



**PARISH OF ST PETER-IN-THANET**

**Agendas, Minutes and Reports  
for  
Annual Vestry Meeting  
and  
Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
2024**

## CONTENTS

### **Agendas**

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Annual Vestry Meeting .....           | 3 |
| Annual Parochial Church Meeting ..... | 3 |

### **Minutes**

|                                                                 |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Annual Parish Meeting 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2023 .....           | 4 |
| Annual Parochial Church Meeting 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2023 ..... | 5 |

### **Reports**

|                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| Priest in Charge.....                   | 7  |
| Electoral Roll .....                    | 8  |
| Parochial Church Council Secretary..... | 8  |
| Churchwardens.....                      | 9  |
| Thanet Deanery Synod .....              | 10 |
| Children's Church.....                  | 11 |
| Choir.....                              | 11 |
| Church Cleaning.....                    | 12 |
| Churchyard .....                        | 12 |
| Community Halls.....                    | 13 |
| Eco Church .....                        | 13 |
| Fabric .....                            | 14 |
| Flower Arrangers .....                  | 15 |
| Fundraising .....                       | 15 |
| Lunch Club .....                        | 16 |
| Mission and Worship Committee.....      | 16 |
| Safeguarding.....                       | 17 |
| Servers .....                           | 18 |
| Social Committee.....                   | 18 |
| St Peter's Women's Group .....          | 19 |
| The Monday Home Group .....             | 19 |
| The Wednesday Home Group .....          | 20 |
| Toddler Group .....                     | 20 |
| Tower.....                              | 21 |
| Treasurer.....                          | 21 |

## **PARISH OF ST PETER-IN-THANET**

### **ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING**

*The Annual Vestry Meeting will take place on **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 11.00am** in the Church.*

#### **AGENDA**

1. Opening Prayer
  2. Appointment of Clerk to the meeting
  3. Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023
  4. Apologies for Absence
  5. Election of Churchwardens
  6. AOB
- a) *All nominations for election must be received in writing prior to the start of the meeting.*
- b) *This is a meeting of those whose names are on the Civil Electoral Roll of the civil parish and/or those whose names are on the Electoral Roll of the Parish Church. Anyone on either of these rolls can attend and vote.*

### **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

*The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will take place on **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024**, immediately following the Annual Vestry Meeting, also to be held in the Church.*

#### **AGENDA**

1. Appointment of Clerk to the meeting
  2. Announcement of results of the election of Churchwardens
  3. Apologies for absence
  4. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023
  5. Matters arising
  6. Reports:
    - a. Electoral Roll
    - b. Annual report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and Parish Activities (including Churchwardens' Report and Deanery Synod Report)
    - c. Presentation and Adoption of the Annual Accounts for the year ending December 2023
  7. Elections and Appointments:
    - a. PCC Members
    - b. Independent Examiner
  8. AOB – *Prior notice to be given to the Chair of the meeting at least 24 hours in advance*
  9. Closing Prayer
- a) *It is preferred that nominations, proposed and seconded, are received in advance of the meeting.*
- b) *If required, voting will be by ballot.*
- c) *Only those whose names are on the electoral roll of the Parish of St Peter-in-Thanet are eligible to attend and vote at this meeting. A clerk in Holy Orders who is licensed to the parish, is resident within the parish or is a habitual worshipper in the parish may also attend.*

## **PARISH OF ST PETER-IN-THANET**

### **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 21<sup>st</sup> MAY 2023**

This is a joint meeting of those whose names are on the Civil Electoral Roll of the civil parish and those whose names are on the Electoral Roll of the Parish Church. Anyone on either of these rolls can attend and vote.

The meeting was held on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 in the Church at 11.00am, Robin Page presiding as Chair of the meeting.

#### **Opening Prayer**

This was led by Rev'd Alice Bates. Rev'd Alice gave thanks for the blessings and challenges of the last year and the work of all the many volunteers. She asked that all who work together are renewed in faith and work for the greater glory of God.

#### **Election of Clerk to the meeting**

Sue Brooks, as Secretary to the PCC, as is customary, was proposed as Clerk to the meeting by Toni Lawrence, seconded by Pat Parkins, and accepted unanimously.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from the following: Mr and Mrs John Reid, Don Bumpstead, Roy and Marion Brown, Richard and Edwina Baker, Andy Parkins and Elspeth Cooke.

#### **Election of two Churchwardens**

Two nominations were received for the post of Churchwarden, these were for Sylvia Mills and Ian Dunn, the present Churchwardens. There being no other nominations, both were accepted unanimously.

Ian advised the meeting that the interviews for the post of Priest in Charge will be held next week. There are three candidates and he asked for prayers for them and for the selection committee to make the best choice. We should all be optimistic that we will have a successful outcome. He also explained that the appointment process is a lengthy one and asked for patience in awaiting a result. He confirmed that an announcement will be made as soon as possible.

#### **AOB**

None.

## **PARISH OF ST PETER-IN-THANET**

### **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 21<sup>st</sup> MAY 2023**

All lay persons whose names are on the Electoral Roll of the Parish Church shall be entitled to attend this meeting and no other person shall be so entitled. A Clerk in Holy Orders shall be entitled to attend and take part in the proceedings if she/he is licensed to the parish, resident in the parish, or is a habitual worshipper in the parish.

The meeting took place immediately after the Annual Parish Meeting.

#### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the following: Mr and Mrs John Reid, Richard and Edwina Baker, Roy and Marion Brown, Andy Parkins, Don Bumpstead and Elspeth Cooke.

#### **2 Minutes of the APCM held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022**

The Minutes of the APCM held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022 unanimously accepted as a true and accurate record.

#### **Matters Arising from The Minutes**

None.

