



PARISH OF CUMNOR

St Michael's, Cumnor
St Andrew's, Dean Court
St Mary's, Farmoor

PARISH REVIEW For 2024 APCM

INCLUDING AGENDA & 2023 MINUTES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
MEETING AGENDAS.....	3
MINUTES OF 2023 MEETINGS	5
VICARS REPORT.....	11
PCC REPORT	14
ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT	15
CHURCHWARDENS REPORT.....	15
SAFEGUARDING REPORT.....	16
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	20
ABINGDON DEANERY SYNOD	21
FABRIC REPORT.....	23
PASTORAL MINISTRY.....	26
LINKS WITH CUMNOR CE PRIMARY SCHOOL ..	27
ST MICHAEL'S CHOIR	29
MESSY CHURCH.....	32
CUMNOR HILL HOME GROUP.....	33
BABY & TODDLER GROUP.....	34
FLOWERS IN CHURCH.....	36
BELL RINGING	37
TAIZÉ WORSHIP.....	41
ST ANDREW'S CHURCH DEAN COURT	42
ST MARY'S CHURCH FARMOOR.....	45
COMMISSIONING OF THE NEW PCC.....	46

MEETING AGENDAS

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

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 2024 - 2025

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 23rd April 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 2023
 - (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 (2 Vacancies for a 2-year term to April 2026)
6. Election of PCC members (7 vacancies serving a 3-year term to April 2027)
7. Questions raised by members of the Electoral Roll
8. Commissioning of the New PCC
9. Closing Prayer

MINUTES OF 2023 MEETINGS

PARISH OF CUMNOR ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 23 APRIL 2023 at 11.45am in St Andrews Church, Dean Court

Present: David Henderson Slater (Chair), Jonathan Widdess (Vicar), Karen Adamson, David Allwright, Susan Allwright, Voirrey Carr, Geoff Dawe, Joy Dawe, Margery Dent, Sue Edgington, Jean Entwistle, Colin Entwistle, Angela Evans, Chris Evans, Paula Evans, John Farthing, Roger Long, Richard Loughman, Patrick Mabhunu, John Morley, Annie Morley, Catherine Mott, Ted Mott, Pam Patrick, Malcolm Posnett, Susan Posnett, Jean Pryce-Williams, Mary Smith, Nick Smith, Dianne Taylor, Malcolm Taylor, Sonia Tekin, Vakkas Tekin, Jessica Turner, Clare Wenham, David Wenham

1. ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

(i) Welcome and Apologies - David welcomed everyone to the APCM.

Apologies: Claire Horsman, Sheila Long, Lilian Stallan, Amanda Widdess

(ii) Election of two churchwardens for the year 2023-24

No nominations have been received, therefore no election took place.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 1 May 2022

One typographical error corrected. Colin & Jean Entwistle corrected to Entwistle.

Proposed: Karen Adamson Seconded: Roger Long

Approved

2. Presentation by Jonathan Widdess

Jonathan likened the parish to a seedling in fertile soil, representing new life and new

possibilities. Whilst celebrating the past and learning from it we need to nurture and care for the green shoots, which in springtime are a positive sign of growth and even point us to the possibility of resurrection. But they are fragile. We are not where we want to be but we are further along than last year

The PCC has been working with a simple vision of Building Up and Reaching Out.

Main focus being ***praying .. serving .. giving***

Church is not a spectator sport but one in which everyone joins in.

We need everyone to get involved.

3. To receive the following reports provided by the PCC

(a) Changes in electoral roll since last APCM - 118 on the roll.

(b) Proceedings of the PCC during the last year (see p.15 of Parish Report)

(c) Financial statement for year ending 31 December 2022 **presented by Roger Long**

(i) We are asset rich - St Andrew's new build £667K but ...

(ii) Cash poor - £111K in bank.

(iii) Although regular giving during pandemic period dropped there has recently been an encouraging levelling out.

(iv) We are battling with inflation and increasing costs and we must look carefully at how we spend our money.

