



St Peter's Church, Tiverton

## ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

April 2023

### *Report on the Fabric of the Church*

Gill Heard and William Zarrett

Happily, the fabric of the church is in generally sound condition and this has been a quiet year with no major projects being undertaken. Our main concern this year has been putting the church back together again, following the handing back of the reordered building by the contractor.

This year, 2023, is a quinquennial year and our new inspecting architect, Michael Vaughan, will be preparing his report in the middle of the year. Inevitably this report will highlight works to the fabric that will need to be addressed by us over the period of the next five years. We hope that nothing of great magnitude comes to light.

We know that in the coming year we must undertake a number of larger projects, some of which are still in the planning and approvals stage. The most significant of these will be works to the rainwater goods and repointing on the east face of the south aisle, the introduction of a fire alarm system in the tower to protect the single route of escape from the tower and the renewal of bird mesh screens to the openings of the bell chamber.

With our reordered church now being used for concerts and other events more often, with larger numbers of occupants, we feel we must take fire escape more seriously. Having consulted the Fire Brigade, we will be introducing various measures they require us to put in place, e.g. better signage and emergency illumination. They also require us to conduct a live fire escape practice at a main service, to make sure the congregation understands the actions they must take – details to follow!

### *The Reordering Project*

David Ricks

Phase One of the reordering is substantially complete. This comprises the removal of pews to the east and west ends, the construction of the extended chancel dais, the new toilet block, new servery and flower arrangers' cupboards and glazing to the porch. Not least we have moved the font to create a new baptistry in front of the Greenway Chapel, which seems to have found universal favour and acclaim. It is easy to forget just how much change St Peter's has undergone, and I hope the alterations are appreciated. They seem to have become familiar already.

We are now able to make use of and enjoy these new facilities and are already finding our building is becoming more popular for concerts and other gatherings. At the start, when formulating our plans, we hoped to be able to extend our outreach to the local community, and these aspirations seem to be coming to fruition in a wonderful way.

The one element of Phase One still to be completed is the children's area and the welcoming facilities to the west of the porch. We hope this will be completed in April.

Due to the revised proposal to accommodate the Newte Library on a mezzanine level above vestry/meeting room, this aspect of the works has been delayed and now forms a Phase Two. We are in the process of obtaining a new Faculty from the Diocese for this work, and we have an acceptable quotation from our contractor. We hope to commence Phase Two in the near future.

The PCC has passed a resolution that the library mezzanine will be named 'The Seaton Gallery'. This is in lasting memory of Mary. She was the first to propose the creation of a mezzanine for the books and was a huge support to the reordering committee throughout the project.

### *Deanery Synod*

Joanna Hall-Tomkin and Kate Henshall

The Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod's meeting in June 2022 included a report from Keith Rushforth about hosting three generations of Ukrainians. During the second part of the meeting members described the many ways in which their churches had benefited from the Queen's Jubilee weekend including church services, scarecrow competition, bell-ringing, parades, tea parties, picnics, bring and share meals, cream teas galore, barbecues, Great Jubilee Lunches, dog shows, entertainment, family games, face-painting, quizzes, music and fundraising for Ukraine. Everyone described a sense of community, a warmth, the involvement of the church often involving food.

In September, Andy Flannagan who is Executive Director of the organisation "Christians in Politics" (which aims to inspire Christians from across the political parties to get involved in politics and public life) gave a talk entitled "Called before the fall' – does it matter?" Andy proposed that we are all involved in politics in one way or another, and stressed the importance of being involved, so that we can challenge the flaws that exist within government. The aim should not be to sort out the whole world, but rather to demonstrate ways to reach future perfection. Jesus demonstrated with examples and parables so that others could apply and expand his work. His demonstrations were directed at a fraction of the population in the area, but the news spread even though Jesus had already moved on to another village or town.

In March, the archdeacon, Andrew Beane, addressed the Synod, describing how "*Simpler, Bolder, Humbler*" needs to be reflected in our dealings within and outside the church. He stressed the need to be younger in our approach, to engage with younger people, the need for the church to do things in different ways. He also acknowledged that church life is complex and exposed the problems of participation numbers in churches falling, less engagement, ageing congregations, clergy numbers falling, lack of volunteers etc. He also suggested some ideas to help such as encouraging four new people to join each year and serving coffee after services and encourage community.

### *Baptism Team*

Rosemarie Longbourne

There were four baptisms in 2021, six in 2022, and so far two in 2023, with two more in the wings. Most of these were included in the 10.15 morning service, except when requested at other times by the candidate's family. The Baptism Team currently consists of Gill Heard, Jennifer Palmer and myself: this is a sufficient number of people to carry out the baptism tasks, and we can be supported by Shelia Richardson and other members of the church on the day if necessary.

The moving of the font, which is part of the reordering, has been beneficial. The baptism family can be seated on the pews alongside the font, allowing everyone to have a good view. The current trend is for baptisms to be inclusive, and children are encouraged to assist and

join in. This is slightly problematic as the font is rather high. It would be useful if a set of steps could be created to enable the children to assist without having to stand on chairs.

