

St Mary the Virgin, Almondsbury



Annual Parochial Church Report

Presented at a meeting held on 28 April 2024

This combined report is presented in accordance with the Charity Commissioner's Statement of Recommended Practice commonly known as SORP 2005.

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- Detailed notes to the accounts;
- Independent Examiner's Report.

St Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Almondsbury, BS32 4DT

**Annual Report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council
and the activities of the parish generally for the year to 31 December 2023.**

Correspondence address: St Mary's Church, Church Road, Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4DT

PCC Members:

Rev Anjali Kanagaratnam, Priest -in-Charge	Rev Paul Van Rossum, Associate Vicar
Astrid Domingo Molyneux, Lay Minister	Pam Van Rossum
David Thomson, Deanery Synod	Clare Jefferis
Helen Hines	Nick Roach, Treasurer
Tim Jefferis, Churchwarden	Dick Avery
Thelma Gibbs	Rosemary Griffiths
Mo Pearson	Rose Pullan
Sandy Thomson	Mike Tierney
Judi Thomson, PCC Secretary	Mike Jenkinson, PCC Chair and Lay Minister
Liz Tierney, Safeguarding Officer and Data Protection Lead	

INTRODUCTION

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The Parish of St Mary's, Almondsbury, is part of the Benefice of Almondsbury and Pilning with Compton Greenfield, which is currently in vacancy.

The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure. The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules and is from those on the Electoral Roll of the Parish. The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission (registration number 1131407).

ASSOCIATE VICAR'S REPORT

This report relates to the calendar year 2023.

The interregnum, which started in August 2022, continued through almost the whole of 2023 until Rev Anjali Kanagaratnam joined us on 17 December 2023. More about this below.

During 2023 the pattern of Sunday services continued as previously, with a mixture of Communion and Morning Prayer Services at 8.30am. At 10am the All-Age Service, with a Children's Group, continued and included a monthly All-Age Communion Service.

During this period the role of 'vicar' continued to be carried out by Astrid Domingo Molyneux, Mike Jenkinson and Paul van Rossum working together. As well as leading services in Almondsbury, we have also taken services and funerals at St Peter's, Pilning.

As in 2022, we have sought to work with the Parochial Church Council to promote the Good News of Jesus Christ and to help people to grow in their faith. At St Mary's we have focused this on our Mission Statement of 'Connecting with God, each other and our community.'

We have continued to connect with God. As we moved through 2023 confidence grew and numbers at services have returned to pre-pandemic levels. For example, over 500 people took part in the two Christingle Services on Christmas Eve. Messy Church is meeting regularly every month in Church and the monthly Saturday morning prayer meeting, Tea Toast and Prayer, has continued in-person with healthy numbers attending.

We have also continued to connect with each other, particularly through the coffee time after the All-Age service. The house group continued to meet weekly on Zoom and in 2023 a new weekly lady's group met in church for a season. The Daily Thought email continued through the year before being retired at the end of November.

We have connected with the community through various means. The weekly toddlers' group meeting every Tuesday in Church in term-time. The ministry of the Church has also been available for private prayer during the daytime. The Church continued to contribute to school life through an input to an assembly every two weeks by Pam Skelding and through the work of the foundation governors. We have continued to promote a 'Charity of the Month,' which both raises awareness and funds. We also support local agencies including the Sisters of the Church Food Bank in St Pauls, Bristol North West Home Bank, and the Salvation Army Christmas Toy appeal. We also showed the Coronation of King Charles on 6 May 2023 on the large screen in church, at which many local residents joined us. The annual Remembrance Sunday Service also brought the village together for this important memorial service.

We are hugely grateful to all those who, often in unseen ways, have worked hard to enable us to do all of this in changing circumstances. Particular thanks are due to Judi Thomson, Parish Administrator, who has given us all incredible and unflappable support throughout the year before moving to Scotland in January 2024. It is through good teamwork and God's grace that the mission of St Mary's has continued to grow through the year.

At her licensing on 11 December 2023, we welcomed Rev Anjali Kanagaratnam to her new role as Priest in Charge of the South Severnside Benefice, comprising of St Mary's Almondsbury, St Peter's Pilning, and All Saints Compton Greenfield. Anjali combines the role with that of Racial Justice Coordinator in Diocese and formally started both posts on 17 December 2023.

We are really pleased that Anjali, Neil and their family have joined us. We look forward to her leadership and working with her in the months and years to come.

