



PARISH OF CUMNOR

St Michael's, Cumnor

St Andrew's, Dean Court

St Mary's, Farmoor



PARISH REPORT

For 2023 APCM

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AGENDAS

1. MORNING WORSHIP

2. ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

This is open to anyone who is either (a) on the church electoral roll of the parish; or (b) living in the parish and have their name entered on the local government electors register. The meeting follows the format of the Church Wardens Measure 2001

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Election of two churchwardens for the year 2023 - 2024

3. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

This is open to anyone who is on the church electoral roll of the parish; others may observe but not vote. The meeting follows the pattern prescribed in the Church Representation Rules 2020 Part 9.

1. To approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 1st May 2023
2. Presentation by Jonathan Widdess (Vicar)
3. To receive the following reports provided by the PCC:
 - (a) a report on the changes in the electoral roll since the last APCM

- (b) a report on the proceedings of the PCC during the last year
 - (c) the Financial Statement for the Year ending 31 December 2022
 - (d) the annual fabric report
 - (e) a report on the proceedings of the deanery synod
 - (f) the statement on whether the PCC has complied with the duty under the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have regard to the House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
4. To appoint the Independent Examiner or Auditor of the PCC accounts
 5. Election of Deanery Synod Reps (3 Vacancies for a 3-year term to April 2026)
 6. Election of PCC members (7 vacancies serving a 3-year term to April 2026)
 7. Questions and any other discussions raised by Electoral Roll members
 8. Closing Prayer

MINUTES OF 2022 MEETINGS

Parish of Cumnor

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1st May 2022

11.30 a.m. St.Michael's Church, Cumnor

Present: Jonathan Widdess (Chair), David Allwright, Sue Allwright, Karen Adamson, Peter Baldwin, John Blackie, Geoffrey Dawe, Joy Dawe, Brian Dent, Margery Dent, Andrew Dyer, Neil Grady, David Henderson Slater, Roger Long, Pam Patrick, Malcolm Posnett, Susan Posnett, Jean Pryce-Williams, Chris Scruby, Margaret Scruby, Rod Sharp, Angela Shepherd, Malcolm Taylor, Dianne Taylor, Jane Vlitos, Clare Wenham, David Wenham. (27)

1. ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Welcome and apologies.

Jonathan welcomed everyone to the APCM.

Apologies received: Helen Azer, Jenny Dyer, Jean Entwhistle, Colin Entwhistle, Angela Evans, Chris Evans, Jan Harris, Claire Horsman, Sheila Long, Vivien Payne, Hilary Prior, Kathy Hodder- Williams, Amanda Widdess. (13)

2. Election of two churchwardens for the year 2022-23

After standing down at the APCM in 2021, CE and MT continued in office until September 2021. There being no further nominations the work of the churchwardens then devolved to the PCC.

No nominations for churchwarden were received for 2022-23.

2. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Approval of the minutes of the APCM held on 18th July 2021

Proposed: Roger Long Seconded: Sue Allwright

Approved with 1 abstention

2. To receive reports provided by the PCC

The Vicar opened this agenda item by expressing thanks to all those whose prayers, service and love helps to make a difference in Cumnor, Dean Court and Farmoor. With particular thanks to Andrew and the Choir; Jenny and the bellringers; Angela and the flower arrangers; members of the PCC; fellow clergy and lay ministers and his wife Amanda.

In his address he recognised the difficult situation in which the church finds itself with declining attendance, financial difficulties and vacancies for key church officers and Churchwardens. This is not the situation he had hoped for when he came 5 years ago- not where any of us want to be. We share a vision of a church with its doors open wide so that people of every kind can come in and experience God's love. Open so that we can go out and share the good news.

Doors open wide. But how do we get there?

We have a limited number of people, limited resources, limited time and energy. We can't do everything. We need to be clearer about what God is calling us to be and what he is calling us to do. We need to make difficult decisions, to be flexible and to experiment. If parishioners have any ideas

about how we can become that church with our doors open wide, they were invited to get in touch with him.

a) Changes to the electoral roll.

In accordance with the Church Representation Rules, the Electoral Roll was revised this year and there are now 115 parishioners on the roll.

b) Proceedings of the PCC

The full PCC met 7 times throughout the year. In addition, subgroups of the PCC undertook specific responsibilities: Standing Committee; Finance Committee; Fabric Committee; Mission Group and SVMG (Staff and Volunteer Management Group). (Details in 2021 Annual Report.)

c) Financial Statement for the year ending 31st December 2021

Neil Grady gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Parish Finances. As a consequence of restrictions and closures resulting from COVID, in addition to reductions in planned giving and donations, the Parish had a significant operating deficit for the second year running.

However, fundraising to rebuild St. Andrew's made significant progress during the year.

Neil thanked Malcolm Taylor for his continuing help with the accounts.

(Details were available to parishioners in the 'Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year ended December 2021'.)

d) Annual Fabric Report

A range of tasks have been undertaken in the past year as detailed in the Annual Report and the way is now clear to take forward work to replace the lead on St. Michael's Church Tower.

The terrier, inventory and logbook will be reviewed by the Fabric Committee and presented to the PCC

Roger Long reported on progress with re-building St. Andrew's Church at Dean Court. The old building has been demolished, the site cleared, and new walls built up to roof level. Progress on building is encouraging and the financial situation reflects generous contributions from Trusts, individuals, and the congregation.

e) Proceedings of Deanery Synod

Claire Horsman represented the parish at four meetings. It was clear that churches across the deanery were undergoing similar challenges and it was helpful to share insights and experiences. (Details in Annual report Booklet)

f) Safeguarding Children and vulnerable adults.

Jonathan Widdess (Vicar) and Kate Elliott (Parish Safeguarding Officer) confirmed that the parish has complied with the duty to 'have due regard' to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Full details of safeguarding practice and training are given in the Annual Report booklet).