### *St Peter's Society of Change Ringers*

Sheila Scofield

We currently have 11 experienced ringers, 2 learners who have just started ringing for service and 2 new recruits. We regularly have 7 or 8 on a Sunday morning and often have 16, with regular visitors on practice nights. Simon and Les have monthly maintenance checks and carry out routine work on the bells.

The Heritage Open Day tower tours, held in September, continue to attract about 60 visitors. We rang the bells muffled for the passing of the late Queen, Open bells for the Proclamation of King Charles III and muffled again for the funeral of the Queen. During the last twelve months we have rung 6 Quarter Peals.

We are currently receiving quotes on the centennial overhaul of the bells, following an inspection and report on the bells by Guild Bell Advisors and Taylor's. The report showed that the bells have been kept in good repair since their recast & rehang in 1923. With costs for the overhaul, painting the frame and replacement of the mesh (to keep birds out) on the louvers, even with volunteer helpers, the total cost is expected to be £25,000. We have already begun fundraising.

### *Christian Aid*

David Catchpole

In 2022 we once again distributed and collected Christian Aid envelopes at consecutive Sunday morning services, and the total raised was £415, plus Gift Aid additions. The need only becomes greater from year to year in the suffering world to which we belong, so the hope must be to raise even more this year during Christian Aid Week, which is set for 14-20 May.

### *St Peter's Church Choir and Music*

Gill Heard

The choir continues with its very loyal and regular members. Lydia Fitton is conducting the choir, regularly, as our Choral Scholar, while Graham Willson continues to be our regular organist, with Simon Trott standing in when Graham is unavailable. The choir welcomed Tom Mitchell recently, filling a very much needed role as a tenor.

The choir have sung at weddings and other special services, as well as the regular Sunday morning Holy Communion services, during the year. Having now begun singing anthems during communion, they hope to expand their repertoire even further during the future.

My thanks go to all connected with the music at St. Peter's

### *Churches Together in Tiverton*

Sue Beale

There is little to report since the Enabling Committee was disbanded last year. The fifth Sunday services are continuing: the one at the end of January was held in St Peter's and the next one will be held at 6.30pm on 30 April, 2023, at the Baptist Church.

### *After Service Coffee on Sunday at 10.15*

Sally Mundy

We were very brave and restarted the coffee after morning service as soon as we could, in the midst of the black plastic & mega dust, in the temporary service area at the back of St Peter's. It worked very well with the urn and cardboard cups, and was well received by all, a bit of normality perhaps.

However, it was with shouts of joy that we were able to start to serve the congregation from our new servery. We purchased 100 new mugs, most of which were paid for by the monies we raised from the draw of Joyce Congram's beautiful blanket, thank you, Joyce. They are of course dishwasher-safe, and after more than a few teething problems with our new gadgets we are now operating very well. We desperately need a few more helpers so that we can operate a two-monthly rota, so please see me if you can help.

I must also thank Jackie Monahan who has decided to pass on the 'tea towel' after keeping the coffee running for several years, and we thank you so much for your hard work.

### *St Peter's Electoral Roll*

Sarah Ware

The Electoral Roll for 2023-2024 is a revised roll. We have 104 electors, (down 2), of whom 22 live within the parish and 82 outside the parish.

### *The Flower Team*

Sally Mundy

The year has ended in the saddest way, with our team leader and dear friend Mary passing away a few weeks ago. I will never 'fill her shoes' but we will all do our best to keep St Peter's flowers blooming.

Last year was 'business as usual', with one particular wedding, when we were asked to do the flowers. The bride and her family were delighted and we received a very generous donation, thank you.

The next few weeks will really test us with so many significant services happening, quite unprecedented, but the great team of flower arrangers will, I'm sure, rise to the challenge.

We have had a couple of new friends join us recently, but more are very, very welcome, as we need to arrange a 'flower rota', to spread the load.

### *Home Communion Visiting Team*

Jean Jenner

Due to covid-19 it was not possible to make as many visits as we should have liked, but we are slowly on the move again.

With regard to the three residential homes for which we are responsible, this has just recently recommenced due to restrictions. This means that we shall have to rebuild our relationships. However, we are slowly under way and will try to ascertain what the best way will be to help them, as it appears that their needs may have changed. Once our new Rector has had time to settle in we shall discuss it with him.

## *Mothers' Union*

Nickie Johnson

Tiverton Mothers' Union met throughout the year in the Baptist Church Hall, enlightened by speakers on a variety of subjects – some spiritual, some informative and some hilarious! Members were encouraged to attend the monthly prayers in the Cathedral, including Lady Day, as well as diocesan MU meetings in the Spring and Autumn. Our annual 'outing' saw members enjoying cream teas in the Canal tearooms with invited guests. As members of the Mid Devon Cluster we enjoyed a Jubilee Coffee Morning at Colebrooke, and shared in Crediton's Harvest communion and lunch.