(v) Cash flow has been poor and we have had to use some of our reserves

(vi) Not a balanced budget as we have a deficit of £24K but first quarter of this year shows a turning of the corner, showing a tiny surplus (£400)

(vii) 2022 was our year of rebuilding. 2023 needs to be our year of continued growth.

Roger thanked the three congregations in the parish for their continued faithfulness in giving through some unpredictably tough times.

(d) Annual fabric report (see p. 23 of Parish Report)

(e) Deanery Synod (see p. 21 of Parish Report)

(f) Safeguarding Statement - 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.

Thanks to Kate Elliott our Safeguarding Officer for keeping us up to date with compliance.

4. To appoint the Independent Examiner or Auditor of the PCC Accounts

Roger Long reported that there have been some ongoing issues with Critchleys and

suggested we change to Chapman Worth from East Hendred to audit our accounts.

Proposed: Colin Entwistle Seconded: Malcolm Taylor

Approved

5. Election of Deanery Synod Reps (3 vacancies for a 3-year term to April 2026)

No nominations received. It is understood that Claire Horsman is willing to continue in her current role as a rep for another year.

6. Election of PCC members (7 vacancies serving a 3-year term to April 2026)

No nominations received.

7. Questions and any other discussions raised by Electoral Roll members

(i) *Pastoral Care* - Karen Adamson asked if any progress had been made to formalise

pastoral care within the parish. JW reported that he and Jean Pryce-Williams had yet to meet to discuss this but would endeavour to do so. A suggestion was made from the Chair that this be done within the next 8 weeks.

(ii) *Finance* - Ted Mott made a plea for finances to be presented in a manner which the lay person can understand.

Roger Long commented that legally we are obliged to present our accounts in a certain way, but all the financial information is available and it is a challenge to present it in a meaningful way to parishioners.

It was noted that the Parish Share had been debated over and that our payment, although delayed, had been paid.

(iii) *Cumnor Primary School* - Voirrey Carr highlighted the upcoming interviews for a new Headteacher and commented that this is a huge opportunity for the school to feel its special relationship with St Michael's. Schoolchildren have enjoyed coming back to church after the enforced break due to the Coronavirus and they are an important part of our future. Voirrey commented that we have a lot of support from the Diocese in this.

Local Coronation activities -

* 5 May - Coronation Concert by Vivace-Cumnor Community Choir in the Old School, at 7.30pm

* 6 May - St Andrew's Live streaming of Coronation service from 10.00am

* 8 May - Coronation Concert by Oxford Commas and High Jinks in St Michael's at 7.30pm

JW commented that the PCC has been considering events around the major church festivals for different age groups and aiming for a wide range of events. This is a work in progress.

Future Events - 1 October - an evening of celebration for Andrew Dyer's 50th Anniversary as organist of St Michael's.

Special thanks was expressed to Amanda Widdess for her continued administrative support throughout the year, which is much appreciated.

VICARS REPORT

In the midst of these seemingly ever turbulent times it has been a good year of steady progress in the parish as you will see from the reports included in this review booklet. There is much to be thankful to God for:

- It's so encouraging to see the new building at St Andrew's enabling new ventures in mission, and beginning to bearing fruit in terms of building community around the church there.
- Messy Church is going well and drawing new families into church life.
- Being able to welcome the community to celebrate the Coronation, with a special service, a tower open day and a concert in the evening.
- The creativity and hard work that went into our Christmas celebrations and resulted in some truly memorable services and the highest attendances for some years.
- Events like Bread and Starlight and The Passion, combining arts with faith and providing new ways to engage our community with the gospel.
- Courses like Hope Explored, Saints Alive and the Lectio Course offering opportunities for people to engage more deeply with God and grow in faith.
- The ongoing, practical witness of things like Memories Cafe and the Coffee Pot, providing a place to belong.
- Our brilliant and growing band of bell ringers who enliven Wednesday evenings in the village with their practice and call us to worship on a Sunday.