Paul van Rossum
February 2024

APCM Report 2023

PRIEST IN CHARGE: NOTE OF THANKS

I wanted to use this opportunity to formally thank all those who worked tirelessly over the period of interregnum to ensure that the life and mission of St Mary's Church continued over this period. The Associate Vicar reports of a full and busy year of growing together in discipleship and connecting with the community. This would not have been possible without the commitment and hard work of all involved. I am particularly grateful to the members of the Ministry team, Revd Paul van Rossum, Mike Jenkinson and Astrid Domingo Molyneux, who not only led services at St Mary's but across the Benefice, and Tim Jefferis (as Church Warden) and members of the PCC who led the church during this period of transition.

As a family, we would also like to thank the church family at St Mary's and members of the wider community, for the very warm welcome we have received. I look forward to getting to know you all and working with you as we continue to journey together and share the love of Jesus to those around us.

Anjali Kanagaratnam
March 2024

CHURCH WARDEN

Almondsbury entered 2023 in vacancy following the retirement of Philip Rowe in August 2022 and so much of my effort as the sole churchwarden was dedicated to working with the Diocese to ensure the timely appointment of a good candidate to minister to Almondsbury, Pilning and Compton Greenfield. In collaboration with Pilning and Compton Greenfield we drafted a Parish Profile, which forms an important part of the information for prospective candidates.

Early in the year the Diocese indicated that any appointment was unlikely to be on a full-time basis, as the South Severnside Benefice was too small to justify such an appointment, when compared with other areas of the Diocese. It was initially unclear whether this meant that an appointment would be made jointly with a neighbouring benefice, however, eventually the Diocese identified that an appointment could be made for South Severnside 4 days per week, with the other two days filling the role of Diocesan Racial Justice Coordinator. Additionally the Diocese discovered that they had a preferred candidate for this combined role, which removed the time and cost involved on advertising the role.

Rev Anjali Kanagaratnam was this preferred candidate and having passed the interview process was licensed by the Bishop of Swindon in December 2023, being warmly welcomed by all those involved in the three churches and the wider community.

During the vacancy we were able to maintain a similar programme of regular services, of baptisms, weddings and funerals, and other activities to that which Philip Rowe had led and I want to personally thank everybody who contributed to running and attending all of the church activities. Having an active and vibrant church to welcome Rev Anjali was a great boost to all concerned.

In 2024 we are looking to rejuvenate our work looking after the Finance and Buildings aspects of St Mary's, which have rather taken a back seat in 2023. We are due a visit from the architect for our Quinquennial Review in 2025 and so we want to try and make sure that everything is in hand before that event, so that we can address any additional concerns that are raised then.

Normally the church has two churchwardens, and so I would be pleased to talk to anybody who might feel that they could serve the church in this role.

Tim Jefferis, Church Warden

ELECTORAL ROLL

There were 98 members on the Electoral Roll as at 31 December 2023, of which 69 were resident in the Parish and 29 resided outside of the Parish.

Mike Jenkinson

WORSHIP AND MISSION

We receive regular input from the group members on aspects of the church's spiritual life and on how the church is functioning. Concerns are addressed and recommendations made to the PCC.

The reports we received from the team members highlighted how well and efficiently the Ministerial team covered the Interregnum and that they were much appreciated. They continue to support the Priest in Charge in her new role. Anjali's ministry has been well received and we look forward to the changed service leading structure.

The Praise group and Matthew (on the organ) give an excellent lead to our worship each week. The worship is tailored to the weeks theme/reading. It is recognised how many volunteers e.g. welcomers, AV team, cleaners, banner ladies, flower ladies, readers, prayer folk, pull together to be an active part of the worshipping community and to enable us to be a healthy church.

The 8.30 and 10.00am service reps report on good attendance, input, and good relationships.

The children's group met each week throughout the year during the All- Age service. There are about 5 regular attendees and sometimes more children. There are often toddlers, with a parent, in with us too. The Roots teaching material is used as is used by the church service leaders.

Last year's Good Friday Activity morning was very well attended with 54 children and 52 adults in addition to our helpers. - The songs, videos, music, activities, and refreshments were all good. Lots of church members were involved in helping so it was a real whole church outreach.

The Toy and Gift Service with pop up Nativity, included a few extra children but numbers were lower than expected. The Christingle services were as popular as ever, especially the second one. There were about 500 attendees of which a large proportion were children and young adults. £623.67 was collected for the Children's Society.