3. Appointment of an Independent Examiner or Auditor of the PCC Accounts

Critchleys Proposed: Roger Long Seconded: Karen Adamson

Approved no abstentions

4. Election of Deanery Synod representatives

There were no nominations for the two one year vacancies 2022-2023.

5. Election of PCC members

Neil Grady, Jan Harris and Vivien Payne have completed their terms of office. Kate Elliott has joined the PCC.

There was a nomination for one new member Sue Allwright

Nominated: David Wenham Seconded: Roger Long

Accepted unopposed

6. Questions

- Jean Pryce-Williams raised several questions about pastoral care in the parish. Who is in the team? What is their brief? Who is being visited? JW named various people who were involved on an ad hoc basis, which he was trying to coordinate. A suggestion was made that this needed to be more formal and JPW and JW agreed to meet to discuss this further.

-John Blackie raised two questions.

In the Annual Report three priorities are identified for the coming year, do you have a plan for how to achieve these priorities? What resources are needed, what is the timescale and how will effectiveness be measured?

Is there a plan for achieving the budget?

JW responded that a detailed plan was not available, problems need to be understood fully to identify solutions with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

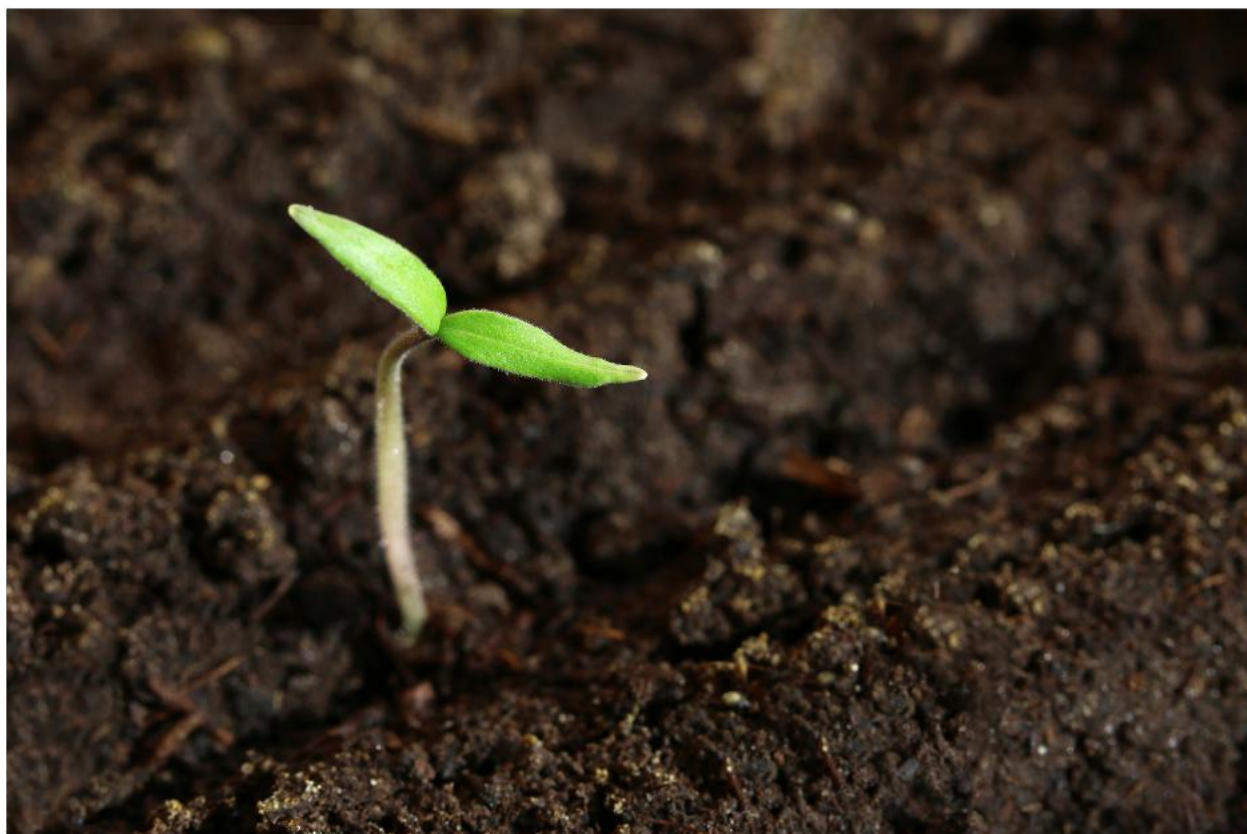
7. Closing Prayer

The meeting closed with prayer at 12.45

VICARS REPORT

The 12 months that have passed since our last APCM have been tumultuous ones for our nation. We have witnessed the coming and going of three prime ministers and two monarchs, the conflict in Ukraine which has caused a global financial and energy crisis coupled with extraordinary heat waves, cold snaps, and strikes.

Thankfully they have been a bit less tumultuous in the parish! Indeed, we can rejoice that we have made good progress on our journey together this year as God's people in this place.



It's sobering to remember that it was only in January 2022 that the government lifted the COVID restrictions, and even then, Omicron caused real concern through to Easter and beyond.

It's sobering too to remember those we have so sadly lost over the last year. Not least Betty Bailey, Tony Wyatt and Brian Dent. All of them made enormous contributions to our parish life over the years and are greatly missed. I am so pleased that Esme and the family have agreed to our naming a room in the Parish Centre in Tony's memory. This we will do in the coming months.

As things have gotten back to normal through the year, St Michael's has been steadily regathering with new people beginning to come along. It's been good to have a team of people ensuring the church building can again be open for prayer and visitors each day from 9am to 5pm. Highlights through the year were the wonderful afternoon celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, with a cream tea in church, two fantastic brass band concerts, the very powerful performance of The Passion by Lamps Collective, and the moving services that we held to mark the Queen's death and the accession of King Charles III.

