the Diocese to reduce the numbers of clergy to 150 will reduce the need for clergy housing and some houses have already been sold to offset losses.
- d) There are reserves held by the Central Church of England and our Diocese does request help from this source. However, the CofE cannot just spend investments in order to keep the current status quo. The CofE also seeks to fund current issues and projects as well as aim to correct historical matters.
- e) Magnificat parishes (designated due to defined Lower Social Outputs or a population of less than 1000 people) are allocated support already and that would be more with this new scheme. Funding may come from other parishes or benefactors or trusts.
There was discussion in the proposal of a “generosity pot” whereby parishes give more than the allocated amount.
It was explained that the Parish Share is a donation, not a compulsory payment, and so if enough is not donated, then DBF costs will have to be reduced accordingly which will probably mean less clergy appointed.
Under the new scheme, Magnificat parishes would still receive funds from this generosity pot.
- f) Linked with this, there are some parishes that have not paid their Parish Share in full – 170 out of 440 parishes had not paid the full amount.
The reasons for this are looked at on an individual church basis. There are no Diocesan powers to enforce payment, but benefices are encouraged to look at the impact of not giving their share in full.

Following this main item of business Revd Jim Cox thanked Matthew Pinnock for coming to the meeting and answering the questions given.

Revd Jim Cox also gave a brief update on some Deanery News:

- Revd Jim Cox was installed as Rector of South Quantock Benefice on 3rd December 2023
- Revd David Wilkie Curate at St James Church left on 4th February and moved to a New Parish and Diocese
- Deanery Lay Worship Assistant Course would be starting in Spring 2024 using the new pathway training
- The Deanery Services of Reflection will be continuing in 2024
- The New Deanery Prayer Calendar will be updated and issued.

The second meeting of 2024 was on 9th July 2024 at St Peter and St Paul's, Bishop's Hull. This was the Deanery Summer Eucharist which is held annually. At this service the Revd Munna Mitra Presided and Lousie Jarman (Reader at St Peter's, Lyngford) preached. The music was provided by the South Quantock Benefice music group. Following the service Revd Jim Cox thanked those who had led and took part.

2024 was a year of Election of members of the Diocese of Bath and Wells Diocesan Synod for the Triennium 2024 – 2027

The following members were elected:

- For the House of Clergy: Revds Jonathan Ball, Ann Fulton, Robin Lodge, Tobie Osmond, Justine Richards and Elizabeth Shearcroft.
- For the House of Laity: No nominations had been received by the deadline, even after an extension timeframe.

Revd Jim Cox gave an update on some Deanery News:

- Dean Hallett was welcomed to his first meeting. Dean had been licensed as a Lay Curate on 3rd July 2024 at St Michael's, Galmington, and he will be ordained at Michaelmas.
- There were a few resignations from Deanery Synod from the House of Laity: Roger Trigg (The Minster) Diana Taylor (Cheddon Fitzpaine) and Lisa Yarnold (St John's).
- Revd Louise Bale had been licensed as Associate Vicar at The Minster on 23rd June 2024.
- Revd Rob Cromwell (St George's, Wilton) was ordained Priest on 29th June 2024
- Revd's Jon and Imogen Ball have been signed off as Curates and Revd Jon Ball will be the new Minister at the new Orchard Grove Church. The Church will be commissioned in Sept 2024. This appointment will be part funded by the Strategic Ministry Investment Board (SMIB)
- New instructions about issuing of Chalice Assistant Certificates
- Congratulations were sent to Emma Gregory (General Synod Rep Diocese of Bath and Wells) who have given birth to a baby boy on 4th July
- There is to be a Diocesan Day of Prayer on Friday 6th and Saturday 7th Sept 2024 which will be led by the Archbishop of Canterbury

The third meeting of 2024 was on 15th October 2024 at St Michael's, Galmington. The key item on the agenda for this meeting was 'Growing Faith with Children, Young People and Families'. At this meeting Andy Levett from the Diocesan Go Team for the Taunton Archdeaconry was welcomed by Jim Cox with members from Churches in the Deanery who work with Children and Young People.

After introducing the theme, the meeting split into groups looking at the relationships between School, Church and Home.

