



St Peter's Church, Tiverton

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

April 2024

Report on the Fabric of the Church

Gill Heard and William Zarrett

The past year has been quite busy and very expensive maintaining the fabric of St Peter's.

The routine planned maintenance continued with service to our clock, fire extinguishers, lightning rods, alarm systems and roof cameras, overseen by our Chair of Fabric, David Ricks. All are in good working order.

Emergency maintenance has been a challenge with the following very expensive projects:

Extensive and expensive repair of dry rot in the Vestry; repair of rainwater hopper at the east end of the south aisle; maintenance to the windows in the bell tower, replacing the bird mesh and installing 'gale breaker' fabric to protect the bells; renovation of the bell workings and frame, undertaken primarily by the ringers who have very successfully raised the required funding; after a fire inspection, fire resistant enclosures were required to be added in the west tower to enclose the gas meter closet and the new electricity consumer board.

In 2024, we will have the quinquennial Inspection. We do not anticipate any major expenditures resulting from it but a prayer in that direction might be in order.

The DIY team continues its valiant efforts, fuelled by coffee, cake and camaraderie!

The Reordering Project

David Ricks

After about two and a half years of hard work and upheaval I'm very happy to report that the reordering contract works are now complete.

May I just remind everyone of the extent of the changes that we've made, as they seem to have become very familiar in no time at all? New toilet with accessible facilities, moving the font to form a new baptistry fronting the Greenway Chapel, greatly enlarged open area at the back of church with new chairs, nave altar platform at the east end, new servery, new children's area, porch refurbished and glazed, new welcome area and new meeting room/office with a gallery over for the library.

We still have snags and defects to be put right, and outside the contract we have to provide furniture and fittings for the children's area and the library.

I hope I'm correct in feeling a general approval with the way the works have transformed our church for the better and in the way our church may now be used.

Safeguarding

Joanna Hall-Tomkin

Safeguarding continues to be an area of high priority within both St Peter's and the Church of England as a whole. 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 there is no doubt that the role of Safeguarding Officer is a demanding one.

I am continuing to update the online St Peter's Dashboard - eventually, this will mean that individuals can log in and check their own 'training due' dates(!). I am pleased to report that all PCC members now have the required current DBS - this follows advice from the Diocese.

I am now working through the other 'requirements' for volunteers within our various roles in Church. My plan is to run some sessions in Church, involving watching the required video(es) over coffee and cake, to facilitate all being able to access them. Even those of us on the coffee rota are required to complete the online basic awareness course! My thanks to our bellringers, who are the first group to be bang up to date with training. 😊

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 incumbent, the PCC and the safeguarding representative.

New training is introduced all the time and Safeguarding is a standing item on each PCC agenda and the Parish Policies and Guidelines are reviewed annually by the PCC.

I am looking for someone to help me monitor training requirements for volunteers - if you think you could help, please do let me know!

Safeguarding can often worry people – it's worth remembering that **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** – raising awareness is vital in ensuring that people feel safe when carrying out work for the Church, safe when in Church, and know who they can ask for help, should it ever be needed.

Deanery Synod

Emma Cobbledick, Joanna Hall-Tomkin and Kate Henshall

The Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod's meeting in June 2023 included a talk by Brian and Chris Clarke who initially volunteered to work in Amsterdam's red light district and subsequently witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall. They became inspired to go and work in Bulgaria, a forgotten Eastern Bloc country, where they founded the charity Krasifaid. Four years ago they returned to the UK to live in Cullompton where, unbeknown to them, they discovered a group of about 400 Bulgarians working at the Chicken Factory. These Bulgarians were mostly from the Roma people and not the Bulgars, they were used to being ostracised. They were surprised to find British Bulgarian speakers. Brian and Chris have been working to improve the acceptance of these people in Cullompton.

In October, the speaker was Sharon Blyth (Children and Families Mission Enabler in Exeter Diocese), who gave a talk titled "The Biggest Mission Field". Sharon's talk was entertaining, interactive and practical – encouraging the deanery synod to draw on ideas from their own childhoods and sharing suggestions to take back to their parishes about ways to encourage children and young people into

their churches. Sharon invited us to think about what is needed in the diocese? – volunteers, recruitment and training, and reaching out together; where are the children? – in schools, parks, cafés, shops, youth groups; and ideas of how we can help – reading to children in schools, school governance, acts of kindness, finding gaps in the school curriculum, prayer groups, picking up on festivals and special events. Sharon focused on what favourite aspects of school and church children will remember and highlighted that grandparents matter in influencing faith among children and teenagers.

In February the Deanery welcomed the Revd Nathan Kiyaga, the outgoing Torbay Area Dean. He explained how the Torbay Deanery has forged links with Devon County Council and other community services to form “Torbay United”, a charity which aims to offer support for schools and the community through faith and other initiatives. Our Rural Dean, Andy Humm then introduced ‘Lifepath Tiverton’ which will run in June for all year 4 children to engage in art, history, drama, music and the Christian faith through learning about the Wesley family. This a collaborative project in the Deanery and we hope that some members of St Peter’s will also be taking part.

Baptism Team

Rosemarie Longbourne

Since March 2023, there have been four baptisms, one of which was an adult. Three were carried out during the 10.15 morning service, and one on a Saturday as requested by the family.

The new position of the font is working well.

The Baptism Team will soon be reducing as Jenny Palmer moves on to the next stage of her life, leaving Gill Heard and myself. This should be sufficient as long as baptisms are during the morning service, as we are supported by Sheila Richardson from the Young Church.