St Andrew's was rebuilt and reopened in September with a wonderful weekend of celebrations with Bishop Gavin performing the official opening, and Bishop Sophie Jelley preaching on the Sunday. The new facilities have enhanced the mission and ministry of the St Andrew's congregation, and the welcome they are able to offer means they have been growing rapidly. The Coffee Pot is becoming an established part of Dean Court life and drawing several locals each week, along with others from around the parish. The new baby and toddler group has made a strong start too, and it was wonderful to welcome over 20 families (40 children!) to the first Messy Church in the new building on Good Friday.

At St Mary's we launched a new monthly afternoon service, "Hymns and Cake", building on the success of their annual "Carols and Cake" events and this has made an encouraging start. If you've not tried it yet, you can be sure of a warm welcome.

These signs of new life are also reflected in a rise in the Electoral Roll this year to 118.

As I have read the reports for our 2023 APCM I give thanks for the faith and faithfulness that characterise our Parish life at its best.

We can rejoice at what God has been doing amongst us these past 12 months, and we can look forward with hope to a brighter future. Thank you to everyone who serves our parish in any capacity - large or small. You are all brilliant!

I want to especially thank Amanda, who is always such a great support to me, and who has been keeping on top of the administration in the Parish Office throughout the year. I want to thank David Wenham, Jessica Turner and Chris Scruby who have worked tirelessly preaching and leading worship through the year, particularly as Eve Lockett and Jean Pryce-Williams have been on sabbaticals from active ministry too. It's been good to welcome them back this year. Many thanks too to the PCC who have worked well together through some difficult decisions and issues and helped to cover many of the functions of Church Wardens.

This is a big part of the reason why the parish is in a better position than it was 12 months ago. There is, of course, more work to do to ensure that the last year doesn't represent a false dawn. The priority for 2023 is to keep things going and to keep things growing!

The PCC in recent months have been working together with a simple vision - Building Up and Reaching Out. It reminds us that we need to build each other up in love by pointing one another to Jesus and helping each other to grow more into his likeness. In this way we'll grow in loving one another as he loves us. And we're sent out by him to reach out to our communities with that love.

Church is not meant to be a spectator sport, but one in which everyone joins in! We need everyone to get involved. Is there some way in which God might be asking you to serve? Could you volunteer a few minutes each week to join in either with one of our regular activities, or on a Sunday morning, or with simple neighbourliness? That might make all the difference in the world to someone and help them to find a living faith of their own.

Rev. Jonathan Widdess

Vicar of Cumnor

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The parish of Cumnor sits on the edge of Oxford. The three Anglican churches in the parish are broadly evangelical in tradition, but each has its own distinctive style of worship. The PCC represents all three churches.

There were 7 elected members (one of whom serves on the Deanery Synod). The Vicar, associate clergy (Helen Azer) and the licensed lay ministers (Eve Lockett) are ex officio members, making a total of 11 members.

Members of the Parochial Church Council for 2022 were as follows:-

Ex-Officio Members

Rev Jonathan Widdess (Chair), Rev Helen Azer, Eve Lockett

Elected Members

Karen Adamson, Sue Allwright, Kate Elliott, Claire Horsman, Roger Long, Dr David Henderson-Slater (Vice-Chair), Jane Vlitos

The PCC met 10 times throughout the year as a full committee. At times we were supported in working well together by David Tyler (then Associate Archdeacon of Dorchester, now Archdeacon.)

In addition, these sub-groups were elected by and accountable to the PCC:

PCC Standing Committee: Rev Jonathan Widdess (Chair), Karen Adamson, Dr David Henderson-Slater.

Finance Committee: Roger Long (Chair), Malcolm Taylor, Jan Harris, Vivian Payne, David Allwright.

Fabric Committee: Rev Jonathan Widdess, Jane Vlitos, Roger Long, Karen Adamson, Chris Evans.

Mission Group: Chris Evans (Chair), Chris Scruby, Rev Jonathan Widdess, Jane Vlitos

SVMG: Rev Jonathan Widdess, Kate Elliott, Claire Horsman.

ELECTORAL ROLL

In accordance with the Church Representation Rules, the Electoral Roll was revised this year. There are now 118 parishioners on the Electoral Roll.

CHURCHWARDENS REPORT

No Churchwardens were elected at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners in 2022 and so we continued as a parish without Churchwardens.

Churchwarden is a role that each person makes their own to some extent. It is a mix both of practical responsibility, and oversight of areas of church life. Although the best way to fulfil these duties is to elect at least one Churchwarden, the essential functions are being covered by the Vicar, the PCC and sub-groups, and the Safeguarding Officer.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Safeguarding within our Parish means the action the Church takes **to promote a safer culture in all our churches**. We want to make sure that across our churches in Cumnor, everyone, including the young, frail and vulnerable, feel safe and welcome to worship within our family.

The Church of England has made six clear commitments, set out in the House of Bishop's policy document Promoting a Safer Church, regarding the safeguarding of children and adults. The church has committed itself to:

- 1.Promoting a safer environment and culture
- 2.Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church
- 3.Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- 4.Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- 5.Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- 6.Responding to those who may present a risk to others

Additionally, The Church of England's safeguarding policy statement says: *"All Church bodies should ensure that they have a 'Promoting a Safer Church' action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly."*

This report will highlight the characteristics of our action plan, to advance our level 2 status to become a level 3 status.

Additionally, it will present our progress as a Parish to extend our mission to become a welcoming and safe presence within our community.

Safeguarding return

There have been no formal safeguarding concerns registered during the period since the last annual report.

Progress

The following represents the significant progress made within the Parish to embed and embrace best practice in safeguarding through its expanding range of voluntary activities within the parish.