The Catering team do a great job providing refreshments after the 10am service and at other events including this year a Breakfast between the 2 services and a Lent Lunch which also raised funds for the Leprosy Society.

The wider church community services have been well attended e.g. Remembrance, Carol, Christingle. It is often commented on how the local community or visitors pop into church for some reflection time during the day.

Messy church and Toddlers are much appreciated by the wider church community.

The Charity of the Month focus engages the congregation in looking beyond our immediate concerns.

Charity of the Month

January:

February: Leprosy Mission, Astrid Domingo Molyneux

March: Uganda Link: Clare Jeffries, CMS link with Simon and Sarah Cawdell

April: Easter services dominate.

May:

June: SAT 7

July: Ripple Effect (was Send a Cow), Pam Skelding

August: Tools with a Mission, David and Joy Laban

September: Ride and Stride/Gloucestershire Historic Churches, Astrid Domingo Molyneux

Tearfund at Harvest Service cash collection, Paul van Rossum

October: Suicide Prevention Bristol, Suzanne Alsop

November: Royal British Legion (cash collection at Remembrance Sunday)

Release International, Jan Cooper

December: Children's Society, Pam van Rossum, includes cash collection at Christingle.

The Tea, Toast & Prayer continues once a month and is well attended as does the Prayer for the Suffering Church group. There is a small evening group on zoom running each week.

Pam van Rossum, Chair, Worship and Mission

FINANCE & BUILDINGS

The Finance and Buildings Committee was temporarily disbanded during 2023 because the numbers required for a quorum had fallen to below that threshold, and so the PCC took over responsibility in the meantime. Building work was constrained by the need to consolidate spending, and therefore only essential work was progressed. It is hoped to reinstate the Committee shortly in view of new people joining the Church who have relevant skills and knowledge, and the financial circumstances improving.

The focus for the future needs to take into account:

- The quinquennial inspection due in 2025 and reviewing outstanding recommendations from the last quinquennial report in 2020.
- Urgent repairs need to be scheduled e.g. radiator valve in choir stall and lighting in the choir vestry.

- Identifying and prioritising significant works e.g. recovering north transept roof, improvements to lighting and review of monuments for safety. Work in relation to improving our Green credentials needs also to be identified and set in motion.

Mike Tierney, Chair, Finance and Building Committee

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Finance Report for year ending December 2023

At last, our financial position begins to improve. We are by no means out of the wood yet but with continued restraint and commitment we can provide a decent legacy for the next generation. Last year I reported that our investments reduced by over £46,000 and that we had an operating loss of over £30,000. We have seen a steady deterioration in our investments since the start of the COVID pandemic but our operating loss in respect of day to day expenditure has been present for a number of years – for instance it was £6,000 in 2019 and increased in later years.

We took action at the beginning of 2023 – significantly reducing our contribution to Parish Share and cutting other important but non-essential expenditure. We recognised that this would be painful for the Church but that it was essential to avoid running out of money in years to come.

This year I am pleased to report that over 2023 our investments grew in value by £14,800, that we received a legacy of £26,000 and that our yearly operating loss reduced to £1,700 leaving us with a total Parish worth of £203,173. This might seem like a large sum of money but most of it is committed to funds that support the maintenance of the Church over the next decade and with a substantial amount tied up in endowment funds. The rise in investment value and the legacy are out of our control and we must be grateful for both the legacy and the Church of England’s management of our investment accounts. But we must recognise that our goal is as a minimum to break even on our operating budget; which we have still not managed to do.

Our aim for the coming year must be to generate a greater income than expenditure to allow us to support more good causes, other parishes in our diocese and allow us to achieve our 2030 target of a zero carbon budget. As a final thought, we must recognise that nearly all our income from donations and that the Church and the PCC are so grateful for all that our people and visitors provide and the time and support that so many give to maintaining the Church, community and our good works.

Nick Roach, Treasurer

2023 Treasurer

SAFEGUARDING – PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

The parish of St Mary’s, Almondsbury is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

Policies and Statements

The Safeguarding policy will be reviewed and updated by the PCC at its meeting in March 2024.

These statements will be reviewed and updated by the PCC at its meeting in March 2024

- Domestic Abuse Statement
- Responding to Concerns and Allegations
- Lone Working Policy

The following Statement was reviewed and agreed by the PCC - Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Statement (Jan 2024)

Activities

The PCC oversees the following activities for Children / Young People and for Vulnerable Adults: Messy Church, Babies and Toddlers, Oasis, All Age Service Children’s Group, and Pastoral Assistants.