Alison Vercoe, Chaplain at Pyrland School, then explained her role there and how churches could develop closer links with their local schools. She encourages prayer, the taking in of small gifts and building up relationships with the Headteachers and staff and children. She also announced that 25th June 2025 would be a special anniversary for the school.

Revd Justine Richards then spoke about the "Launchpad Scheme" which works with children aged 11 and over. She gave details of the work being done at St Michael's and the joy of seeing children with no family church connections coming to the services and becoming part of the congregation.

There was then feedback and comments taken from the groups.

Diocesan Synod Elections

House of Laity: No nominations for representatives had been received in the timescales set by the Diocese in the summer and the reasons for this had been discussed at the DMPG meeting on 17th September. Nic Tall is still a General Synod member and therefore can still attend Diocesan Synod.

As a result of these discussions, the House of Laity had been invited again to stand for Synod as a co-opted member and a deadline of 11th October had been given. No nominations had been received by that date nor at this meeting.

Revd Jim Cox gave an update on some Deanery News:

- Revds Jon and Imogen Ball had been licensed as Ministers at Orchard Grove Church which meets in the primary school on the estate
- Revd Dean Hallett had been Ordained as Curate on 29th September at St Michael's Galmington where he will be Curate
- Revd Jane Eastell, PTO in the Taunton Deanery, has moved away from the area
- Liz Pooley from the House of Laity (St Peter's, Lyngford) has resigned from Synod
- Ruth Cook will be retiring on as Deanery Warden of Readers on 31st December 2024
- Revd Robin Lodge has completed his Term of Office as Archdeaconry Warden of Readers
- The Deanery Facebook page has been closed down

A new prayer calendar after this meeting was soon going to be issued.

Darren Chalmers
Deanery Synod Rep

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Vicar's Report

As a summary of the year's activities is provided in the Annual Report & Accounts, and the work of the different teams and responsibilities of church life are set out in this booklet or will have been delivered orally at the meeting, this report is mainly concerned with my thanks, and an appreciation of where we are as a parish now and a vision for the future. In reading the two documents do remember that the Annual Report & Accounts refer to the calendar year 2024.

The year 2024 was characterised by a great deal of sadness for us as a church family through the deaths of eight members of the congregation, past and present. The funerals of Ali Perry and Alan Cook stand out as ones that touched not only St Andrew's but the wider community and, indeed, the Diocese too. Both were towering figures who gave of themselves so generously to others in the church and beyond in a huge variety of roles. That is not to eclipse the others: Dave Lowman, Nancy Holmes, Lorna Jepps and Dot and Dave Howe, plus, of course, Martin Bowker who returned to faith at St Andrew's, but who latterly worshipped at St Peter's. All were loved, valued and will be remembered. For example, who among us will easily forget Dot's enthusiasm for gathering up empty coffee cups on a Sunday morning, the emptiness of which could sometimes be very loosely defined!

Sometimes we have the opportunity to remember those whom we have loved and lost in a tangible way, and so it is good that we can remember Ali Perry through enhancements to our Garden of Remembrance, funded by donations at her funeral, where her ashes rest, and on which she worked so hard alongside Ali Aish. We have been able to add more plants and a second bench and release the Northeast Door, closed for so long, with more to come.

Our Parish Conference in 2024 was held in September, earlier this year to allow due ratification by the PCC in time for a crisp start in January. We continued to plan actions based on our agreed set of values: welcoming, caring, growing, responding and nurturing. One of the most notable resolutions was to respond to the growing international feel to our congregation. We now have members of the church family with roots in India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Iran – and, of course, Sweden! For some, life in the UK has been a bit of a challenge and we continue to work at ways that we can welcome them all and make them feel at home at St Andrew's.

Churchwardens are my partners in mission, ministry and management, so it is still sad to note that we still only have one. David continues with incredible energy and has a great ability to get things done. I am grateful to the church membership for resolving at the last APCM that holders of this office may continue for the national length of service of 7 years rather than our local three, which allows for more flexibility than hitherto. However, Churchwardens are elected every year, and we must allow them the right to choose whether to continue on a year by year basis. Much of David's time in 2024 and since has been taken up by the vagaries of our new heating system. David has taken the brunt of the realisation that what we have has been a great disappointment, and he continues to work with our supplier to resolve the problem. This is one of many reasons why we are advised to elect two churchwardens, and for this reason we must redouble our efforts to find a second warden this year. There is a way of doing so between APCMs if necessary and I continue to hope that we will resolve this situation in short order.