- Safeguarding Sunday was celebrated within St Michael's church within its Sunday service
- A robust, electronic central register of volunteers and their compliance status is maintained. (NB all paper files are stored safely within the Parish office.)
- New volunteers have been safely recruited for our Toddlers group at St Andrews
- New volunteers have completed foundation safeguarding training where appropriate
- The Safeguarding lead has completed further training on Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment
- The Safeguarding lead has updated the PCC on the key points from Domestic Abuse training
- The Safeguarding lead has updated the Safeguarding dashboard to generate a revised action plan
- Safeguarding is a standing item within PCC meeting

Priorities for action:

As identified within the Safeguarding action Plan:

- The PCC needs to review their policy regarding the recruitment of ex-offenders
- At least one churchwarden needs to be elected and comply with safeguarding procedures
- PCC members need to complete some safeguarding training
- Churchwardens, PCC members, vergers and anyone in a role, which involves work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, must complete the foundation- learning pathway.
- All members to have completed initial safeguarding training and further training to those relevant on Safer recruitment.

The Safeguarding team wishes to thank all volunteers who give so much time and effort to offer our community safe and stimulating activities to meet their needs and show our loving care as disciples of Jesus.

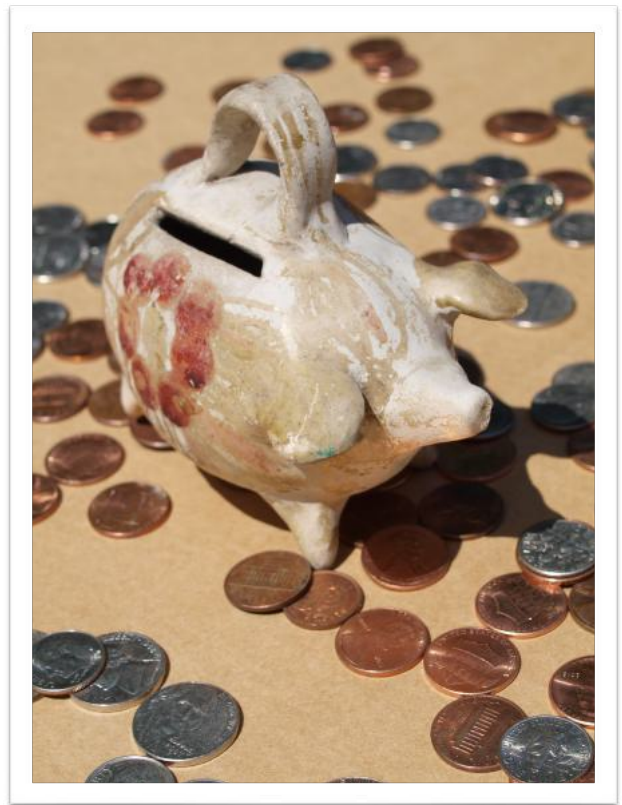
The parish has complied with the duty to “have due regard” to the House of Bishops’ guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Kate Elliott (Parish Safeguarding Officer)

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Church Finances continue to be significantly impacted by the fallout from the COVID pandemic. In common with almost all Churches, attendance at worship services has still nowhere near recovered to pre COVID numbers, and this continued to have a major impact on our income both from regular giving and from rental income and fundraising. In 2022, the Parish had a significant operating deficit for the third year running which fortunately was offset by an unexpected final payment from the Poulton legacy.

In these difficult times, it was a huge blessing that the project to rebuild St Andrews Church was completed on time and within budget with a final project cost of £688k. This amount was fully funded by a combination of grants from the PCC, the Diocese, other Charitable Trusts, and individual congregational giving, it means we have no debt to carry forward and a worthwhile asset to expand our missionary work in Dean Court and beyond.



Roger Long

On behalf of the Finance Committee

ABINGDON DEANERY SYNOD

March '22

There was a discussion about how technology is still being used in churches post-Covid and to what benefit and of the financial implications of investing in necessary equipment.



Some churches have equipment set up to live-stream and continue to live-stream services, whereas others don't have sufficient space to accommodate this equipment. Similarly, some churches do not have Wi-Fi. Training was suggested for some of the smaller churches to facilitate different forms of accessing services. Live-streaming weddings, christenings etc. had enabled these services to be shared by guests unable to attend because of shielding, difficulties in travelling etc. Live streaming had therefore proved to be more inclusive. There was also the added advantage that those who hadn't already engaged with church previously now felt confident to do so through Zoom or live streaming. A number of churches have also invested in means for contactless payment.

September '22

Bishop Gavin thanked Helen Kendrick for her work as Area Dean as she left the post to take up her role as temporary Acting Archdeacon and Keith Dunnett and Rob Glenny took over as Area Dean and Associate Area Dean, respectively. Andrew Anderson-Gear, Diocesan Director of Ministry and Mission, gave an informative and interesting presentation on the work of his department and its scope for supporting

parishes. Martin Steele, Deanery Treasurer, gave a detailed presentation on the proposed Parish Share allocation and the ramifications for the Deanery of parishes failing to pay, in full, their share.

November '22

A reviewed Parish Share proposal was presented in the light of Cumnor having paid its '22 share in full, news of which was gratefully received. The proposal was accepted by Synod.

Representatives discussed the deanery Mission Action Plan (MAP) relating to Working Together, Resourcing and Supporting Mission and specifically, about Growing & Empowering Lay Leadership. Results showed a wide range of initiatives.

February '23

Reps were requested to complete a spreadsheet showing MAP initiatives, successes, experiences their parishes are happy to share and identifying useful further resources both for recording purposes and to inform the Prayer & Party Synod on 17 May.

The Area Dean reminded parishes of the diocesan requirement that parishes use the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard to ensure they are up to date with good safeguarding practice.

Lay Deanery Synod reps will need to be re-elected at this year's APCM's.

Claire Horsman

FABRIC REPORT

It has been another busy year for the fabric committee as they have sought to provide support and guidance to the PCC on the maintenance and management of the church properties and grounds at St. Michael's, St. Andrew's, and St. Mary's churches.

Two major projects were completed during the year; the rebuilding of St. Andrew's Church and the replacement of the lead on the Tower Roof at St. Michael's. Work on the latter benefitted hugely from the dry summer weather. The lead which was removed had been installed in 1796 and is now on display inside the church tower. We hope that the new lead will last as long! Before removal Oxford Archaeology undertook a photographic survey which showed extensive graffiti of historical interest, examples of which have been retained.