Sadly, we said goodbye to two of our members, Jean Webb and Alice Cockerill, but admitted Debbie Martin as a new member. There were 20 full members and 5 MU@Home members on our books, keeping MU alive in Tiverton, run by a very able committee. Half way through the year Nickie Johnson took over as secretary to relieve a much-overworked Gill Heard.

The national theme for Mothers' Union was 'Transformation Now!', when members were encouraged to think outside the box to find new ways of 'being' MU. With many of our more 'mature' members this was a challenge that we hope to be able to address in the future.

## *Pastoral Care Group*

Rosemarie Longbourne

There is currently a vacancy for the leader of the group.

There has been little activity in the way of visiting since the pandemic. However, an initiative suggested by Sally Mundy where knitted hearts were given to members of the congregation unable to attend church because they were shielding/ill/incapacitated was very well accepted and successful.

## *Prayer Chain*

Jean Jenner

We have seen another very busy year with requests from far and wide, and the feedback is that this is a ministry that helps so many people. The team and I feel very privileged to be able to share and support the needs of so many.

## *Sacristans*

Sue Beale

The sacristans' duties have been carried out as usual over the past year. Sadly, Catherine Makepeace moved away in May last year; she was a valuable member of the team and is much missed.

## *Safeguarding*

Joanna Hall-Tomkin

Safeguarding continues to be an area of high priority within the Church of England. Parishes are required to raise awareness of this subject and to ensure that robust policies and practices are in place. The requirements for up to date and regular training are becoming more and more detailed and the role of Safeguarding Officer is increasingly becoming more and more time-consuming. I am currently in the process of updating the St Peter's Dashboard, which has been quite neglected.

I recently distributed the up to date list of training for those undertaking work of a pastoral nature, and copies are available on the tables at the back of the church. This includes the need for all PCC members to have an enhanced DBS. I am undertaking the necessary training shortly, to be able to be the official DBS evidence checker!

St Peter's has been working to ensure that measures are in place for the 'safer recruitment' of people in specific roles within the parish, paid and voluntary, including those already carrying out the work. These are (i) where an individual has more than incidental contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults who are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. Examples are pastoral care and Home Communion visitors, Holiday Club helpers, and bell ringers with training responsibilities; and (ii) those in the parish with overall responsibility for safeguarding: the Rector, the PCC and the safeguarding representative. New training is introduced all the time; most recently, training on domestic violence.

Safeguarding is a standing item on each PCC agenda and the Parish Policies and Guidelines are reviewed annually by the PCC.

### *Stewardship*

Helen and David Wakely

2022 has been the seventh full year of offering the Parish Giving Scheme as a means by which to give to St Peter's Church. We continue to receive stewardship through direct debit giving and weekly envelopes as well as the general collection. Giving regularly to the Church by whatever means enables us to plan and cover our expenditure and obligations.

By the end of 2022, there were 43 who give through the Parish Giving Scheme, numerous one-off gifts and 5 by regular direct debit. We now have the option to give on line using *Give a little* through the Church website.

The achievements for the year are as follows:

Cumulative totals		2022	2021	Difference
		12	12	
		months	months	
Parish Giving Scheme	£ NGA	1448	2199	-752
	£ GA	24573	26530	-1957
	£ GA tax	5894	6629	-735
Average No		44	48	-4
OOGA	£	6824	1391	5433
Standing Orders	£	1095	954	141
Give a little donations	£ excl GA	69	1064	-995
	£ Total	39902	38767	1135

Thank you to you all for giving by whatever means; it is greatly appreciated and enables us to support St Peter's and its activities that we love. If you could consider giving through the Parish Giving Scheme, joining packs are available in the Church.

*Tapissers*  
Jane Bonnick

This year I can report that currently two kneelers are being made. Jill Farrow has nearly finished the kneeler in memory of Penelope Gordon and I have finished the Platinum Jubilee and commemoration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. I shall have it blessed when the new Vicar comes. I am about to start on one to commemorate Andrew Curtis.

*Theology Quest and Questions in Tiverton*  
David Hamer and David Catchpole

It is hard to believe that this study course has been running since 2006, and it still seems to be meeting a need for up-to-date exploration of key issues raised by the study of the Bible and/or the challenges of being Christians in the modern world. As with all other causes we were hit by the effects of the covid-19 lockdown, so it was only in the autumn of 2022 that we opened our doors again, as it were, and resumed activity with a pair of trios, waiting with some uncertainty to see whether people would come. Well, they did, albeit in reduced numbers, for going out in the evening is something that seems to happen less than it used to. Never mind, we had some lively sessions devoted to two contrasting topics: 'The Mayflower and the Pilgrim Fathers' and 'JESUS who became GOD'.

Since summer time seems a more promising stage of the year for coming out and indeed, as a number of our participants do, travelling some distance to join our sessions, we plan a quartet in June this year, the title of which will be 'What's so special about John's Gospel?' Maybe you, dear reader, can answer that one – if so, come and tell us what the answer can or should be!

*Young Church*  
Shelia Richardson

There is not a lot to report about young church this year. I am usually to be found at the back of the church ready to look after and entertain children with appropriate activities.