Safer Recruitment & DBS

The PCC is responsible for the safe recruitment of people wanting to work with vulnerable groups through the activities mentioned above. During the year, the PCC has recruited the following numbers of people to support those groups.

Activity	Number of leaders/helpers	Number of new helpers recruited last year	Number of helpers removed (expired/deceased/left)
Pastoral Assistants	3	0	3
Messy Church	5	0	2
All Age Service Groups	8	1	2
Babies and Toddlers	3	0	0
Oasis	3	0	1

DBS Checks

As part of the safer recruitment process, where eligible, volunteers working with vulnerable groups have been DBS checked at the level appropriate to the role. Because the parish provides activities for vulnerable groups, the PCC members are also eligible for an enhanced DBS Check.

There are 27 of volunteers / PCC members who require a DBS check for their role and all of them have a current check (i.e. the check has been completed within the last 3 years). **However, there are 10 volunteers/ PCC members who are due for renewal of their DBS check this year (2024).**

Training

Safeguarding training at different levels is a requirement for all roles; the current situation in terms of meeting the requirements in the parish is as follows:

Basic Awareness (all church officers and volunteers, bell ringers – I have included Flower Arrangers, Sides and Refreshment Helpers though many have not been informed that they are required to undertake the training)

Number in Role	Number completed training in last 3 years if highest level of training required	Number with no or expired training
22	2	20

Foundation Safeguarding (PCC members, volunteers working with vulnerable groups, Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officer, bellringers supervising children who ring with the team)

Number in Role	Number completed training in last 3 years if highest level of training required	Number with no or expired training
20	16 (<u>7 are due for renewal this year – 2024</u>)	3

Leadership Safeguarding (Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officers, Tower Captains where children ring with the team – excludes Licensed Lay Ministers as the Diocese are responsible for these)

Number in Role	Number completed training in last 3 years	Number with no or expired training
8	7 (<u>1 is due for renewal this year – 2024</u>)	1 (PSO who is standing down this year – 2024)

Domestic Abuse (PCC members, Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officers – excludes Licensed Lay Ministers as the Diocese are responsible for these)

Number in Role	Number completed training in last 3 years	Number with no or expired training
16	16	0

Reporting to the PCC

The PCC was updated about safeguarding matters in the parish at all its meetings throughout the year. During the year there were no safeguarding matters which were reported on to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Action Plan

The PCC has an action plan created by the Parish Dashboard. Progress is reported to the PCC meetings and current progress on our Parish Dashboard is 89% at level 3 (highest level).

The Safeguarding Dashboard allows us to track down all the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. The PSO is responsible for the Dashboard with editor rights, with some PCC members (Vicar, Associate Vicar, Chairperson and Churchwarden) having read access. We continue to use the Safeguarding Hub to enter and keep track of all DBS checks and training, as well as creating job descriptions for the key roles involving children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Finally, I am standing down at this APCM after 6 years, as we are moving on to another church. I wish to thank all those who have renewed their DBS certificates and undergone Safeguarding Training. I wish to thank all the support I have had over the years especially the Ministry Team, Group Leaders and the Safeguarding Team at the Diocese of Bristol. At the time of writing, there is no replacement, but I wish whoever takes on the role every success.

Liz Tierney, Parish Safeguarding Officer

DATA PROTECTION REPORT

It is nearly 6 years since the new legislation for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force. Though we have left the EU, these rules will still apply.

The following can be found on the Church's Website – The Data Privacy Policy, Data Consent Form and Data Protection Procedures Policy. There are copies of the Data Consent Form in church.

Various other data consent forms are available for other areas where personal data may be displayed in the public domain – like Noticeboards, the website or the Lich Gate. All data, apart from the Lich Gate, is kept in the Church Office. The Vicar, Data Protection Lead and Parish Administrator have access to the data. The Lich Gate data is kept by the Data Protection Lead and passed onto the Lich Gate Editor for inclusion in the Lich Gate. It is planned that the Lich Gate data will be kept in the Church Office.

We as a Church MUST with all emails relating to Church business using the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) option – many of us already do use this. We must remember that not everyone wants their email address in the public domain.

As with the Parish Safeguarding Role, I will be standing down from this role at the APCM, and to date there is no replacement.