A further project which is due to start shortly is the replacement of the Sexton's hut in St. Michael's churchyard destroyed by a winter storm in 2021.

The committee met a total of seven times to discuss a range of day-to-day issues ranging from blinking lights to mysterious smells, leaks and boiler problems. The programme of work required by the 'Quinquennial Review' is also a regular feature of the agenda. Dealing with all these required extensive action from committee members outside meetings and particular thanks go to members Chris Evans and Roger Long. In addition, others with specialist skills were involved e.g. John Blackie, and those who joined in the churchyard clear-up day at St. Michael's. All very much appreciated.

During the year, a change in arrangements resulted in the remit of the fabric committee extending to include the Church Cottages. A problem currently being addressed is the bad state of the church wall which the churchyard shares with the cottages. Karen Adamson (Clerk to the Church House Trust) joined the committee and current membership also includes Claire Horsman and Jane Vlitos.

In line with section 50 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018, the terrier, inventory and logbook will be reviewed by the Fabric Committee at an upcoming meeting and subsequently presented to the PCC.

With thanks to all members

Jane Vlitos on behalf of the Fabric Committee

PASTORAL MINISTRY

Our clergy and lay ministers, supported by volunteers and the simple loving kindness we show to one another and to our community have continued to offer support to people who are unwell, bereaved or lonely within the parish, regardless of whether or not they attend church.

Our ministry to our parish through Occasional offices grew in 2022 with 6 Baptisms, 21 Funerals and 9 Weddings conducted in St Michael's. The high number of weddings was largely due to people catching up after the pandemic.

CARE HOME MINISTRY

Care home ministry has continued to recover as restrictions have progressively eased with regular services held in Oxenford, and Chawley Grove. These have recently restarted in Cumnor Hill House too.

Many residents of the local homes have continued to join us for worship via the live-stream from St Michael's, and it's been a joy to welcome them in person when the staff can arrange to bring them along. Many of the care homes have SmartTV's in the day lounge so the residents can watch there, or they have iPads that individuals can use.



LINKS WITH CUMNOR CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

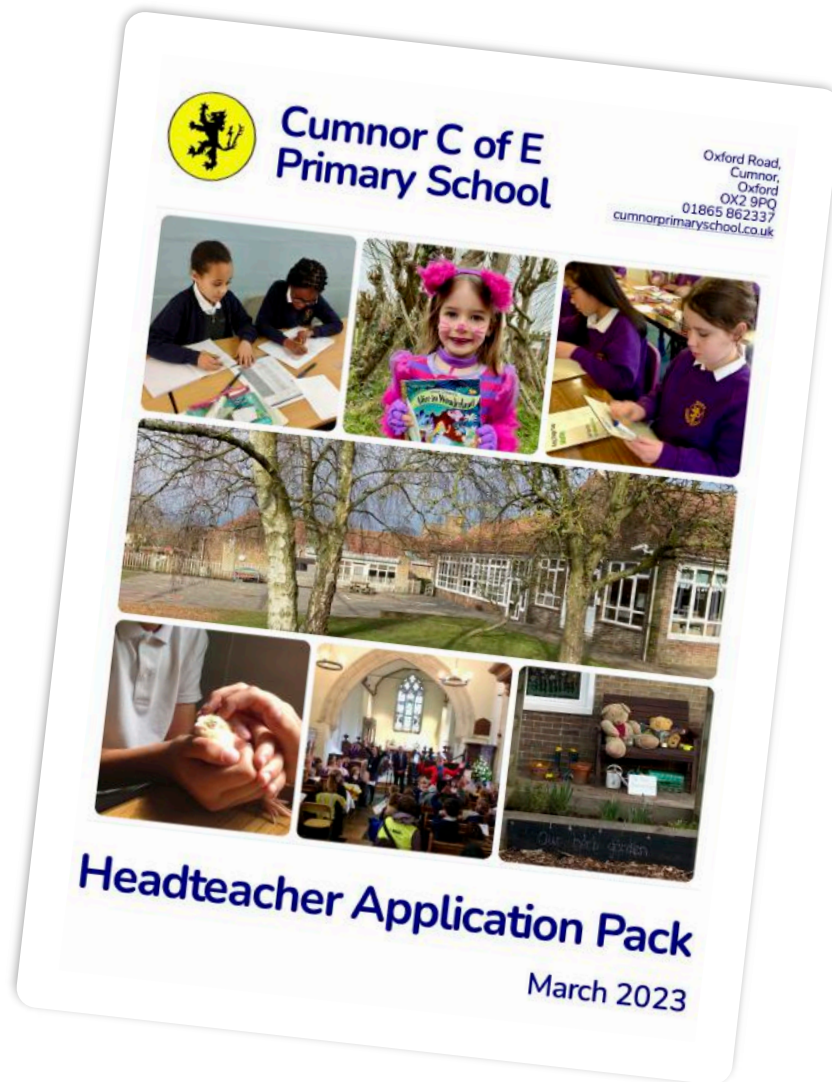
The school has rapidly returned to a normal, thriving, exciting school after the trials of Covid. Under the leadership of the Head, Ed Read, fine work by the staff has resulted in a carefully designed programme to enable children to catch up where necessary and academic performance seems well on track. An OFSTED inspection at the beginning of the year was also complimentary and the Governors took particular pleasure in the opening sentence of the report - 'Pupils enjoy attending this welcoming and caring school. They are encouraged to 'love others as you love yourselves', and they certainly do.'

It has been possible this year to re-establish those activities which serve as an important link between the school and the church. Weekly 'Collective Worship' with Jonathan, services in church at Harvest, Christmas, Easter, and the Leaver's Service at the end of summer term. It has been good to be able to offer tea/coffee once again to parents and family attending these services. Children were also invited to an Advent Messy Church in December and carols in the churchyard which was timed to coincide with the arrival of 'Santa' in the village.