- Our faithful and talented choir at St Michael's, ably led by Andrew whose extraordinary service to the parish as organist we were able to celebrate with Bishop Gavin last October.
- Our weekly online services continue to reach around 20-30 people each week and do draw people to try church in person.
- The generous legacies which mean that despite rising costs, and a growing gap between giving and expenditure the church balance sheet remains healthy.



There are challenges and opportunities too. Most parishes (and other voluntary organisations besides) are facing the situation where congregations are growing older and fewer in number, volunteers and church officers are harder to find, and the cost of living rises have caused donations to decline at the same time as outgoings have risen.

Recently there have been some encouraging reports in the media of a growing spiritual hunger particularly among younger age



groups, and signs that the spiritual tide in the West, which has been going out for over a century, may at long last have turned. The world has changed a great deal in a relatively short space of time, and particularly since the pandemic. It's no surprise that many churches are finding that their tried and tested approaches to mission are no longer working as well as they once did. The best way forward seems to be to allow room to try new things, and new ways to reach people. It's things like Messy Church and the new groups at St Andrew's that are beginning to bear fruit, and the challenge for the next few years will be to explore new things at St Michael's, while consolidating on the good work that's already going on across the parish.

None of this will be possible without you. You are wonderfully gifted and committed people. **Thank you to each and every one of you for the time, talents and gift you give to our parish.**

Rev. Jonathan Widdess (Vicar of Cumnor)

PCC REPORT

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, and the licensed lay minister (Eve Lockett) are ex officio members, making a total of 9 members.

Members of the Parochial Church Council for 2023 were as follows:-

Ex-Officio

Rev Jonathan Widdess (Chair), Eve Lockett

Elected

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

Co-Opted

Mary Smith

The PCC met 9 times throughout the year.

In addition, the PCC was supported in its work by these sub-groups:

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, Voirrey Carr.

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

Staff & Volunteer Management Group: Rev Jonathan Widdess, Kate Elliott, Claire Horsman.

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

In accordance with the Church Representation Rules, the Electoral Roll was revised this year. There are now 117 parishioners on the Electoral Roll.

CHURCHWARDENS REPORT

No Churchwardens were elected at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners in 2023 and so we continued as a parish without Churchwardens for the whole of 2023.

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

Introduction

The Church of England is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.'

From 'Promoting a Safer Church', The Church of England's Safeguarding Policy Statement.

Safeguarding is at the heart of our Christian faith. We are all made unique and in the image of God. Jesus came that we might have life and have it in abundance (see John 10.10). 'Safeguarding' means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture in all our churches. In order to achieve this we need to do a lot of hard work. We will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults. We will work to prevent abuse from occurring. We will seek to protect those who are at risk of being abused and respond well to those who have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks. The Church will take appropriate steps to mitigate such risks.

From The Parish Safeguarding Handbook: Promoting a Safer Church

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, across our 3 churches at St Michaels, St Andrews and St Mary's.

The Church of England has made six clear commitments, set out in the House of Bishops' 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, in order 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
- DBS renewals are completed in a timely fashion
- Where new volunteers, or renewals are prompted, volunteer job descriptions are co-created to accurately reflect the volunteering role
- Safeguarding is a standing item within PCC meeting

Priorities for action:

As identified within the Safeguarding action Plan:

- The revised action plan will be presented to the PCC in May for its attention

- Safeguarding data to be migrated to The Church of England Safeguarding Hub by the end of the year
- PCC members and volunteers 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.)

Celebration!

We have extended our activities across our Parish. Our community can now access a range of inclusive activities that include:

- Our Baby and Toddler groups at St Michaels and St Andrews
- Our Memories café
- Our Coffee Pot community drop in
- Our Messy church activities
- Our Joy Place at St Andrews
- Our Table tennis club at St Andrews
- Our film club

The Pastoral team wishes to thank all volunteers, old and new, 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

Finance Committee has reported to PCC quarterly, with an occasional extra report when figures have been available.