#### **3 Official Reports**

##### **Electoral Roll**

The Electoral Roll Officer, Gill Horne, confirmed that there were 136 persons listed on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022 and 136 on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023. During the year, eight new people had joined the roll and eight were removed (five deceased and three moved away). The Electoral Roll will be available in Church and in the Parish Office for the next three weeks. Gill will be retiring from the position of Electoral Roll Officer and Robin thanked Gill for her work. He is hopeful that Richard Baker may take over or find another replacement. It was suggested that an average attendance at morning services of 65 was disappointing but June Binfield reminded us that some attended only the Wednesday morning or 8.00am Sunday Services but all were entitled to be on the Electoral Roll.

#### **4 The Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and Parish Activities**

All reports had been circulated before the meeting and were available on the day. It was unanimously agreed that there was no necessity to read the following reports:

Secretary's Report, proposed by Pauline Osborne and seconded by Rev'd Alice and Fabric, Goods and Ornaments and Deanery Synod reports, proposed by Toni Lawrence and seconded by Michael Jacques.

##### **Chair of PCC Annual Report**

Robin Page opened his report by saying that his work as Chair of the PCC for the past year had given him a greater insight into the amount of work done by all the volunteers, PCC members, retired clergy and Rev'd Alice. He felt it was easy to take it for granted that services would happen but without the support of a large number of people this would not be so. He extended his grateful thanks to all, including the Rev'd Alice and the retired clergy, the entire PCC, Laura, Parish Assistant, Sue as Secretary and Deborah, Admin support. He thanked Toni who cares for the Halls so beautifully, which has seen our lettings increase in number, and for her work in Safeguarding and with the Children's Church. Don Bumpstead has transformed the Garden of Remembrance, and Eco

Church has done invaluable work in the Churchyard. Church cleaners, flower arrangers, the Lunch Club volunteers, and the Women's Group all deserved our gratitude. The St Peter's Village Tour has donated a defibrillator as well as a substantial financial contribution. Robin and Gill Page, Ian Dunn and Sylvia have all received training to use the defibrillator. However, Ian reassured us that it is possible to use it without training as there are full instructions with it. Robin looked forward to the appointment of a new Priest in Charge to ensure the work of the Church continues.

### **Financial Statement of the PCC for the year ending December 2022**

The report had been circulated previously with the minutes. It was not considered necessary to read it out in full. Robin Page as Treasurer added some comments to his report. He noted that our net loss was £3,060 but this would have been worse but for a grant of £6,000 from the diocese towards heating costs. The income from the halls has been invaluable and has supported our payment of one Parish Share. The new Vestry roof cost £31,000 and over £9,000 was paid to improve the Garden of Remembrance. We have contributed to a number of charities including the Ukraine appeal, the Poppy appeal, Christian Aid, Thanet Food Link and Thanet Winter Shelter.

There were no questions.

### **5 Appointments**

The new appointment to the PCC was Lloyd Stickels.

Deanery Synod Members are June Binfield and Mary Bridges.

Independent Examiner – It was proposed by Rev'd Alice, seconded by June Binfield and unanimously agreed, to again appoint Spurling Cannon as independent examiners for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

### **6 Any Other Business**

A short meeting of the PCC will follow this one.

### **7 Closing Prayer**

Rev'd Michael Cooke led the closing prayer. He too thanked all those who have worked tirelessly in this year to support the Church while we await the arrival of a new Priest in Charge. He asked for His blessing on all attendees and Church supporters, and that our work shall be for the greater glory of God.

The meeting closed at 11.30am.

## **Priest in Charge**

### **Administrative Information**

St Peter-in-Thanel Church is situated in Church Street, St Peter's, Broadstairs, CT10 2TR, and is part of the Diocese of Canterbury within the Church of England. From January – September 2023 the Parish was in a period of vacancy, following the retirement of the Rev'd Jan Durrans in September 2022. As of 10<sup>th</sup> September 2023 Rev'd Matt Hodder was installed and licensed as the Priest in Charge of the Parish.

### **PCC Structure, Governance and Management**

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules, or co-opted. All Church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll, and all on the Electoral Roll are eligible to stand for election to the PCC.

### **PCC Objectives and Activities**

The PCC co-operates with the incumbent in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church/hall of St Peter's. The PCC considers issues relating to the internal life of our Church, to its work and witness within the Parish and to the part it may play in the wider work of the Kingdom of God. We seek the well-being of the Church community and to do all we can to give a warm welcome to all newcomers to Church services and other events.

### **PCC Membership**

PCC members are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

|                             |                                                                                     |                                    |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Chair/Incumbent             | Rev'd Matt Hodder                                                                   | Priest in Charge<br>(from Sept 23) |
| Minister in Parish          | Rev'd Alice Bates                                                                   | Ex-Officio                         |
| Vice Chair                  | Robin Page                                                                          | Treasurer                          |
| Churchwarden                | Ian Dunn                                                                            |                                    |
| Churchwarden                | Sylvia Mills                                                                        |                                    |
| Deanery Synod Reps          | Mary Bridges<br>June Binfield                                                       |                                    |
| Elected Members of the PCC  | Gill Horne<br>Richard Baker<br>Roy Brown<br>Pauline Osborne (RIP)<br>Lloyd Stickels |                                    |
| Co-opted Members of the PCC | John Reid<br>Toni Lawrence<br>Andy Parkin<br>Robin Page                             |                                    |
| PCC Secretary               | Sue Brooks                                                                          | (non-voting member)                |

## **Other Appointments**

|                                                 |                |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Electoral Roll Officer                          | Richard Baker  |
| Parish Safeguarding Officer                     | Toni Lawrence  |
| Churches Together in Broadstairs Representative | Lloyd Stickels |

It has been a joy and a privilege to serve as Priest in Charge of the Parish since September 2023. The sense of warmth, kindness and diligence has been evident since day one. As you read through this report you will get a sense of all that has been happening at St Peter's over the past year. We are blessed to have so many people who are generous with their time and skills to help make our Church a place where all are welcome and included. Thank you to all who serve in big and small ways!