In addition to the Vicar, the membership of the Governing Body included Voirrey Carr (Chair), Sarah Apetrei, Joy Topping and Jane Vlitos. We are keen to ensure that the school maintains the ethos and meets the responsibilities of a Church of England School.

What it means to be a church school was clarified by a presentation at a recent Governors meeting by Christian McGuinness (Diocesan Schools Advisor). He also described the Church of England Vision for Education. The final topic

he explored was Desirable Characteristics of a Church School Leader. Which was sadly particularly relevant as Mr. Read will be leaving the school at the end of the summer term, he will be very much missed.



Staff, Governors, children, parents, Diocese and County Council reps have all been helpful in the process to advertise for a new Head Teacher. We ask for your prayers in finding a suitable replacement.

Jane Vlitos & Voirrey Carr

MISSION GIVING

In line with the PCC's commitment to give away ten percent of the church's planned giving, the Mission Working Group drew up the following list which was approved by the PCC. Letters were received from each organisation expressing their thanks for our encouragement by helping them in this way.

| Cumnor Parish - Mission Giving for 2022 | | |
|---|------------------|--|
| | 2022 | |
| Given earlier in the year | £3,000.00 | CMS - Rabiah's support & general fund |
| | £480.53 | Cumnor School Bibles for leavers |
| | £374.19 | Children's Society |
| Remainder of allocation | | |
| Local: | £300.00 | Emmaus Oxford - providing shelter and meaningful work to the homeless |
| | £200.00 | BeSpace |
| | £300.00 | Friends International Oxford |
| National: | £300.00 | Christians Against Poverty - releasing people from poverty, debt, unemployment and addiction |
| | £300.00 | Youth For Christ - taking good news relevantly to British young people |
| | £300.00 | Archway Foundation provides facilities for those who are lonely. |
| International: | £300.00 | Bible Society - making the Bible available throughout the world |
| | £300.00 | Open Doors seeing persecuted Christians |
| | | |
| | £400.00 | Tear Fund |
| | £500.00 | Hearcry - Helen Azer |
| | £150.00 | South & Vale Citizens Advice Bureau (Vivien Payne & Jan Harris) |
| | £200.00 | Oxenford House |
| | £150.00 | Oxford Community Churches - Edge Housing Project |
| | £7,554.72 | |

ST MICHAEL'S CHOIR

With the continued relaxing of the Covid 19 restrictions, things have almost returned to normality with the choir leading the singing and worship from the choir stalls in the chancel.

Following recommended inoculations and sitting appropriate distances apart, the choir have been able to sing successfully without masks which has enabled them to make their normal contribution to each service with the occasional anthem, particularly during administration of Holy Communion.

Choir membership has sadly declined over the years, but the faithful few are still able to form a four-part choir on most Sundays. They also regularly attend choir practice on Fridays, when we all have an enjoyable time trying out new anthems and hymns for performances during the services.

Members have always taken an immense pride in leading the singing through hymns and other musical items, and it is reassuring that they are happy to continue, often expressing how much they enjoyed singing a particular hymn or anthem.

Sadly, this year has seen the Junior Choir put on hold again, but I hope things may get better soon and we can encourage some younger members to join us.

The Future

Things have improved this year. The Choir no longer must wear masks, making singing easier. Also, services are now regularly held every Sunday giving a reassurance that things are getting back to normal.

Despite the Covid restrictions this past year we have had a lot of fun and have been encouraged by everyone in the church family at St Michaels for which I and the choir thank you all most sincerely, for without your support we could not continue.

The future for the choir looks bright and we are conscious of the contribution and value we make to each service. We are fortunate in having a Vicar and congregation which appreciates our efforts – as noted by me in the comments made before and after the services. Thank you again to all – we do sincerely try, and I'm often amazed and moved by what we achieve. So thank you all for your efforts and unstinted support over the last year.

We are, however, conscious of the need for more persons to come and sing with us every Sunday. If you enjoy singing and would like to join us, please let me know. Equally, if you would like a "taster" do drop by the Church any Friday from 6.30 – 7.30 pm to see what hymns and musical items are planned for the Sunday, and sample what we are doing. You may then hopefully decide to join us, in which case you would be made very welcome by us all.

The choir do have a lot of fun. Ask any of them, and they and I hope to continue to sing as a group leading the services at St Michaels in the future.

Andrew J Dyer

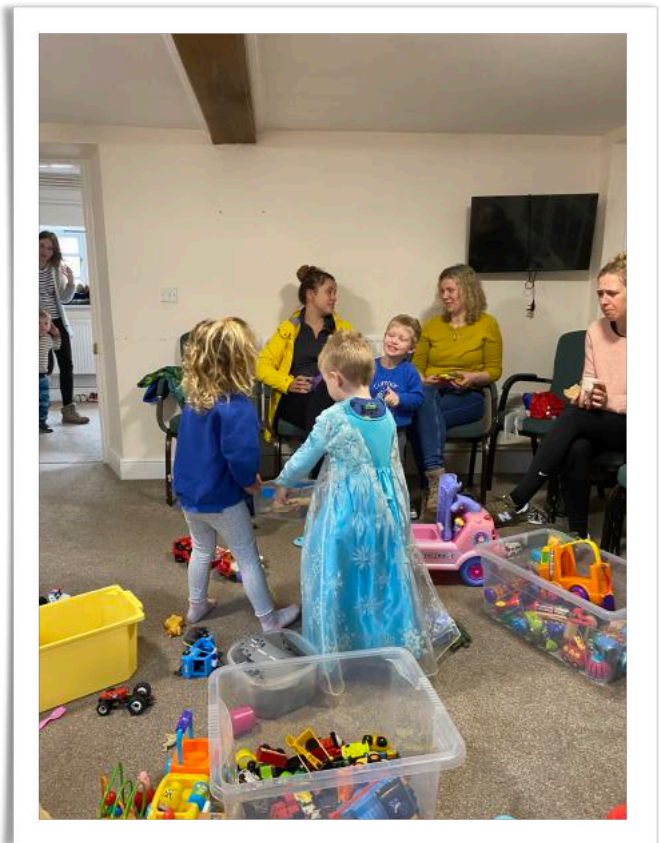
BABY & TODDLER GROUP

The Cumnor Church Toddler group is now in its 13th year. Can't believe we have been running it for so long! New families continue to find their way to us, and are delighted to meet other families and see their children interacting with their peer group.