Sue Goodman continues to be a particularly effective PCC Secretary, playing a major part in the leadership team not just servicing the PCC, but helping with the day to day decision making and fielding the huge amount of paperwork that surrounds the Faculty Jurisdiction procedure necessary to making even quite modest changes to the building. As always, her attention to detail is an important gift to us all.

Our "Treasury Team" continues to be reliably led by Antony Yeo, assisted by Lizzie Budd as Assistant Treasurer. Lizzie is principally responsible for Gift Aid and managing the Fees Account with Lesley Gold, and the Church

Hall accounts. My warmest thanks to all the team for looking after an aspect of church life which can be difficult and sometimes complex to cover.

Lesley Gold is an equally invaluable Administrator and has worked tirelessly through another year. It is a demanding role, but one she never fails to exercise with efficiency and good humour. As one who can quite easily let a detail or two slip from the mind, my bacon has been saved by her on more than one occasion with a timely reminder of a small routine matter which can have much greater consequences if overlooked! Please remember, though, that she needs every ounce of her customary efficiency to achieve all she must do in a relatively short time and be patient with her if she is unable to help you as quickly as you would like.

My thanks to Bill Perry for his wisdom and practical help as Parish IT Consultant, helping with technical glitches, especially when a certain vicar, trying to be helpful, switches off a switch that supplies power to both wi-fi and sound system!! His calm approach when the problem is discovered shortly before divine worship is to be admired! (As is his forgiveness!).

Elsewhere on the IT front, my thanks to Esther for keeping an eye on our Facebook and Instagram accounts, supplied with content mostly from the Parish Office, or when they see something coming that we have missed. Those of us who are not great users of social media need constant reminders that this is how many people communicate. My thanks to Sue Goodman, Stephen Grimshaw, Ali and Steve Aish for helping with the livestreaming of worship.

Our Church Hall has continued to go from strength to strength during 2023. Cherry Hingston was appointed with the particular focus on developing the Hall as the "commercial" arm of our operation. She is certainly succeeding and recently it was possible to set up a standing order of £500 per month from the Hall account to the main PCC account, plus additional surpluses as they arise when not needed for investment in the building. This is good news as it fulfils our aim that the Hall should become a funding stream for the church. On top of this Cherry has improved and streamlined our systems and, along with Lizzie's financial oversight, has given the Hall Committee meetings a particularly professional feel. My thanks to them both, and to Grace Thistlethwaite our valiant hall cleaner, not to mention her Mum, Anna, as an occasional and unpaid (as far as we know!) team member!

Outside the Hall, my thanks must go to the considerable team that keep the Green looking great with regular mowing and seasonal leaf collecting. We are blessed to have this green space in the middle of a large urban area, used to good effect in many ways, from the Scouts to Easter Cracked to the Summer Fete.

Back over at the church, Ali Aish has taken the lead in looking after our Garden of Remembrance, supported by Joy Abnett and Bill Perry. As I wrote above, with aid of funds raised through Ali Perry's funeral we are working of a number of enhancements for this special area, which is a reminder of many fondly remembered church members no longer with us.

Ali Aish has also worked hard to lead us beyond our EcoChurch Bronze Award to take us to Silver. We understand that Gold is quite hard to achieve given the levels of commitment required. This may well be a good thing but doesn't prevent us from approaching the actions needed to place us in the "working towards" status, unofficial as that might be. My thanks to Ali and her working group for their efforts to get us to this place.