During the year we have introduced new Independent Examiners; Chapman Worth taking over from Critchley LLP, our day to day book keeping has been managed by Jacqui Hiles with help from Amanda Widdess. We are all indebted to Malcolm Taylor for lots of technical input and for liaising with the Independent Examiners at the year end.

Our message to PCC has been consistent throughout the year that the Church finances are running at a deficit, ending the year (2023) minus ~£34k

Because we have some reserves this deficit is covered by unrestricted funds but reduces our reserves and monies for other projects.

Members of the committee during this year have been Malcolm Taylor, Vivien Payne, Jan Harris, David Allwright and Roger Long. On a personal note I am grateful to them all for their support and dedication throughout the past year, most of us are stepping aside at the APCM to allow a new generation to take over the committee and I wish them well for the future.

Roger Long

Retiring Chair of Finance Committee

ABINGDON DEANERY SYNOD



The Deanery Synod has met 4 times since the last APCM

May '23 at St Blaize, Milton

The meeting, entitled Prayer and Party, took the form of a number of stations around the church with thought, prayer and discussion-provoking material prompted by the results of the Mission Action Plan (MAP) survey, sent to representatives following the February meeting, which attendees were invited to visit, contemplate and seek inspiration from.

October '23 at St James, Radley

Rob Glenny and Nick Weldon were introduced as the new Area Dean and Associate Dean and officers were elected to the Standing Committee for the next three years.

The Lay Chair reported that the Prayer and Party in May had been positive, with a number of successful initiatives taking place across the Deanery, including:

- Developing work with children and young people
- Engaging with people in new housing developments

- Offering new ways for communities to experience church
- Developing work with elderly people and vulnerable adults and looking at ways to encourage intergenerational work.
- Deepening our life with God
- Looking at how help and support can be offered through bereavement services.

The recently appointed Associate Archdeacon, Jane Haslam, was introduced and spoke about herself, her life and family.

The Deanery Treasurer presented the parish share proposal for the following year, including three slight changes from the current year, which would have a net effect of reducing parish share by £2,800. Reps were asked to take the amendments back to their PCC's for approval.

November '23 by Zoom

Proposed amendments to the parish share, discussed at October's meeting and subsequently, within PCC's, were approved. The treasurer explained about the availability of parish support grants, which are to help people through a transitional period whilst tackling issues within their parish and that a mission grant had been awarded to support the Abingdon Passion Play, which takes place every three years.

A series of groups discussed how their parishes were either reaching out to residents of new housing developments or engaging in regular mid-week activities aimed at children, young people and families and how these activities might lead to church attendance.

February '24 All Saints', Marcham

The Deanery Treasurer passed on the thanks of the Archdeacon and Associate Archdeacon to the parishes for their hard work and generosity over the last year to raise parish share. Abingdon is one of four deaneries in the archdeaconry that met its parish share in full. The Deanery Standing Committee added its thanks given this had been difficult for many parishes to achieve. The full 2.5% rebate has now been received from Oxford Diocese and is being paid out to all parishes.

The deanery accounts for 2023 and the budget for 2024 were presented and unanimously approved.

Prudence Daly, the General Synod Representative allocated to the Abingdon deanery as point of contact, spoke about the workings of General Synod.

Claire Horsman

FABRIC REPORT

Throughout the year the fabric committee has 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.

Following the replacement of the lead on the Tower Roof at St Michael's last year, an event was held on June 24th to celebrate the history of Cumnor and auction examples of the graffiti which had been removed. Edward Impey gave a presentation about the history of the tower lead and its graffiti, inscribed by those

intrepid enough to get onto the roof since the lead was laid in 1796. Malcolm Taylor acted as auctioneer for 24 pieces of graffiti (which raised £750 for church funds) and Martin Harris presented The Cumnor History Society awards.