Thank you to everyone who filled these Data Consent forms over the past year and for your support over the past 6 years.

Liz Tierney, Data Protection Lead

THANKS

The PCC employs Matthew Thomas as Organist and Judi Thomson as Church Administrator. All other routine activities are undertaken by volunteers and Council places on record its appreciation of these volunteers who give their time and skills to the church and community.

ADOPTION

This report was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 14 March 2024 for presentation to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 28 April 2024

St Mary the Virgin, Almondsbury



Reports from Organisations

Distributed with the Annual Parochial Church Report

Presented at a meeting held on 28 April 2024

THE LICH GATE

The Lich Gate Magazine is published by St Mary's and is distributed to all homes in the Parish.

In early 2022 Edward Ranger indicated that he would retire as editor at the end of January 2023 making the February issue his last. For a while it looked as if the Lich Gate would have to fold, as no new editor had come forward. Fortunately, Garth Jackson offered to become the new editor and he took over the role in January which enabled a seamless transition.

We are very grateful for all of the work done by Garth as Editor, Steve Townsley as Distribution Manager and John and Lucy Ingle as Advertising Managers. Without them, there would be no Lich Gate.

Long may it continue.

Paul van Rossum

BABIES AND TODDLERS GROUP

Toddlers has been busy over the winter, with the glebe residents also joining us for tea and singing. It's a very lovely atmosphere for young and old!!

Sandy Thompson, Leader

OASIS GROUP

The OASIS online/home meetings are restarting with individual families at mutually convenient times from Easter. This is after a break while Jan recovered from a heart operation. During Covid restrictions these proved helpful to struggling families once monthly.

After Covid restrictions eased, we met in homes and gardens with one or 2 families. When the time is right we would hope to return to after school Oasis meetings in church. The team is keen to continue Oasis children's work and Sue Hewson has enthusiastically provided craft and materials suitable for home/online meetings throughout all the changes. PRAISE GOD for all He is doing to build families and youth/children's faith in the area.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

Jan Cooper and Sue Hewson, Ro Palmer, Sarah Redmond, Michael Kirby

MESSY CHURCH

Messy church has been well attended throughout the year. Children particularly enjoy the crafts and we are so lucky to have Gratz preparing and cooking the food with Sarah. We are still looking for more helpers as it is very time consuming preparing and packing up afterwards. The children and parents listen to the story on the overhead projector before crafts and questions have been raised afterwards, which is very encouraging. We are looking forward to Anjali joining us in the future.

Sandy Thompson and Mo Pearson, Leaders

CATERING COMMITTEE

The year had quite a quiet beginning for the committee who are still a reasonably small band of just four ladies. It was decided to put out a donations box and ask for contributions towards the coffee and teas served after the All Age Service on a Sunday. A notice has been added to the yellow pages sheet to this effect and the congregation have responded well.

Our first real event was at the Good Friday activities when we provided refreshments with hot cross buns for around 80 attendees. This was well received.

Saturday 6th May the committee were asked to provide teas and coffees for the televising of the Kings Coronation. Numerous donations of cakes made it a really special occasion for all who were there.

Following the appointing of Anjali the three P.C.C.s were invited to meet with her at Pilning church. St Mary's were asked to help and we provided a variety of savoury items as well as cakes for this.

Pam VR suggested we could try a Church Breakfast for 15 th October before the AA service and after the 8.30 one. Croissants, pain au chocolat, orange juice as well as coffee and tea was on offer. We were surprised and delighted by how many of the congregation turned out for this and it is perhaps something we could repeat.

The Almondsbury Village Events team approached the committee to serve teas and coffees with mince pies at their Christmas Fayre which we did, and this was held on 25 th November.

As usual we served mulled wine and homemade mince pies (donated by the congregation) after the Carol Service which is always sees the church full.

This rounded off another year at St Mary's Church.

I would like to thank everyone, the committee members and others who willingly offer their help with various events.

Rosemary Griffiths

FLOWER ARRANGERS

Greetings, the flower arrangers have produced lovely displays on a weekly basis, except during lent and advent as per the church calendar.

I would like to extend my thanks to our volunteers on behalf of the church congregation and church clergy.

We as arrangers will continue to provide an arrangement at the lectern, and pillar arrangements at Easter, Harvest and Christmas and I am sure they will continue to be enjoyed by all. I was asked if it would be at all possible to reintroduce arrangements at the altar, sadly this is not feasible as we have too few arrangers now, and this would be asking too much of them.