The New St Andrew's Project continues to be a part of our Mission Action Plan in spite of delays caused by the need to concentrate time and resources on restoring the church heating. The clearance of the pews in the South Aisle and around the no longer disused Northeast Door has been a boon for events such as the Christmas Market, as well as for informal worship, Church Mice and most recently for a well laid out funeral tea. We have also been able to remodel and slightly expand our Children's Area to the delight of our youngest members. As 2025 progresses we have finally received permission install bi-fold doors where the archway is half way along the Narthex so as to host small meetings in a space that is easier to heat. During 2024 it was realised that the cost

of new chairs for this area was going to be too great to fund, given the likely frequency of use, whether from reserves or sponsorship, and could be safely deferred to such time as the replacement of the remaining pews became possible. We did, however, purchase a trolley and ten tables to the particular delight of the Fundraising Group who no longer had to borrow from the Hall for the Christmas Market.

Besides me, our ministerial team now consists of our two licensed Readers, Ruth Cook and Jeremy Harvey, who continue to share in preaching, teaching the faith, assisting and leading worship and in pastoral care. We are blessed to have them. They are also a huge help to me when I want to throw around ideas for our development, or simply the upcoming season of the Church's year. Finally, in spite of variable health, it is good to see Tricia Anderson, our Reader Emeritus, whenever she can make it, and to support her husband David who is now a home communicant.

My thanks too for the help and encouragement of our retired clergy. We now have quite a group with Janet Fulljames, Munna and Nicola Mitra. Jane Eastell moved away to Bristol during the year to be nearer family after a period of ill health and we wish her well. The Church of England relies more than perhaps it ought on retired priests, but they remain a massive powerhouse of experience, wisdom and practical help. I know I speak for us all when I say that our own ones are a great blessing in the life of our parish.

Our Readers and retired clergy join with me in preparing and planning our SALT (Sharing And Learning Together) courses in Advent, Lent and early Summer, for which I am most grateful. An additional resource has been our Lectio Divina group, which meets twice monthly in between the SALT courses. These are led by David Budd and Nicki Sawyer, and it has been lovely to be able to attend these as a group member without the responsibility of leadership!

In November, at Evensong at Kingston St Mary, our then Area Dean and former vicar here, Jim Cox, commissioned Darren Chalmers as a Lay Worship Assistant, following a successful period of training. It was so sad that Alan Cook passed away before he could be commissioned. We had delayed the occasion in the hope that his health might improve, but it was an honour to be able to present Ruth with a posthumously awarded certificate signed by Bishop Michael during the service. Darren has blended this role with looking after the Choir and being responsible for downloading and preparing recorded music when there is no organist, sometimes at very short notice following a cancellation! Darren has a very good liturgical sixth sense that I am keen to develop as he is a most useful member of the team supporting the quality of worship that I believe is a strong feature of St Andrew's life.

Our supply of organists was always going to be unstable, as individuals are always hired on an occasion-by-occasion basis rather than retained as Alan Cook had been. So it is that both Derek Jones and Ian Gouge stepped back from their regular visits in a bid to reduce their own commitments, while John Young headed off in September for a new role with the Junior Choir at Salisbury Cathedral. On the plus side, it was good to see the arrival of Paul Burnett who currently plays on the first and fifth Sundays, while it has been lovely to see Nathalie Delaney grow into being an organist, building on her pianist's training. We also enjoy the occasional visits of Sam Baker, who himself has organ pupils, whom we are keen to help him encourage as the only way to solve what is quite a shortage in today's church. My thanks to them all. The Mission Action Plan for 2025 includes a proposal to have another go at appointing a Director of Music, this time to lead the team rather than hold the entire role.

Of course, our organists are not our only musicians. My thanks to all our splendid Choir whose positivity shines through in face of a very different leadership than the one they enjoyed when we had a formal Director of Music. They make a great sound. During the year it was agreed that they would return to robing and processing on occasions when we had an organist, but support the congregation informally from amongst them when recorded music was necessary. It was also lovely to see the return of our Band for our Christingle service, ably prepared by Carolyn Tudor, who even climbed on the organ stool to save the day for Midnight Mass!

Behind the scenes, but no less valuable, are the many hours put in by Martyn Trott, our Sacristan. His wisdom and practical approach are invaluable when planning worship and organising the sanctuary. His work largely unseen and too easily unnoticed – except of course should it for any reason not be done! It is good that we have a number of assistants who have agreed to be trained to lend a hand, especially when preparing the church for Sunday worship. My thanks to him and all our servers and Communion assistants for their help in the sanctuary. Meanwhile, Judy Blew has been able to continue being our Verger on occasions, as well as leading the Welcome Team and presiding over that most important of rotas ... Sunday Coffee!