I am pleased to say that we are a growing Church. We have growing links with our local businesses, schools and community figures. We have a Church family who are growing in their faith and love of God, and we have a growing sense of what God is calling us to do here. As we look back on 2023 and look ahead to 2024, I hope you will join me in praying for another fruitful year for our Church here in St Peter's.

*Rev'd Matt Hodder*

## **Electoral Roll**

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 there were 136 names on the Roll. Since then, 7 names have been deleted and two added, making a total of 131 on the Roll at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

- 6 people died;
- 1 moved away;
- 34% of those on the Roll live outside the Parish boundary.

*Richard Baker*

## **Parochial Church Council Secretary**

The membership of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) consists of the Priest in Charge, two Churchwardens and representatives elected from the Church congregation. During 2023, Robin Page continued as Chair until the appointment of Rev'd Matt Hodder as Priest in Charge in September 2023 gave us a new Chair for the PCC.

The Church's role in providing worship and services is a crucial one in the village and, in addition, the halls are a base for many parish activities and are very valued by the community. All these vital services are organised and led by the PCC.

Sadly, we lost one of our members, Pauline Osborne, who died in September. Pauline's long and loyal service as Churchwarden and as PCC member was greatly valued by all her friends and colleagues in the Church. The loss of her experience and active support left a huge gap which continues to be felt. As a mark of respect, the PCC observed a minute's silence for Pauline at the meeting in September 2023.

Currently the council has thirteen members. The PCC has met six times during the period from January 2023 to December 2023. Attendance at the PCC has averaged 80% annually.

Mission and Worship, together with Fundraising and Fabric continue to be some of the chief priorities for the PCC. Once again the work of the PCC, together with all the other Church committees and with support from the congregation and the community, in organising events and initiatives has enabled us to meet all our financial obligations. In addition, support of, and donations to, charities outside the Church has been initiated and has the enthusiastic support of the PCC, recognising the Church's responsibility to act in accordance with Christian teaching.

Planning for future fundraising to meet the running costs of the Church, to support other charities and to maintain the Church building and grounds continues.

Thanks are due to all those who support the fundraising events in any way and for the excellent catering by Sylvia Mills and her team.

We are fortunate that the long-term commitment of many PCC members has ensured their efficiency in co-ordinating so many of the vital activities that make up the role of St Peter-in-Thamet throughout the Church year. This service has been invaluable to all the congregation and the community of the village of St Peter's as a whole. New members would be most welcome to assist in this important work and to prepare for the work to continue seamlessly in the future as members retire.

We give thanks to God for the hard work of all the PCC, our volunteers and committee members. We look forward to an active and fulfilling year of continuing service in 2024.

*Sue Brooks*

### **Churchwardens**

2023 can probably best be summarised as a year of two parts. We started the year off in vacancy and ended the year with Rev'd Matt Hodder in post as our Priest in Charge.

We are so very grateful for all of the help and support we were given during our time of vacancy. We were able to hold all of our scheduled services as well as respond to all of the requests for Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals and Burial of Cremated Remains. For this we say a big thank you to our Curate, Rev'd Alice and our retired Priests, Rev'd Brian, Rev'd David and Rev'd Michael; we appreciate that it was a big ask. The day-to-day work of the Church continued almost seamlessly thanks to the hard work of the members of the PCC and the many other volunteers in the Church family. It was lovely to welcome pupils from St Peter-in-Thamet Church of England Junior School for their Easter Service and Year 6 for their Leavers' Service in July. The annual Summer Fête was another successful occasion which was well supported by both the Church congregation and the local community.

At the end of June, we were delighted to be able to announce the appointment of the Rev'd Matt Hodder as our new Priest in Charge. The Licensing and Installation of Rev'd Matt was carried out by the Bishop of Dover, The Rt Rev'd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, and The Venerable Dr William Adam, Archdeacon of Canterbury, at a service held on 10<sup>th</sup> September. It was a wonderful occasion attended by representatives from many of the local Churches as well as a large number of our own

congregation. As well as welcoming Rev'd Matt it was wonderful, too, to welcome Jen, Zach, Annie and Hope as they begin a new chapter in their lives with us at St Peter's.

As Churchwardens we have been greatly encouraged as we worked with Rev'd Matt, Rev'd Alice, the PCC and the congregation for the rest of the year. Our many services and activities were well supported and enjoyed by many. It has been a pleasure to welcome a number of newcomers to our Church family during this period; we trust that they will feel welcome and encouraged as they get to know us.

*Sylvia Mills and Ian Dunn*

### **Thanet Deanery Synod**

The Thanet Deanery is one of the 15 Deaneries in the Diocese of Canterbury. It is the largest Deanery and consists of 17 Churches and groups of Churches and in addition Harvest New Anglican Church. The Deanery Synod meets three times a year and consists of the clergy and lay representatives of the parishes. St Peter's has been represented by the Rev'd Alice Bates and two lay representatives, Mary Bridges and June Binfield. They were joined in the last third of the year by our new priest, the Rev'd Matt Hodder. The clergy also meet as a Chapter. Our Area Dean is the Rev'd Philip Musindi, who is Chair of the Deanery Mission and Ministry Committee. The Lay Chair of the Deanery is Judith Andrews, LLM, who as the only candidate was elected by the Synod in March 2023. Judith is a Licensed Lay Minister and an Anna Chaplain. She is on the team of St Laurence-in-Thanet, Ramsgate. There were no candidates for the vacant post of Deanery Secretary. A Deanery Mission and Ministry Committee meets monthly over the year.