In recognition of his many years of service to St Michael's Church and the community of Cumnor, the Fabric Committee initiated the designation of a room in the Parish Centre as the 'Tony Wyatt Room'. A plaque was installed and dedication led by the Vicar on April 6th.

A project completed during the year was 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 four times to discuss a range of day to day issues ranging from blinking lights and church clock chimes to mysterious smells, boiler and lightning conductor 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 on October 21st at St Michael's. (During this event, one area of the churchyard was seeded with wildflowers.) All help very much appreciated.



Of particular note at St. Michael's has been the identification of the source of 'the smell'. Many thanks to Claire Horsman for tracking this down and dealing with it. We can all breathe more easily! Another problem currently being addressed is the bad state of the church wall which the churchyard shares with the cottages. As Clerk to the Church House Trust, this has particularly involved Karen Adamson who is also a Fabric Committee member.

The capacity of the churchyard for future burials and interment of ashes has become a topic of concern and the possibility of creating a Garden of Remembrance for the scattering of ashes is

being discussed. This will require extensive consultation and consideration.

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 continued to thrive in 2023 with 9 Baptisms (the highest since 2017!), 21 Funerals and 3 Weddings conducted in St Michael's.

CARE HOME MINISTRY

Care home ministry has continued to recover as restrictions have progressively eased with regular services held in Oxenford, Cumnor Hill House, and Chawley Grove. Over the past year we have also added regular services at Oakenholt, one Holy Communion and another worship service.

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

This has been a year of change at Cumnor CE Primary School. Ed Read retired at the end of the summer term 2023 and new Head Steven Badger joined the school in September. Voirrey Carr also retired as Chair of the Governors after tireless service to the school and outstanding commitment to strengthening the bond with the church. Joy Topping also completed her term of office as a governor, after many years of faithful and energetic service. Sarah Apetrei had also been a great asset to the governing body during her membership. Jane Vlitos is serving in her last year as Foundation Governor. All four, together with the Vicar, were keen to ensure that the school maintained the ethos and met the responsibilities of a Church of England School. New Foundation Governors are being appointed to continue that tradition.

During the year, the links between the school and the church has included, weekly ‘ Collective Worship’ with Jonathan; services in church at Harvest; Christmas; Easter and end of summer term. It has been good to be able to offer tea/coffee once again to parents and family attending these services. Thanks to Voirrey, Joy, Claire Horsman and Dianne Taylor – who many parents know from ‘Mums and Toddlers’ at St.Michael’s on Wednesdays. Children were also invited to an Advent Messy Church in December.



They say that ‘Any crisis provides an opportunity’ and when the school was flooded a few days ahead of the annual PTA Christmas Fair, it was certainly a crisis! But the prompt actions of Jonathan and his team of helpers and PTA members moved the Fair into St.

Michael's, with Father Christmas's grotto in the Parish Centre! It was a huge success and greatly appreciated by all.

May I encourage you to remember in your prayers the staff, children and their parents as we enter a new era. With a new Head Teacher, new Chair and members of the Governing body facing many educational and social challenges.

Jane Vlitos

ST MICHAEL'S CHOIR

The choir continues to form a visual and vocal presence at all our services, processing and leading the singing and worship from the choir stalls in the chancel.

While our numbers have been few, we have been successful in leading 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 again put on hold, but I hope things may get better soon and we can encourage some younger members to join us.

Memorable events of the past year

There have been several milestone events over the past year at which the choir led and played a significant part.



The Carol service in early December was well received and gave people a greater time to prepare for Christmas. It was actioned to enable me to escape to Australia to spend Christmas with my daughter and I shall be forever grateful to the Vicar, Terence

Carter, and the organ scholar from St Peters College for filling in on the Sundays I was away,

In October I fulfilled a long-held ambition of mine – to complete 50 years as organist of St Michaels. We held a wonderful service of thanksgiving with members of the choir (past and present) coming together to form an extra big choir to give thanks for my 50 years of service. Although it doesn't seem that long, I can honestly say I've enjoyed every minute of it and hope to go on for a bit longer yet.