Over the last year, the work of our small but dedicated Flower Team has still been able to achieve great things with limited resources, especially at Christmas and Easter, led faithfully by June Acreman in spite of a difficult time with her health. We thank them heartily for their dedication, without which our festivals in particular would be the poorer.

It is good to be able to work with our Lay Pastoral Assistants; Steve and Carol Bull, Darren Chalmers and Sue Lodge, so that everyone in need can be looked after as well as possible. Our Baptism ministry is shared with Steve, who, having chosen this area of work, looks after the families of candidates and helps with the services themselves. Tea & Talk, led by Carol and a small team on a Thursday afternoon, continues to flourish and is a support both to congregation and community. Our ministry to local nursing homes consists of being ready to offer end of life prayers, and to visit Aspen Court for a short service each month around well-known hymns. In addition, thanks to Carol Dimmer who organises Easter and Christmas greetings cards from St Andrew's to residents so that they can know they are not forgotten by their parish church.

Messy Church is held around five times a year, run jointly with Rowbarton Methodist Church alternating on each site. My thanks to Sue Lodge as Messy Church coordinator at this end, and Nicola Lorraine of RMC for making this possible. We continue to reach large numbers of adults and children through this work, as witnessed by the sheer numbers of new participants each time. As always, fresh staff is needed if this valuable ministry is to be sustained.

My thanks to our Children's Leader, Sue Lodge and her team for this vital ministry. Our vision is that the older children are taken aside during the Liturgy of the Word, a time for teaching and learning for us all, and then return to gather around God's table for the "family meal." Younger children can remain and play in the Children's Area but must be supervised by an accompanying adult. The way children are cared for has changed a lot over the years and we are aware this sometimes causes difference in expectations. Our plea is that the children always feel included and that St Andrew's is their church as much as the adults'.

Church Mice is going well, ably led by Joy Abnett and Judith Crayford, along with Di Ruff (i/c refreshments) and Carol Bull as LPA, there especially for the parents and carers, some of whom help informally with the practicalities of the day, not least collecting and packing away the toys dropped by their charges all over the building! This is another area where committed helpers and leaders are needed if this work is to survive. Di wishes to retire from this work in the summer and steps are being taken to fill this and other gaps.

My thanks to our Parish Safeguarding Officer, Stephen Grimshaw, who occupies a vital role in helping us protect our children and vulnerable adults. While we may find the constant attention to training and the renewal of DBS checks irksome, they are all there for a purpose. Please, if you are invited to undertake training, please do so, not least as a mark of respect for those whom we serve. Technically, you need it to operate in your role. It is a requirement of the Bishop and permissions for certain roles may not be renewed without it.

We continue to be part of MINT (Mission in North Taunton), a federation of ourselves, Rowbarton Methodist, Wellsprings Church and Oakwood Community Church. MINT has delivered Easter Cracked and Nativity on the Green as well as coordinating the presentation of *It's Your Move* books to primary school leavers for some years. At the end of 2024, Sue Lodge and Janet Sillet (of RMC) announced that they were stepping back from their roles, and we give them both our hearty thanks for their leadership in this hugely effective ministry. As a result,

the committee decided not to stage Nativity on the Green in the future, but were keen to continue with Easter Cracked in 2025, which, with some fresh helpers, took place very successfully.

Talking of schools, we continue to enjoy close links with St Andrew's School and its membership of the Bath & Wells Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) helping to underpin its Christian identity. There are two Foundation Governors, who have a particular duty to uphold the Christian nature of the school, but with the stepping down of Dawn Booth in 2024 there are no longer any links between the parish and the governing body.