The Deanery manages aspects of the collection and distribution of money across the Deanery. Our Treasurer attends Synod when finance is an agenda item and there are additional meetings for Church Treasurers. The Parish Share provides money to pay the clergy stipends, clergy pensions, training for curates and for lay roles as well as helping the Diocese provide support to our Church schools, youth hubs, safeguarding, the prayer network and so on. The Diocese has made cuts in expenditure and is repaying a loan. The Deanery supports the Diocese's Strategy, Changed Lives → Changing Lives and the three Bold Outcomes - Children and Young People, New Christian Communities and Revitalisation of every Parish, Benefice and Deanery. Within our Diocese, Leadership is provided by the Bishop of Dover, The Rt Rev'd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, and The Venerable Dr William Adam, Archdeacon of Canterbury. Bishop Rose has four priorities, Prayer, Bible Study, Evangelism and Generosity. The Archdeacon who is relatively new in post has been very supportive and has encouraged initiatives to address Deanery issues.

The Deanery has a Deanery Mission and Worship Committee and since taking up his post, the Rev'd Matt Hodder is a member, as is one of our congregation, June Binfield. This Committee is responsible for producing a Deanery Plan, which is a living document as changes are made as needed. The current Deanery Plan was sent to the Diocese after the November Synod. The Diocese will collate all the Deanery plans to form a way forward and some projects may be put forward to request funds from the Church Commissioners. Our plan includes the three Bold Outcomes as well as environmental justice and plans arising from the specific work and needs of our Churches. The Thanet Deanery has not paid its full share in recent years even with a contribution to some parishes in areas of deprivation from the Church Commissioners. This has meant that the traditional number of stipendiary priests cannot be sustained. Over the year there have been vacancies in St James's Church, Margate, St Saviour's Church, Westgate-on-Sea, the Wantsum Benefice - St Mary the Virgin,

Minster, St Nicholas, St Nicholas-at-Wade, and Churches in Monkton and Chislet, St Peter-in-Thanel, St John the Baptist with All Saints' Church, Margate, Holy Trinity Church, Margate, St Paul's Church, Margate, St Laurence-in-Thanel, Ramsgate, and St George's Church, Ramsgate. Christ Church, Ramsgate, is closed. St James's Church has a new priest, as has our Church and the Wantsum Benefice along with St Saviour's Church; they will also work with All Saints' Church, Birchington-on-Sea, which would like to close St Thomas's Church in Minnis Bay and St Mildred's Church in Acol due to lack of financial resources and very small congregations. St Luke's Church, Ramsgate, has joined with St George's Church. Plans are under way for Holy Trinity Church to join with The Church Revitalisation Trust (CRT) and be a Resource Church. A priest will be appointed to Holy Trinity Church by the PCC with funding, support and resources from the CRT which will allow working with St John the Baptist with All Saints' Church and St Paul's Church. St Laurence-in-Thanel, which leads a team group of Churches, is still in vacancy. Lay leaders and members of congregations are also helping to keep things going.

Synod met in March 2023. A talk was given by the Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Vocations Officer, the Rev'd Jon Marlowe, and all were encouraged to discern possible callings. In June 2023 the Synod met in St Mark's, Ramsgate: Anna Chaplaincy was explained and the Deanery Plan discussed. It was decided to hold a Deanery Day of Encouragement, which was held in September. Attendees acknowledged what was being done in the parishes and discussed how to address the three Bold Outcomes in our Church Life and in the Deanery Plan. Also in September a Deanery Roadshow covered Finance, Church and School Partnerships and Church Buildings. The November Synod agreed to send our Deanery Plan to the Diocese. The Rev'd Matt Hodder, who has a Deanery leadership role as regards Children and Young People, introduced an audit questionnaire to map out what is being done. The Lay Chair also provided a questionnaire to help communication in the Deanery. The Rev'd David Tate is leading the Deanery in Eco matters and he has been active in encouraging the parishes to become part of the A Rocha Award Scheme for Churches. Our challenges also include getting in contact with the new housing estates in the area.

*June Binfield*

### **Children's Church**

Children's Church has grown in popularity over the year with several new families joining the St Peter's family. Regularly there are between 16 to 22 children. Moving the group to the Main Hall has enabled the children to have lots of space to work. Several work stations are set up along with a group seating area where discussion takes place. Using the Main Hall also enables use of a laptop and overhead projector which can be used to show videos, stories and PowerPoint slides to extend learning. The children enjoy singing with Pat and are building friendships with each other. The younger children have space to use toys and have sensory play with scented playdough. Over the last year we have explored; Jonah, Remembrance, Easter, Christmas, Prayer, Candlemas. The children are always keen to share what they have learned and show any crafts they have made.

*Toni Lawrence*

### **Choir**

Sadly, we have lost two of our dearest and long-standing friends and members of the Choir - Alison Burgess died in January and Pauline Osborne died in September.

As well as our regular Sunday services, the Choir continues singing for weddings and funerals and we meet regularly for rehearsals on Friday evenings.

The Choir sang at the Christmas Tree Festival in December with a short concert of Christmas music to conclude the first full day of the Festival on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December. Our numbers this year were enhanced by guest singers including three additional altos. Our Advent services incorporated a new work by James MacMillan [Advent Antiphons].

We were happy to sing at our annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols on the afternoon of Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December.

*Patrick Dunn*

### **Church Cleaning**

During the year several of our regular cleaners had to give up for various reasons, and no new volunteers have come forward. In the past we have divided the Church into small sections, with one person responsible for each part. Depending on usage, cleaning does not have to be done each week, and can be done at a time to suit the individual, although most cleaning is done on Friday morning. There is an urgent need for more volunteers, and if you can help please see Richard or Edwina Baker (01843) 865090. We are very grateful, therefore, to Hilary Kendrick, Edwina Baker, Mary Bridges (until ill health forced her to give up), Michael Cooke, Elspeth Cooke, Pat Clayton and Sally Wood (until she moved away), for their hard work in keeping our beautiful Church clean.

*Richard Baker*

### **Churchyard**

The year 2023 started with some disappointment for the St Peter's Churchyard, as the programme of winter works to the trees was not able to be done because of reduced availability of staff at Thanet District Council. General maintenance such as grass mowing and light pruning was done as normal.