We average 8 / 10 families per week , and it's lovely to see them around the village/ park/ pub wherever, and it's also great to see families who we have known over the years, and catch up with their news.

We enjoy getting to know the parents and watching the babies and toddlers grow and develop. Sessions are very informal. and we try to show God's love just by being there, answering questions, and facilitating conversations as and when appropriate.

Some families are drawn to Messy Church, so we are delighted to see them there.



Angela Evans & Dianne Taylor

FLOWERS IN CHURCH

During the past 12 months the team has been involved in various weddings and funerals, as well as the usual church festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

All the flower arrangers really enjoy decorating St Michael's, both as a team and individually.

I am indebted to each member for their continued participation in this ministry and I realise we are very fortunate to have local and willing volunteers.



We were challenged by the destruction of the Sexton's hut in the churchyard, which destroyed some of our equipment, but the team have risen to the occasion by transporting their own

pedestals from home. This is now unnecessary as one of our team has recently, very generously, donated two new pedestals to the church, for which we are extremely grateful.

From time to time, when the cost of fresh flowers escalates, we supplement from our supply of very good artificial flowers.

We also now use biodegradable green foam for our arrangements.

Angela Evans, Coordinator

BELL RINGING



I am delighted to report that following a recruitment campaign last summer, we successfully recruited five new ringers to our tower and ‘tied bell’ practices followed, taking place during the autumn and spring months. Having learnt

and perfected the skills of handling and ringing a bell, our recruits have now joined the band for Wednesday practices and will soon be joining us for service ringing and weddings.

RINGING AT ST MICHAEL'S FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Weddings

During 2022, the band rang for eight weddings.

Thursday, 2 June 2022

A peal of Cambridge Surprise Major

5152 changes in 2 hours 53 minutes

Composed by Charles Middleton

Arranged by James Clatworthy

Andrew J Dyer

Michele Winter

Jenny A Dyer

David L Thomas (Conductor)

John G Pusey

Timothy G Pett

W Nigel G Herriott

David G Maynard

Rung to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Friday, 9th September 2022

Tolling of the tenor bell in memoriam of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

Ringers: Jenny Dyer; Matthew Hall, Jill Last, Guy F Matthews & Janette Swaine

Monday, 19th September

Tolling of the tenor bell to commemorate the life of HM Queen Elizabeth II, on the day of her funeral.

Ringers: Andrew Dyer; Jenny Dyer; Matthew Hall, Guy F Matthews & Janette Swaine.

VISITORS

We welcomed visitors from Wimbledon and Hertfordshire last summer and hosted an afternoon Branch Practice of the 'Old North Berks Branch' on 24th March 2023.

Tower roof – Whilst the lead-work was being replaced, the band migrated for one Wednesday to North Hinksey Church and we were grateful to the tower captain for hosting the ringing practice.

Bell maintenance – The annual maintenance of the bells was carried out earlier in the year by Whites of Appleton which ensures that the bells are in full working order.

Jenny Dyer, Tower Captain, April 2023

MEMORIES CAFÉ

The Memories Café has proved a warm and friendly meeting place for mostly elderly people of the parish, some of whom have few social contacts with other people. Our members are provided with a comfortable place to meet and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, and a piece of cake and a good chat.



We celebrate special occasions such as Easter and Christmas, and birthdays. We have outings, and occasional visits from the Oxford Museum, who bring artefacts to handle and discuss.

Churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike derive much from being with other friendly, interested people at the Memories Cafe.

Jan Harris and Team

TAIZÉ WORSHIP

During the lockdowns, we (Dominie, Jackie, Voirrey and Anna) tried to keep the Cumnor Taizé service alive by posting an online version of our service, with embedded links to Taizé songs, performed either by the Taizé community itself or by Taizé groups in different parts of the world.

Now restrictions have been lifted, we meet on the first Sunday of each month at 4.30pm.

Our short service usually lasts around 45 minutes and is attended by between 12 and 15 people. The worship style is lay-led, informal, simple, and based upon guidance from the Taizé community. We are very fortunate that Voirrey Carr, who is a member of our choir, can lead us as our Cantor when we sing short Taizé songs and chants, accompanied by Anna Lockett on her harp and or Robin Carr on his classical guitar. The songs are easy to sing and are based upon words from the Bible. Each service features a reading from the Psalms and from the New Testament. There is always a short period of silence and prayer and an opportunity to light a candle for those we wish to pray for.

Please feel welcome to come along and join us.

During 2023, we will meet every month except for August and December. However, we hope to hold a special service on Saturday September 23rd (time tbc) in solidarity with the ecumenical service being held in Rome by Pope Francis and Brother Alois.

Dominie Burton and Jackie Holderness-Laar

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH DEAN COURT

The past year has been momentous for St Andrew's. A year ago, we were 'in exile', meeting in the Dean Court Community Centre, while the church rebuilding was going on. We hugely appreciated the Centre's hospitality, and although our meeting time of 11.30 was not good for everyone, we enjoyed our stay there. We would like once again to express our thanks to our friends in the Centre for their help, which even extended into the first days of the rebuilding when they loaned us chairs for the opening and for our Christmas celebration.