Sarah Redmond

BELLRINGERS

Another packed year as we truly settled back into the post-pandemic era. In terms of activities, the bells have been rung where possible on Sundays and for weddings and practice nights. There was a large amount of ringing for the various Christmas services, weddings (including my own daughter!) and activities and we even gathered enough ringers to ring at midnight on New Year's Eve 2023/ Day 2024, having failed last year!

Thanks must go to the following people.

- Gerry for maintenance, risk assessments, CCTV, and being able to see the bells in glorious technicolour, fly cleaning and just about everything else that wouldn't have been done without him!
- To Paul for his support of the ringers throughout the year and welcome Anjali
- Adam for continuing as secretary and wedding organiser and doing all the paperwork and keeping us abreast of the news and developments, locally and nationally
- To our members, guests and visitors, without whom we couldn't function.
- Tim as Treasurer and Adrian as Deputy Tower Captain
- All who support Sunday Service ringing and practices

In statistics the story of 2023 is:

Attendance on Sundays ranged from 0 to 8, with the average being 5.8 up from 5.6, the average last year. We rang on 50 of 52 undays and had six or more ringers on 29 of these (58% up from 52% last year), with seven or more on 12 (24% up from 23%).

Attendance on Mondays ranged from 2 to 13, with the average being 8.4 down from 8.8 on normal Mondays last year. We rang on 37 of 52 Mondays, nine of the missing Mondays being due to our decision to ring once a month at Chipping Sodbury, one to the AGM, and five to Bank holidays. We had eight or more ringers on 30 of the 37 Mondays (81% up from 61% last year) and ten or more on 14 (38% up from 18% last year). We have 13 resident ringers, one more than last year, of whom, a daughter of one of the resident ringers, is a junior.

Our ringing highlights otherwise, we achieved the first courses of Beverley and Surfleet Surprise Minor for four years, the first plain course of Erin Triples for four years, a touch of Cambridge minor, a first ever plain course of Plain Bob Major on a Sunday, the first Sunday touch of Grandsire Triples for three years, the first Sunday touch of Stedman Minimus for three years, Gerry's first touch of Grandsire doubles inside, and a touch of call changes on five with a working tenor.

We rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples to welcome Rev Anjali Kanagaratnam, a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples for the coronation of King Charles, and two other quarter peals of spliced Stedman, Plain Bob, St Martin St Simon Doubles, and a fourth quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles. This total of four quarter peals is one more than the three we rang in 2022.

Visiting bands rang quarter peals of Grandsire Triples, Single Oxford Bob Triples, Plain Bob Major whilst a visiting band of Cumberland youths rang a peal of Lessness Surprise Major with full sound proofing on.

Otherwise, we rang 25 different methods versus 23 last year. These varied from Rounds and Call Changes, Plain Hunt, Cloisters Doubles and Triples, Grandsire Doubles and Triples, Plain Bob Doubles, Minor, Triples and Major, Antelope Doubles, St Simon's Doubles, St Martin's Doubles, Reverse Canterbury Doubles, Stedman Doubles, Erin Doubles, Kent Minor, Single Oxford Minor, Double Oxford Bob Minor, St Clements Minor, Spliced Plain and Little Bob Minor, Cambridge Surprise Minor, Beverley Surprise Minor, Surfleet Surprise Minor, and Norwich Surprise Minor.

An attempt at Cambridge Major unfortunately didn't make the grade.

We continue with our monthly joint practice with our friends at Chipping Sodbury. This allows us to ring Surprise Minor and Major and also give the learners a chance to have a stronger band around them as they progress.

Almondsbury wrote and ran the Branch Quiz Champions in February, yielding our title to Winterbourne, (but winning it back again in 2024 by some distance!)

"A bell's not a bell 'til you ring it"

Marcus Booth, Tower Captain – Almondsbury

DEANERY SYNOD

The Bristol West Deanery Synod report was published in April 2024. It has been added below.

Clare Jefferis and Rosemary Griffiths, Deanery Synod representatives

Bristol West Deanery Synod Annual Report 2023

Introduction

Three Deanery Synods took place, all were held in person, unlike the two previous years when many meetings had to be conducted by Zoom.