The main entrance path up to the Church South door and the East front of the Church had been well maintained by Sally Wood and occasional helpers. Her move away presented us with a problem, but Jan Seed, who had worked with 'The Friends of St Peter's Churchyard', stepped in and has done a brilliant job. Jan is also part of the team that has provided and maintained the wooden planters in the area between the Church and the Church halls, contributing to St Peter's achieving Eco Church Silver Award.

Also helping in this regard are the other two volunteer groups which do a sterling job of keeping many graves tidy. 'The Friends of St Peter's Churchyard' meets once a month on Saturday mornings from March to November. The group, which has been active for several years, also tends the War Graves.

Relative newcomers, 'The Gardening Angels', meeting every Tuesday morning from 9.00am to 11.00am, have cleared 300 graves overgrown with brambles over the past 2 years, marking those without grave surrounds or headstones and putting names to all of the graves.

All volunteer groups take care to protect and encourage wildlife and birds by having bird feeders, bug hotels and log piles for other insects. More bird boxes are to be installed in 2024.

The 4 hornbeam trees planted in 2020 have again survived a dry summer and the drying effects of strong winds with much appreciated efforts of Richard and Edwina Baker trundling buckets of water by wheelbarrow to the North West boundary of the Churchyard. More infill hedgerow plants have been required, as dogs and owners continue to take short cuts instead of remaining on paths, thus uprooting young plants.

All volunteers admit to benefitting from being outdoors in a tranquil space in the company of others. It is also rewarding to receive positive comments from visitors. If you wish to join any of the volunteer groups, please contact Rev'd David Tate (07867 110895) or the Parish Office ((01843) 866061) in the first instance.

I am happy to receive comments about the Churchyard and ideas to improve it.

*Rev'd David Tate*

### **Community Halls**

The Halls continue to be a valuable hub for the Community and bookings remain buoyant with limited spare capacity. Income for the year 2023 was £7K over budget but expenditure was £12K over budget after paying 2 Parish Shares resulting in a small surplus of £1,375. We had a bank balance of £1,642 with £58,558 held on CCLA. A small loss is budgeted for in 2024 assuming the payment of two Parish Shares.

The ongoing damp problems in the Portland have now been resolved happily without cost.

We have acquired a defibrillator and have had air conditioning installed in the Mulberry Room all at no cost thanks to the generosity of the Village Tour.

*John Reid*

### **Eco Church**

St Peter's Eco Church initiative has had a successful year, the highlight being the attainment of a Silver Award, one of only two Churches in the Deanery to have achieved this accolade. It is activities within the Church, its buildings and land, that have helped. Thanks to all who contribute to sustainable activities.

Opportunities to make further progress are being pursued, and these include the use of solar panels, moving to LED light bulbs when bulbs are changed, consideration of using 'green' electricity and gas supplies when lower prices permit.

The areas that need more action concern relationships with other organisations, Churches and the community in joint activities such as litter picks, support for environmental charities, joining with Margate and Ramsgate towns through Thanet District Council's various initiatives.

Each month, the Eco Church Group offers in the Parish Magazine suggestions of how we might each play our part in working towards a sustainable creation. One way in which Church members can assess how we are progressing is by completing a Lifestyle Survey. This has been trialled by some Churches in Canterbury. It is anticipated that such a survey will take place in St Peter's in 2024, and we hope that members will respond enthusiastically.

Diocese wide there continues to be activity which culminated in a conference at Canterbury Cathedral in September, a report of which was given by Elspeth and Michael Cooke, and printed in November's Parish Magazine. The conference was organised by the Diocesan Eco Champions, of whom David Tate is one.

It is pleasing that Church members support the Eco Church Group, which is in need of members, as the majority of Churches in the Deanery show apathy giving a variety of excuses. "We don't think there is climate change", "We cannot do anything about it", "It's not our problem", "I won't be around for it to affect me".

Climate change is real and it is happening, accelerated by human action/inaction.

*Rev'd David Tate*

## **Fabric**

The usual housekeeping activities have all been carried out and are up to date.

Just after Easter the Quinquennial Inspection was carried out by Daniel Martin, our newly appointed surveyor. His report highlighted four main points:

- Drainage assessment and repair;
- South Porch repair and enhancement;
- Vestry Corridor repair and enhancement;
- Chancel interiors repair and conservation.

A full underground survey was carried out on the rainwater drains around the Church. It was discovered that drainage on the South side was in a very poor state and in places had completely collapsed. Work is now underway to rectify these problems.

The other three items are due to be addressed in 2024 but, due to the extent of repairs needed to the drains, are in abeyance until the work on them is done.

The long running pier saga with Thanet District Council (TDC) we hope may be solved along with the above, as both TDC and Kent County Council will be involved with replacing excavated footpaths and highways.

A new shed has been erected in the Churchyard for the use of storage of gardening equipment.

The audio system has been serviced and tested and with a few minor adjustments is now working well.

In October the War Memorial was damaged and the added two courses of non-matching stone forming the flower bed were dislodged. TDC, who is responsible for the Memorial, was informed and as it was deemed to be dangerous the damaged stone was removed in time for the November Remembrance Services.

*Andy Parkins*

### **Flower Arrangers**

The flower arrangers have had another full year. We are half the number we were, but everyone loves doing it and will continue.

*Diana Taylor*

### **Fundraising**

During 2023 the Fundraising Committee put in a lot of work in organising and running events to raise funds for St Peter's Church. Over the course of the year we ran the following:

Six Boot Fairs, two Quiz Nights, one Children's 'Bingo' half-term event and a performance of Handel's 'Messiah' by The Merry Opera Company.

In addition to the above we also organised and ran the Summer Fête in June and the Festive Fayre in late November, both of which were very successful. In addition, the Fundraising Committee played a major role in ensuring the success of the 2023 Christmas Tree Festival, which not only proved to be a very enjoyable event for all who took part or visited it but also added £461 to the Church's funds.

In total, the Fundraising Committee's efforts raised a total, from all sources, of £15,843, which is a very satisfactory total and one which we hope we can at least equal in the forthcoming year.