It was exciting to witness the rebuilding process, overseen by Roger Long whose work as Project Manager was tireless and effective, as he worked with APH Construction to get the rebuilding completed in ten months. We had a valuable day of prayer and preparation for the new building in Stanton House; it was good to have Helen Azer speaking to us. We are thankful for the person who subsidised the day. Helped

by moderate weather, the building made good progress and we were able to have our official opening on Saturday 10 September. There was standing room only as the Bishop of Dorchester unveiled a commemorative plaque, with the help of Janice Wingett, who sang in the choir when the original wooden building was opened in 1961. The following Sunday was a joint service for our three churches, at which Bishop Sophie Jelley of Doncaster preached on knowing God personally. She and Chris her husband had been involved in our youth work when students in Oxford. Two months after our opening we had a day of thanksgiving and giving, which resulted in the final costs of the building — over £600,000 — being covered, something for which we were extremely thankful to the Lord, and to all who generously supported us.



From then we have rejoiced in having such a wonderful modern building with excellent facilities, including a fully equipped kitchen and an AV system with great potential, and which enabled us to livestream the Queen's funeral. We now

look forward to live-streaming the Coronation of King Charles.

A significant feature of the new building is a wonderful picture by David Lockett: this abstract painting entitled *Expecto Resurrectionem de Mortuorum* reminds us of the Christian hope of resurrection, based on Jesus' resurrection (and illustrated in the rebuilding of the church).

As well as Sunday services, we are using the building for The Coffee Pot, a new weekly drop-in morning and simple lunch led by Angela Sheppard, which has welcomed people from the local community, as visitors and helpers. Music has been provided by Rod Sharp and Margaret Scruby. We also have a weekly Toddlers' Group, led by Sue Allwright; see the separate reports. We have also had some meetings of our Fellowship Group and of Faith Group but have continued to have Time to Pray via Zoom.

Once a month JOY Place, the service for adults with learning disabilities, has continued to meet, under the leadership of Matt and Jen Long, Chris and Sandra Pell, and Hunter and Amberle Brown. It is a special and joyful service, and we hope that it will grow in the coming year.

Our building has been used for some years by two Christian groups a Tamil Prayer Fellowship and a service for the Fijian Community. Both groups have been supportive of the new building and joined us for a special international Christmas Celebration. We are looking forward to doing more things with both groups. this is an answer to our prayers for new 'labourers in the harvest'; we are discussing using the games court and the new building for renewed work with young people.

We have also been glad to welcome back a variety of other local groups (art, dance, singing) who hire the church regularly and help us to build relationships with our community.

During the rebuilding we discussed plans for the future work at St Andrew's: our prayer is that the physical rebuilding will lead to spiritual rebuilding and outreach. We have talked about developing work with Christians against Poverty, about English Conversation for those for whom English is a second language, about film nights, etc. etc. We have been glad to develop a link with Edge Housing, a Christian charity working with homeless people, including in Dean Court, and we look forward to the Lord opening other new doors.

The saints go marching in: we give special thanks for the life of Betty Bailey who was a missionary serving in Nepal where she was a key figure founding the Green Pastures hospital for leprosy patients, and then, after having to leave Nepal, was one of the key figures in the establishing of Stanton House. Also, for Brian Dent, who contributed greatly to the local community and who was a lay minister in our parish and the diocese. Margery and the family are in our prayers.

David Wenham

ST ANDREW'S TODDLER GROUP

A team of us started the new St Andrew's Toddlers Group at the end of September, just after the new building opened, meeting Friday mornings in term time 9.30am to 11am. Quite a few families have dropped in since then, fifteen altogether, and a small

number of local families come quite regularly. There is quite an international feel to the group which is lovely; we have only needed to resort to Google

translate on a small number of occasions! We offer a range of toys (the corridor is an excellent space for push-along toys), a craft activity each week, a variety of refreshments, sometimes a time of singing, and a friendly group of people to talk with.

We've had the pleasure of getting to know various adults and children over the past six months and have received some appreciative comments which encourages us. Numbers are small, but this perhaps allows us to get to know those who come all the better, and we hope for growth in the coming year. Many thanks to Clare Wenham for her posters, and Kate Elliott for seeing us through the safeguarding process, and to our team of helpers, for their time and all they do on the weeks they can be there: Jane Vlitos, Mary Smith, Margaret Scruby, Lavenia Tava and to my husband David.

Sue Allwright



THE COFFEE POT

Launching The Coffee Pot has been a real joy. We started cautiously to calculate demand and, from October to December, opened every other week from 10.30-12.00 serving hot drinks and cake and charging £1 for unlimited hot drinks and £1 per slice of cake which means that the project is self-financing. Just before Christmas we also included a Crisis at Christmas stall, a cake stall, and greetings cards were also on sale which all made for a jolly end to the year. This year we decided to open on a weekly basis extending our hours to enable us to serve a light lunch of soup, rolls and crumpets. This has not proved as successful as we had hoped and so, after Easter, we will be re-thinking their format. Cake, coffee, and chat is what people come for and is what everyone enjoys.

We have two teams who alternate and it's good to have people on the teams who are friends from the community as well as church members. And a similar mix come and enjoy what we have to offer. From a high of 40 who came to the launch the numbers have settled to usually between 20 and 30 but, whatever the number, we love being able to offer a warm and welcoming space to those who come.

Angela Sheppard



The Coffee Pot

STARTS AGAIN
20 APRIL

St Andrew's Church Orchard Road OX2 9BH

Every Thursday 10.30-12.30

Coffee, tea, cakes

Free squash and biscuits for children

Closed for election 4 May

New timing!

ST MARY'S CHURCH FARMOOR

Our monthly 'Hymns & Cake' service runs on every 4th Sunday at 3.30pm. We start with refreshments and chat, before our time of worship together, usually attended by 8-10 people, but with 16 in December.

St. Mary's Church 
Farmoor

 **Hymns & Cake, monthly at 3.30pm** 

Sunday 23rd April

 **The Good Shepherd** 

Join us in the church for friendly chat and worship together

Themes this year have included Jesus the Healer, Meeting Jesus, Water of Life, a Taizé service led by Jackie Laar, and we have shared Holy Communion on several occasions. Thanks to Rod Sharp for the music and Janet Cross and Di Tubbs for help with refreshments and lifts. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Jessica Turner