Of course, Collective Worship in schools continues to be an important ministry and should not be forgotten as part of our children's work. I am grateful to be in partnership with Ruth Cook, my Methodist colleagues, Deborah Kirk and Annie Deche, along with Patrick Weld, who, between us, visit St Andrew's School weekly. Deborah and I also visit Priorswood Primary School as invited. Both schools make use of their parish church for worship at special times in the year. Meanwhile, at Pyrland School (formerly The Taunton Academy), I have continued to be part of the Ethos Committee (as a member of the local clergy not as a governor), the purpose of which is to develop and monitor its own Christian foundation. We were pleased to host a Carol Service again for their Year 7 in December. I continue to offer help with RE in any school if required. The lay Chaplain, Alison Vercoe, provides an invaluable ministry to staff and students alike, and it is good that the PCC has been able, again, to make a financial contribution to her post.

Turning back to church life, we should also make special mention of our superb Fundraising Team, now under shared leadership with Darren Chalmers and Karen Cridland. Their oft-stated aim of putting the *fun* into *fund*raising is being superbly carried out with a range of events including the Christmas Market, Summer Fete and the occasional Sunday lunch. The Light up the Spire project continues to commemorate anniversaries and special events with sponsorship of its floodlighting. My thanks to all who serve on this group for all their hard work, which provides us with such superb financial results.

That is already quite a list, but beyond that there is a veritable army of others, too numerous to mention individually: our welcomers, church and brass cleaners, lesson readers, intercessors, welcomers, coffee and catering helpers, bell ringers including Henry Haslam our Tower Captain, and all the members of the PCC. The list goes on, almost more than I can remember. And so, if anyone has been left out, thank you to you too!

Last, but by no means least, I would like to record a public thank you to my wife, Sue, who alongside her other church roles and a more formal network of support, plays a major – maybe the greatest – part in keeping me sane! Her unstinting encouragement, sharing both the joys and sorrows of public ministry (and there can be plenty of each!), not least waiting for long hours for me to come to rest for more than five minutes at a time, is of immense value to me and something for which I am most grateful, and all of this while holding down a challenging full-time job!

So, what of the future?

I guess I could summarise the challenges with one word: resources. Although people are very generous, our costs continue to outstrip our resources, and this in a time when some have had the need to tighten their proverbial belts. Our reserves are getting smaller as they approach the guaranteed minimum needed to maintain our employees in their jobs and pay our basic bills. That leaves us with an interesting challenge: how do we relate our church finances with our faith? At one level it would be easy to pare everything down just to keep a building to worship in on Sunday morning. Yet our faith bids us look outward so that we must invest in order to grow, but without being reckless. It sounds terribly Anglican to say that there is a middle way, but that does seem to me to be a solution. In practice, that's about priorities and when we set the Mission Action Plan for 2026 we will need to make sure we know how we finance what we intend to do. In the end, of course, faith is a response to a loving and generous God so that we see what He is doing and join in.

One of our blessings is that the Parish Share – our contribution to the pot that pays for the clergy and central support services from the Diocese – has remained stable for the time being, thanks to some transitional relief that reflects the demographic of our parish. This is against a new method of calculation, reflecting financial pressures at diocesan level, that has each benefice (parish or group of parishes) paying for the professional ministry it receives. In the future – and elsewhere in Bath & Wells currently – this will have implications for the distribution of clergy posts. In Taunton no changes have so far been planned, but parishes should not assume that that future will be the same shape as the past.

Our other resources are our people. We all remember that the late Ali Perry used to tell us how there were 93 people doing a wide variety of roles at St Andrew's. I don't know what the current figure is, but there so many of you giving generously of their time and talents in so many ways. However, although there are plenty of helpers, we are short of leaders, as witnessed by the fact that for most of my 15 years in this parish we have worked on only one churchwarden. It may be that we need to be more creative in how we use parish officers so that the load, which can sometimes be demanding, is shared more evenly.

That said, we have a faithful God, and I do believe that He gives the Church all the gifts it needs fulfil its calling. As I said last year, faithfulness sometimes equals willingness to change; to do things differently, run things differently, to let certain things – sometimes very good things – die off so that new things can be born. That is death and resurrection, a concept at the very heart of the Easter season that, by the time you read this we will be celebrating. Our values of welcoming, caring, growing, responding and nurturing, along with our faith in a faithful God that is rooted in prayer and worship, will give us the framework we need to live and tell the story of Jesus for the coming year and into whatever future the Lord has in store for us.

Robin Lodge
April 2025