At the end of 2023 the Committee consisted of, in addition to the Chair, five elected members plus four Church Officers. Over the course of 2023 the Fundraising Committee lost two of its most long standing and most distinguished members, namely Don Bumpstead and Pauline Osborne. Don, who retired in March 2023 was one of the original founders of the Committee in 2014 and had done a lot of very valuable work for us during his 9 years of service. His skills, wise advice and wry humour are much missed by us all. Pauline sadly died in September after a long illness. She was one of the 'old soldiers' who was never backward in letting everyone know her opinion but who always stepped up whenever anything needed to be done. She was an utterly reliable person as well as being very good company and her loss has left a huge hole in the Committee which will take some time to heal.

Finally, as Chairman I would like to thank all members of the Fundraising Committee for everything that they have done over the year to make our fundraising efforts such a success. One other person also deserves all our thanks for her assistance over the year, namely Laura Kirk, our excellent Parish Administrator whose skills in computing and design, as well as organisation, have been hugely valuable to all of us on the Fundraising Committee.

*Roy Brown*

## **Lunch Club**

We have been able to enjoy another full year of Lunch Club meetings in 2023, meeting on the first Monday of each month. There are a few months when we cannot meet, when the date falls on a Bank Holiday, and also August.

We usually have approximately 35 diners each month, though for our Christmas Lunch we had approximately 45, much enjoyed by everyone.

I would like to say a special thank-you to our cooks, Jean, Dilys, and Lorraine and Laura, who have recently joined us. Also, everyone who helps in the kitchen, and those who help front of house, setting up and clearing away.

Gill, our Treasurer, has decided to stand down after many years, and we are very grateful to her for all she has contributed.

In July, we presented a cheque to Mr Fagg from the Kent Air Ambulance. Each month our members continue to support this worthy cause, and on this occasion, he arrived with a very special certificate, showing that the Lunch Club has raised £10,000 over many years of donations.

If anyone feels they would like to help, please contact me. We are always pleased to welcome new volunteers as our Club could not function without them.

Our Club is open to anyone over the age of 60, who lives in the village or Parish of St Peter-in-Thanel, and who can join us each month on a regular basis.

*Marion Brown*

## **Mission and Worship Committee**

The Mission and Worship Committee met seven times in 2023. Membership over the year included the Rev'd Alice Bates, Ian Dunn (Churchwarden), Sylvia Mills (Churchwarden), June Binfield, Mary Bridges, Christine Denton, Patrick Dunn, Gill Horne, Pauline Osborne, (RIP September 2023), Pat Parkins, John Parsons and, from 10<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the Rev'd Matt Hodder. Pauline was a very long-standing and hard-working member of the Committee. The first eight months of the year we were in interregnum and we are grateful for the leadership and guidance of the Churchwardens and the ministry of those with Permission to Officiate (PTO). All our Church family worked together during this period. COVID has not gone away but this year it did not prevent the regular rhythm of our worship.

At each meeting worship is reviewed and future worship is considered. This covers all our regular services including 8 o'clock, Parish Eucharist, Wednesday Eucharist, Sunday Praise, Children's Church, Choral Evensong and Taizé and our many special services such as Mothering Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Ascension, the Patronal Festival, Harvest, Remembrance, A Time to Remember and Christingle. As Christmas Eve was on a Sunday in 2023, it was a very busy time. During Holy Week and in August, Compline was said. Attendance at Evensong was not strong. There was a pleasing number of Baptisms and weddings, as well as a number of funerals. A highlight of the year was on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September when we celebrated the new ministry of our Priest in Charge, the Rev'd Matt Hodder, who was licensed by the Bishop of Dover, The Right Rev'd Rose Hudson-Wilkin

and installed by The Venerable Dr William Adam, witnessed by a large congregation. We were delighted to welcome Matt, Jen, Zac, Annie and Hope. A Scratch Nativity was an enjoyable innovation. Church attendance in 2023 has been higher than in 2022 and is getting near to pre-pandemic levels.

We are grateful for the silent Hour of Prayer on Wednesday mornings, organised by the Rev'd Alice, and we look forward to changes being planned for the coming year. In March the service for the World Day of Prayer was held in our Church and was well attended by many of our neighbouring Christians. We encourage prayer to be at the heart of our Church and individual lives. The Rev'd Alice also encouraged prayer for our community, based on a street map of our Parish. The Rev'd Matt provided prayers and readings for us to use at home during Advent.

Music is a regular item on our agenda and we are able to understand its important role in our worship and Church life. We are fortunate to have a Choir and a professional organist. As well as leading the congregational singing, the Choir sings anthems on Sunday mornings. The Choir also enhances festivals with their music. Some instrumental music has been played at Taizé services.

We thanked Gill Horne for her many years of outstanding service as Sacristan as she retired at the end of 2023. Lloyd Stickels is to be our next Sacristan. Gill has also been helpful in alerting us to the need for more Servers. New Servers have come forward and although we could always use more, plans are well underway for the future.

Children are always on the agenda. We cover developments in the expanding Children's Church and their participation in Sunday Praise. The children now use the Main Hall for their activities before they return to Church. This gives them more scope in many ways and makes it easier to help cater for the wide age range. We enjoy the children telling the congregation what they have been doing. We look at ways that the parents/carers/relatives feel welcomed and included. The term time Toddler Group is going well and it has generated some Baptisms and links with the Children's Church. The Rev'd Alice has liaised with the uniformed organisations and they have been present on some occasions. The Rev'd Alice has worked with St George's Church of England Foundation School and St Peter-in-Thamet Church of England Junior School as has the Rev'd Matt since taking up his post. Pre-Christmas gave more opportunities to work with additional schools. St Peter-in-Thamet Church of England Junior School has held three services in our Church.