The Future

I feel I can report 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.

Andrew J Dyer

MESSY CHURCH

We continue to hold Messy Church four times a year, with gatherings at Summer, Harvest, Advent and Easter. We swap between St Michael's and St Andrew's each time.

Messy Church is a form of church for children and adults that involves creativity, celebration and hospitality. We start with crafts and activities, then enjoy a worship celebration together, and end with food. It's fun, inclusive, faith-building fun for families with primary school aged children and at all stages of faith.

It has been wonderful to see a good number of children and their families joining us and having a great time together with our brilliant team of volunteers. Many of those who come are new to church and it is exciting to see them learning more about Jesus and meeting him for themselves.



A massive thank you to all the team who work so hard to help make our Messy Church what it is!

CUMNOR HILL HOME GROUP

We continue to meet regularly on Monday evenings, and are now in our 15th year together, people have come and gone, but several are original members, so we know each other well. Currently we have 13 members.

Our study material varies, mostly Bible based, or sometimes a Christian book, and the facilitation of the study is shared between us. The evenings are never dull or quiet and are always stimulating. We keep a prayer diary, so it's encouraging to see how

our prayers have been answered over the years.

Between gatherings we keep in touch by WhatsApp/ phone/ real life (how quaint!) The WhatsApp communication is excellent for sharing fun family photos, thanks for good news right through to urgent prayer requests.

And at the end of each term we finish with a more relaxed social event, which includes spouses/ past members.

Once again my heartfelt thanks go to the whole group for their faithful attendance (cake is a bribe), total commitment and wholehearted and enthusiastic participation.

Here's to our next year together

Dianne Taylor

BABY & TODDLER GROUP

The Cumnor Church Toddler group is now in its 14th year., some of our first 'customers' are now doing their GCSE exams. However did that happen?!

New families continue to find their way to us, and this year we have welcomed several Grannies with their Grandchildren.

We average 9/10 families per week, and it's lovely to see them around the village/ park/ pub wherever, and catch up with their news. We are also always delighted to see the families who find their way to Messy Church

We enjoy getting to know the parents and grandparents and watching the babies and toddlers grow and develop. Sessions are



very informal, we try to show God's love just by being there, answering questions, and facilitating conversations as and when appropriate.

Angela Evans & Dianne Taylor



FLOWERS IN CHURCH

We have had the pleasure again this year to continue flower arranging at St Michael's. We still have the same team of six volunteers who are very faithful and freely give of their time and resources to make the church look more beautiful than it is already.

Festivals of Easter, Harvest, Christmas and the occasional wedding are very much a team effort and a big thank you should go to Tizzie Ballard, Jean Entwistle, Janet Pottle, Hilary Prior and Tricia Venables for their continued support. Other news is that the Sexton's hut has been rebuilt and now that the concrete floor has completely dried out we can gather all our supplies more or less in one place.

A big thank you to them, as ever.

Angela Evans, Coordinator

BELL RINGING



Ringling continues to thrive at Cumnor and we regularly ring all eight bells for Sunday Services which is a significant achievement. We continue to hold tied bell practices to refine bell handling and are particularly grateful to Matthew Hall for his dedication in teaching our recruits to ring.

Ringling events:

- Weddings – We rang for three weddings during 2023 and in April 2024 for Sarah & Will's wedding. Sarah is a member of our band and we were particularly delighted to be able to ring.
- Ringling for special occasions - Members of the band rang rounds and a quarter peal to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla in May 2023 and in August 2023, a quarter peal was rung to celebrate the life of James Dyer. In September 2023, a quarter peal, to celebrate

Andrew Dyer's 50 years as organist at St Michael's, was unfortunately unsuccessful.