In 2023 and the key themes were:

- **Missional Communities and Missional Engagement TC.T**
- **Understanding the TC.T Value - Generosity**
- **DLT Elections and understanding the TC.T Value - Creativity**

March Deanery Synod:

Missional Communities and Missional Engagement TC.T

Deanery Synod on 14 March 2023 focused upon this being a Triennial Year and exploring the missional opportunities with Bristol West. The Meeting was held in person at St Mary's Leigh Woods.

Triennial Year

Synod was reminded by the Area Dean that this is a Triennial year. Consequently, Deanery Representative will need to be elected at APCMs for a three-year term of office and in accordance with the number stipulated for parishes and united benefices.

The Deanery Synod Annual Report will be ready for circulation prior to the commencement of APCMs.

The Main Theme: Missional Communities and Missional Engagement TC.T

The Area Dean welcomed Rob Mountain, Director of Transformation, and members of the Diocesan Transformation Team. Rob introduced the session with some slides demonstrating the reason why this Diocese is participating in the National Emerging Church programme and how this begins to translate at a local level.

Following the TCT overview, Synod broke into discussion groups to identify the active opportunities that might start to shape the projects across the Deanery that could form a focus for TCT Missional Community activities. Recognising that some of these projects could and should cross boundaries of geography, parish, deanery, denominations, inter-faith and other organizations.

Discussion output is included with these minutes (see attachment) and have been gathered under the emergent headings:

- **Activities and Events**
- **Worship and Teaching**
- **Crossing Boundaries**
- **Culture Shift**
- **Resourcing**

The Uganda Link

Rev Janet Hill and Sarah Thomas updated Synod on the Deanery trip to our link Dioceses in N Uganda which took place at the end of October 2022.

May Deanery Synod:

The 'Transforming Church. Together' Value 'Generosity'

Deanery Synod on 17 May 2023 focused upon our understanding of the TC.T value – 'Generosity' - and how this is exhibited in our words and actions. The Meeting was held in person at Christ Church Clifton.

The Main Theme: Generosity, one of the four values within Transforming Church. Together

The Area Dean reminded us of the four values of the diocese, Openness, Creativity, Generosity and Bravery. We

reflected in pairs and groups on the diocesan definition,

'We value generosity and receive and give sincerely. We give our time and resources to share what we know of Jesus' love. We want our communities to feel supported and cared for in the way Jesus would do, to experience God's love through our action and an opportunity to journey into faith if they choose.'

Then in different groups we discussed what generosity looked like, we shared ideas and wrote on post it notes. There was feedback from every group, including a range of suggestions, from publicising food baskets in churches to showing generosity in our listening towards others stories.

The Uganda Link

Rev Janet Lee showed slides from the trip last October and in particular of Lira Palwo clinic, the remote health clinic in Kitgum Diocese which is this year's deanery project.

October Deanery Synod:

The 'Transforming Church. Together' Value 'Creativity

Deanery Synod on 5 October 2023 focused upon DLT Elections and the TC.T value of Creativity. The Meeting was held in person at Holy Trinity, Westbury on Trym.

The Main Theme: Creativity, one of the four values within Transforming Church. Together Elections to the DLT

It was noted that there was a lack of clarity as to the purpose and functions of the DLT, action on Area Dean to circulate role descriptions for clergy and lay reps ahead of next Deanery Synod.

Creativity

Caroline Jowett-Ive, Diocesan Director of People and Bishop's Staff link to Bristol West, reported on the Transforming Church Together, TCT, 5-year programme to bring transformation with £6.8million grant. The money would help fund new roles, both full and part time, permanent and temporary, clergy and lay. Two particular new roles to note concerning clergy in our deanery, were Rev Andy Murray, now made Dean of priority communities and Rev Anjali Kanagaratnam, Racial Justice coordinator.

Caroline then introduced the evening's key topic 'Creativity':

'We value creativity and we co-operate with the work of the Spirit. We are faithful, rooted in faith and responsive to the Spirit. Our communities feel inspired, this is bold and joyful faith, work and worship that engages us all. We want our communities to experience a variety of projects and worship styles, celebrating tradition and innovation in connection to God.'

Looking at the definition of creativity, the synod then discussed in small groups how creativity was and could be expressed in their parishes. The results are attached to this report.

The Uganda Link

The Revd. Janet Lee mentioned the bank issues currently being addressed and which will be shortly resolved. She also talked about the Bristol-Uganda partnership, which is now 54 years old, and that it will be an item for discussion at Bishop's Council in December.