Other areas of mission have included Church Watch, the Lunch Club for the Elderly, the Food Bank, gifts for the Homeless, Ride and Stride, the Village Tour, hiring out our Community Halls and many fundraising activities. Concerts in the Church also bring people in. We work closely with our fellow Christians in joint projects and in prayer. Charity donations have helped Christian Aid, the Homeless and UNICEF. Plans are underway to help 2 specific charities in 2024 on a more regular basis. The Committee reviews our links with the community. More Bellringers have been recruited and we have enjoyed their peals on Sundays, the day of the King's Coronation and the celebration on the next day in our special Sunday service. We gained the A Rocha Eco Church Silver Award and the Rev'd David Tate helps develop our Churchyard as an ecological resource.

*June Binfield*

### **Safeguarding**

In the last year 1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check has been completed. Renewal of DBS checks remains at every three years. The annual Safeguarding conference took place January 2023

and periodically through the year online Zoom networking meetings take place where changes are shared along with good practice ideas. Canterbury Diocese continues to review and monitor its safeguarding training courses and support given to parishes. There was a staff change in the Diocese where a new disclosure officer was appointed to replace the previous post holder who moved to a new role. As Parish Disclosure and Safeguarding Officer, I liaise and seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team if required and attend regular briefings, update training and receive the Diocese's Safeguarding Newsletter. The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

*Toni Lawrence*

### **Servers**

I would like to begin by thanking everyone who has helped me during my time as Sacristan.

I am especially thankful to Anne Lawrence and Alison Austin who have covered the 8.00am service each week, but we are still in need of more help at the 9.30am service.

If this is something you feel you could help with, please do come and talk to me, Rev'd Matt or Rev'd Alice. It really is not that onerous and the more people we have to help, the easier it will be for everyone.

Thank you.

*Gill Horne*

### **Social Committee**

I didn't think that the Social Committee had done much during 2023, but looking back, it had been busy.

The Committee had assisted the Fundraising Committee in providing refreshments for The Merry Opera Company's 'Messiah', the organ recital during the Christmas Tree Festival, and both the Summer Fête and the Festive Fayre.

After the Good Friday 'Walk of Witness', we provided coffee and hot cross buns for approximately 50 people. Refreshments were also provided after the services on Ascension Day and 'A Time to Remember' in November.

On 10<sup>th</sup> September we were delighted to help provide a reception for Rev'd Matt's Installation. Three weeks later we arranged the annual Harvest Festival Supper for 66 people – a record number.

*Sylvia Mills*

### **St Peter's Women's Group**

The group is still flourishing after its inception over 50 years ago as a mother and toddler group that met in the afternoon. We still have some original members who have lots of memories. I wish we could attract younger members but aim to offer a varied programme for the enjoyment of the ladies. We support the Church by running the bottle tombola stall at the fayres, and enter the Christmas tree competition and hold a Carol Service in the Church. I endeavour to find local speakers and many tell us the fee/donation is often given to a worthwhile charity.

We always have at least two outings a year, an annual meal and some exercise or active sessions. We welcomed Julie Bartlett who addressed our wellness, head to toe, and it kick started thoughts about movement we could do at home, or join a class. One talk was about the humble bumblebee by Dr Clive Nuttall who showed us amazing photos and Pat Buckley, who is a beekeeper, visited us in December to tell us about his fascination with the importance of pollination and his hives and honey.

As always a regular and exceptional speaker is Melanie Gibson-Barton who spoke about 'And so to Ted', all about the history of the children's favourite toy and many old bears joined us with their owners. Mary Smith told us about the war tunnels at Maidstone Girls Grammar School and the life of the staff and pupils in WW2. I bought her book for my grandchildren to enjoy.

I found the evening learning about the famous Cindy doll very entertaining and also the Ramsgate Costumed Walk in July.

We had to raise our yearly fees to ensure the continuation of the group and the ladies agreed it was still excellent value, meeting twice monthly, with lots of interesting speakers, and a chance to chat and relax. I am always on the lookout for a variety of topics. We returned to the Community Garden who do fantastic work and also welcomed Rev'd Matt who endeared himself to us by his down-to-earth journey via Cambridge and our Parish. The aim is to attract new members and remain viable and keep on meeting in the Portland Centre on the first and third Tuesday in term time.

*Gill Lovelock*

### **The Monday Home Group**

From a group of 10 people, on average about 8 of us met on 37 Monday afternoons (we took breaks only for public holidays and over the summer season). We met generally at the home of Elspeth and Michael Cooke in Dumpton Park Drive, forming thereby a 'fellowship outpost' at one of the extremities of the Parish.

Our normal pattern is to spend a good hour reflecting on the Bible passages set for the previous day at the main service at St Peter's Church - inevitably we find there's far more to be savoured (or queried!) in the readings than is possible in a normal Church service. During Lent we followed "Rhythm of Life - Journeying with Jesus through Lent: What does it mean to be a disciple in the world today?", a 5-week course compiled in the Diocese of Leeds, with videos and discussion themes/topics: Resting, Creating, Sharing, Encouraging and Celebrating. For Advent we explored each week one of its "alternative" set of themes: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. After each of these sessions we posted on a display panel in St Peter's Church a selection of pictures, texts and prayers shared.

We always conclude with a short time of prayer (maybe allowing God to get a different word in?), followed by tea and biscuits - an opportunity for catching up on news. As a very diverse group in terms of tradition and involvement in Church activities, we are highly tolerant of each other's different views (and Bible versions!) - and indeed there will always have been more than one occasion for laughter. We are of course very open too for anyone else to join us - they (you?) would be most welcome! For details please do contact us on (01843) 863293.

We are thankful to be able to maintain our contact with Tera Schipper (a member of the Home Group in 2020-21, and now with a Christian charity in Jordan working especially amongst women). Tera's regular Newsletters (latterly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) enrich our discipleship and draw us into her work through prayer.