Here are the details of the quarter peals, as recorded on the national database, 'BellBoard', <https://bellboard.uk/>:

**Thursday, 24 August 2023 in 47m
St Michael's, Cumnor, Oxford**

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Janette Swaine
- 2 Jenny A Dyer
- 3 Andrew J Dyer (C)
- 4 Clare E F Dyer
- 5 Guy F Matthews
- 6 Matthew Hall

To celebrate the life of James Dyer.



To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla

Saturday, 6th May 2023

Rounds

Jenny Beech
Lianne Beech
Andrew J Dyer
Jenny A Dyer
Guy F Matthews
Amy Morgan
Isabella Morgan
David Nowakowski
Nicholas Speller
Janette Swaine
Harriet Morgan, aged 4 years,
rang the Sanctus bell

Saturday, 6 May 2023 in 46m

1260 Grandsire Doubles

- 1 Nicholas Speller
- 2 Janette Swaine
- 3 Christopher Brown
- 4 Guy F Matthews
- 5 Andrew J Dyer (C)
- 6 Jenny A Dyer

- Courses – A member of our band attended the Steeple Aston Ringing Course which provided a day of tuition and practical experience ringing the method ‘Grandsire Doubles’.
- Maintenance - Annual maintenance was carried by Whites of Appleton to ensure the bells are in full working order. In addition, the emergency lighting in the tower was recently overhauled.
- Handbells – We joined Cumnor Primary School’s Coronation celebrations in May 2023, taking along the band’s handbells to an assembly; afterwards the children enjoyed learning to ring and played ‘Oranges & Lemons’.
- Visitors – We have welcomed visitors from Devon, Bristol and other Oxford towers.

Jenny Dyer, Tower Captain

MEMORIES CAFÉ

The Memories Cafe is 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 meet at the Cumnor Cricket Club on alternate Tuesday afternoons (dates to be found in the Parish Newsletter or CPN). This is 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, Christmas, and birthdays. Last year we had two outings, one to Aston Potteries for

afternoon tea, the other for lunch at the Bystander. Both were thoroughly enjoyed. We are busy thinking about where to go this year. We also have visits from the Oxfordshire Heritage Museum, who bring artefacts to handle and discuss. These stir up many memories of times past.



We are blessed with a wonderful team of volunteers who not only provide the tea and cake but transport for those who are unable to get there under their own steam.

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

Jan Harris and Team

TAIZÉ WORSHIP

The parish's Taizé group continues to meet (4.30pm on the first Sunday of each month) at St Michael's. Attendance averages around 10-12 regulars with occasional visitors. We are most fortunate to be accompanied by Cantor Voirrey Carr, harpist Anna Lockett-Stevens and guitarist Robin Carr.



The service consists of two Bible readings, several Taizé songs, prayers and the occasional poem. Following the Taizé pattern, there is a simplified liturgy, with no single leader and no sermon. Instead, we include a period of silence for individual reflection upon the meaning of the Bible passage, personal meditation and prayer. We welcome anyone who would like to enjoy a simple opportunity to meet with God.

After each service, there are usually some refreshments and the option to meet one another and chat together.

Jackie Holderness-Laar

(Tel: 862640 for more information)

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH DEAN COURT

Last year's report described the excitement of completing the rebuilding of St Andrew's and of its reopening. The past year has been less dramatic, but with many things to give thanks for. We continue to enjoy the new building and its facilities, and we continue to be grateful to Roger Long who deals with the small hiccups that always go with a new building.



We are grateful too to many others who contribute to our life, not least to Angela Sheppard and her leadership of the Coffee Pot, to Sue Allwright for leading the Toddlers' Group, and to Richard Loughman whose vision for monthly film nights has resulted in a series of enjoyable and popular evenings. (See separate reports.)

Musically we continue to be thankful for the regular ministry of Margery Dent and Rod Sharp, and occasionally of Margaret Scruby on the Paraguayan harp. We have been given a fine and versatile electronic keyboard in memory of Sheila Clayton; this has been in action in JOY Place services, and we look forward to using it more frequently. Sheila's funeral was the first in the new building, and it was good to welcome her family.