Recognising the importance of praying, we are delighted to have continued the monthly "Pray for 12", with each of us spending an extra hour in prayer at home on the last Wednesday of each month. Rev'd David Tate circulates beforehand a set of guidelines on a different theme each month (including optional Bible texts, specific prayers and songs). If you are interested in joining "Pray for 12" please contact David ((01843) 447861 or email [davidtate047@gmail.com](mailto:davidtate047@gmail.com)) who will happily send the latest guidelines as a sampler, before you decide to join regularly in this prayer initiative.

*Michael and Elspeth Cooke*

### **The Wednesday Home Group**

The Wednesday Home Group meets on the afternoons of the first Wednesday of the month and on all Wednesdays in Lent and Advent. All are welcome. We look at themes from the Bible. Two examples are that we followed Mary and Martha and also Jesus and Samaria. We look at the historical context, including the social, political and geographic environment. We read Bible passages related to our theme to increase our understanding and discuss how it can help us in our lives. We each use our own Bibles so that the different versions are also interesting. Some passages are so vibrant that we can try to enter into the event in our imaginations. We begin and end each session with prayer and we can introduce individual concerns in a quiet and confidential atmosphere. We then share a cup of tea and a chat. We enjoy the chance to study and pray together as well as sharing fellowship in a peaceful atmosphere.

*June Binfield*

### **Toddler Group**

Toddler Group has continued to grow in popularity. We regularly have around 4/5 new families each week and a core amount who come each week and others who attend ad hoc. We have three volunteers who help each week along with Rev'd Rhodri Walters from St Peter's Baptist Church and 5 volunteers from St Peter's Church. We had a lovely end of term summer soft play in July where a soft play and bouncy castle were hired for a fun session. This was funded via the weekly fee the parents pay. We also had a Christmas Party session where in lieu of paying their weekly fee, the parents donated goods for the local food bank. As usual parents/carers were very generous with their donations. Through the year toys and resources have been replenished using the weekly fee paid by parents and due to the amount of people attending we are able to still cover the costs of

the fruit, toast and drinks which are provided. We are still able to offer the low price of £2 per family thanks to the use of the Community Halls.

We desperately could do with some new volunteers to join the group in the year ahead so that we have plenty of adults to chat to the parents and enable people to not have to commit to every week.

*Toni Lawrence*

### **Tower**

This past year has been a busy one for the Tower. Having started the year being short of Sunday ringers we are now faring much better. We had a 'Ring for the King' campaign, which resulted in 6 new beginners. Two of these have now become fully fledged members of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers. We have been very fortunate to acquire a new very experienced ringer, who moved into the area and we really value his assistance.

The Coronation was an exciting time for the ringers, we made sure we included every ringer on the day who was available, even if they were unable to ring solo. There were 23 who rang during the hour before the service, and we also rang a quarter peal that day.

Three other quarter peals were rung at St Peter's during the year, including one of Bob Triples to welcome Rev'd Matt Hodder as our new Priest in Charge. We took part in the District Call Change Competition, and the Striking Competition this year. The call change was held at Northbourne where we came 5<sup>th</sup>, and the striking was held at Chislet where we came 5<sup>th</sup> also. Two weddings and several funerals were rung for this past year.

New ropes were installed in November thanks to the hard work of Sue Bones, Simon Lovelock for the installation and Felicity Lewis and Sue for the ordering. The ropes have made a big difference to the handling of the bells.

An Annual Dinner was held this year, the first time since COVID. It was held at The Racing Greyhound and was a very enjoyable evening, expertly organised by Felicity Lewis.

Saturday ringing club still continues, attendance fluctuates, which is expected, however everyone seems to continue to enjoy themselves. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who continues to come and help on a Saturday, we wouldn't be able to do it without your help.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rev'd Matt and the PCC for allowing us to ring these lovely bells.

*Sarat White*

### **Treasurer**

Mercifully, our recent interregnum wasn't too protracted, and it was a delight when the Rev'd Matt was appointed as our new Priest-in-Charge, and I was able to stand down as acting PCC Chairman and focus more fully on the Church's finances.

Whilst our accountants have yet to finalise our figures for 2023 it looks as though we will once again conclude the year with a deficit of some £4,000 and this trend looks likely to continue for this coming year.

Our ability to generate a surplus centres around 'Regular Giving' by our Church members. In recent times, some of our more generous benefactors have died, resulting in a decline in our monthly income which has had a marked effect on our income stream - by some £10,000. However, there are 'green shoots' of recovery with our Church attendance figures and we must hope that our new attendees will appreciate the need to maintain our finances.

There are some initial facts of note during 2023:

- The Fundraising Committee, ably led by Roy Brown, continued to carry out vital work throughout the year with a host of enjoyable events raising approximately £16,000 for the Church.
- We were able to increase our charitable giving in 2023, paying over £4,000 to charitable causes. This will increase further in 2024 with the two nominated charities also benefiting from such donations.
- Our Parish Share commitment remains our biggest single cost and this has risen by over 8% for this coming year. With the exception of one other Church in the Thanet Deanery, we remain the highest contributor to this scheme.
- It should be noted that if it weren't for the financial help given by the Community Halls, our deficit would be dramatically worse - the halls paid £9,252 for Church gas and two lots of Parish Share amounting to £16,430, a total of £25,682. It's important that we don't lose sight of how vital the halls are to the running of St Peter's.

The last Quinquennial report threw up some areas which need our attention - whilst some are 'cosmetic', other areas such as our drainage network will place much greater demands on our finances (possibly some £50,000) and we must be thankful that our 'rainy day' reserves with CCLA allow us to accommodate such expenditure.

Whilst I believe that we will continue to show a deficit for a little while yet, I am cautiously optimistic that our financial wellbeing will improve as the years progress, providing that our Church members appreciate the need to support our fundraising efforts and be mindful of the vital need for regular giving and maintain this in line with inflation.

As always, my thanks go to the PCC and Finance Committee for their support throughout the year but, most importantly, to the Church members who continue to work so very hard to ensure that our beautiful Church remains open for St Peter's and the wider community.

*Robin Page*