We have had slowly increasing numbers at Sunday services, and we are thankful for the ministry team who lead and preach, including now Chris Sugden. Jessica Turner not only preaches, but gave a very enjoyable evening talk about the flora and fauna of the Canaries, where she leads holidays for Nature Trek. We hope to have other such general interest evenings in future. In particular we are planning a course in the early autumn on 'Caring for one another as years go by...', i.e. on the challenges of old age; we hope to involve local experts such as William Cutting and others, and including Sir Andrew Dilnot.

We have been less successful in reaching young people, but it has been good to have a team of people led by David Allwright prepared to provide a 'Sunday School' for any young people who come to our services. 'Messy Church' has been held in St Andrew's twice, and has been our major success in reaching out to local children and families. Thank you to the team of helpers from our three churches. We enjoyed having the Mabhunu family from Zimbabwe with us for six months, but they have now moved to Ashbury near Swindon where Patrick is a part-time vicar. We had a good 'Youth Event' last summer, with music provided by Vilimoni Tava and his Fijian colleagues, and we also had 'Drop-in'

afternoons for young and old, during the school summer holidays. We plan to repeat this – but in the mornings – this coming August. We go on praying for something more regular for young people, and for people to lead that ministry.

JOY Place, the monthly service for adults with learning disabilities, is undergoing change, with founder leaders Matt and Jenny Long stepping back, because of family commitments. We are very grateful to them. St Andrew's people have been increasingly involved in welcoming those who come and in providing refreshments, and we are having a major campaign to publicize this special and enjoyable ministry.

David Wenham

ST ANDREW'S TODDLER GROUP

We meet on Friday mornings in term time and have fun with the small number of families who come. Many thanks to Mary Smith,



Starts
23 Sept 2022

St Andrew's Toddlers Group

- Fridays in termtime 9.30-11.00am
- For pre-school children with a parent/carer
- Toys, stories, crafts, refreshments
- Suggested donation £1 a session
- Just turn up! Information: Sue, tel. 864991

St Andrew's, Orchard Road, OX2 9BH www.standrewsdeancourt.org.uk

Jane Vlitos and my husband David for all their help.

Sue Allwright

TABLE TENNIS GROUP

Table Tennis group continues to meet on alternate Wednesdays, 2 pm in St Andrew's small hall. It is an opportunity to play TT, have a cuppa and a chat, and to engage with folk in the community. For new folk some experience of the game is helpful but newcomers are welcome. Contact Margery 01865 862534, & Richard 01865 438423

Margery Dent

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. This year we have again 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.

COMMISSIONING OF THE NEW PCC

The Parochial Church Council comprises elected members of the congregation who serve the community of this parish. Together with the churchwardens and the clergy, they share responsibility for the oversight of the mission and ministry of our church.

They are required to attend meetings of the Council whenever these are called, and are expected to take a leading role in the life of the church and, by their example, be a source of encouragement to others.

They are expected to work well together, to seek God's will in all matters, to make wise decisions that serve kingdom purposes and to reflect Christ-likeness in their dealings with one another.

And so I ask those who, this year, have been elected to serve and all those who are continuing in this ministry:

The leader then addresses the members:

Will you co-operate with the incumbent in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical?

With the help of God, we will.

Will you commit yourselves to this work and responsibility?

With the help of God, we will.

Will you seek to fulfil your responsibilities with generosity and faithfulness?

With the help of God, we will.

Brothers and sisters, will you support those on the PCC in this ministry amongst us?

We will.

Let us silently offer our prayers to God and ask his blessing on our PCC.

Ever-living God,
you gather us together
to carry the gospel of Christ to all people.
Bless the members of this Parochial Church Council.
Let your Spirit enlighten their minds and guide all their actions
that your people may be renewed in faith,
united in love,
and bring to fulfilment the work of your Church,
to your greater honour and glory.

Amen.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, by the power which is at work among us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages.

Amen.