St Peter’s Society of Change Ringers

Sheila Scofield

It’s almost impossible to encapsulate all we have done this year in 200 words. So we try with a list: Setting a target of £25k for work on the bells to mark 100 years

- Town Band concert (Sept)
- Handbell & music concert (Aug)
- Coffee morning & sale (Nov)
- Afternoon tea & sales (Feb)
- Monthly summer market stalls
- Knitting, sewing & plant sales
- Many other events with thanks to St Peter’s Church members

At the time of writing, we have reached £19.5k

Ringling Events

- Regular Sunday service ringing (until Jan 15th)
- Regular practice (using neighbouring towers from Jan 15th)
- Quarter peal – Coronation of King Charles III
- Ringers’ service to launch fundraising (May)
- Tower open day (HODs Sept)
- St Peter’s Shield competition at Kentisbeare (Sep) – We won!
- Guild Festival fortnight – 8 QPs rung locally by members of the band (Oct-Nov)
- Quarter peal rung in memory of the Rev Robert Gordon (12.11.23)

- Tower outing to South Hams (May)
- Ringers' working party clear west end path (summer Fridays)
- Weddings (May & Oct)

The Bells

- 15th Jan: Bellhanger arrived, fittings stripped (3 days)
- 31st Jan: Bellhanger returned & replaced most of the bearings (3 days)

As I write: Bellhanger to return Sun 10th (3 days) to replace all parts, & bells returned to working order. Peal attempt by local band on 16th March, service & lunch for centenary celebration on 17th and dinner 23rd March.

St Peter's Church Choir and Music

Gill Heard

St Peter's choir continues to sing at all the Morning Services, the occasional Evening Service and weddings and funerals when requested, under the direction of Graham Willson or Simon Trott.

Two dedicated members, Adi Pannifer and Jane Bonnick, have retired following many years of service, and due to work and other commitments we have said goodbye to Lydia Fitton. Through the year it is good to report that we have welcomed Tom Mitchell and Lena Marvao.

Following the Chevithorne patronal festival, the choir held its annual lunch in the village hall.

To begin a busy Christmas period for the choir, some members visited St George's Home to sing carols and offer readings.

Christian Aid

David Catchpole

In 2023 we once again distributed and collected Christian Aid envelopes at consecutive Sunday morning services, and the total raised was £305, including Gift Aid additions. I am glad to report that the PCC is once again supporting this strategy, so everyone who comes to St Peter's on Sunday 12 May will be reminded and given the opportunity to contribute.

The need only becomes greater from year to year in the suffering world to which we belong, and especially so at a time when we can almost hear the cries of distress from Gaza. So, the hope must be to raise even more this year during Christian Aid Week, which is set for 12-18 May.

A few years ago, the total we raised was given a major boost by a hugely enjoyable safari supper. This year, thanks to the kindness of Gill Heard and Sally Mundy, this will happen again. Do come! Friday 17th May, 6pm, tickets costing £15 for 3 courses & coffee, available from Gill or Sally.

After-Service Coffee on Sunday at 10.15

Sally Mundy

We have been able to serve coffee and biscuits every Sunday over the past year, which is always very welcome, and a very important part of the morning Service.

There are five teams to cover each week, but we would like to get at least a couple more teams, so that the rota could be worked on alternate monthly duties.

You have all been very generous adding to the donations pot, and so we have raised nearly £500 to help towards Church expenses, and this is after we have bought several items for the 'new kitchen', drawer liners, kettle etc, etc. So, thank you for your support.

St Peter's Electoral Roll

Sarah Ware

At the beginning of 2023/2024, we had 104 electors on the roll. During the year, we lost 8 electors but gained 4 new electors, so our number is exactly 100.

I will be starting the new roll in the autumn as everyone will need to re-apply to be on the roll, so I expect this number to drop, again. Please can I ask everyone to encourage new church members to enrol? By starting the new roll in the autumn, it will hopefully give us time to achieve better numbers for the 2025/26 Electoral Roll.

The Flower Team

Sally Mundy

As we anticipated, our 'year' started off at a gallop, with lots of very special flowers for our dear Mary's Memorial Service, which was held 4 days before our APCM last year, and we did her proud! This was followed by the Licensing Service for Christian, the same week as the Coronation of King Charles: we had great fun with flags, and bunting. Whitsun finished off the very busy month of May.

After this our flower fund had taken quite a hit, and so we decided to host a 'Coffee Morning' on 15th July, at our home, and we were delighted to raise over £400, with the help of many, many friends enjoying the friendship and the coffee, the first time since Covid! We were able to purchase some lovely top quality silk flowers with some of this money, which will help to keep us going through the year, as fresh flowers are getting so expensive, and a trial arrangement had several of you feeling the flowers as they looked so real.

This Easter there will be over 12 fresh flower arrangements around St Peter's and I thank the loyal team for their commitment, time and skill, in dressing our beautiful Church for Easter, and for all our celebrations and festivals.

Mothers' Union

Nickie Johnson

Tiverton Mothers' Union met regularly in the Baptist Church Lounge with invited speakers on a variety of subjects – some faith based, others entertaining, but all enjoyed and challenging. Membership, drawn from St Paul's, St Andrew's and St Peter's, numbers 20 with a small number of former members (MU@Home) being lovingly supported by friends. Nickie Johnson held the fort throughout the year as leader, secretary and, latterly, as treasurer.

Some members joined with others around the diocese for Lady Day, Cathedral Prayers, Council and Members' Meetings and Mary Sumner Day. The annual outing in June entailed a visit to the garden of Kia Ora, slightly marred by the resident ducks! Maybe the highlight of the year was the Christmas Craft meeting, much enjoyed by all. At the Advent service a new member, Jeanne Barnett, was admitted to MU, to the delight of all!

As with many organisations, Tiverton MU is experiencing the problems of an ageing membership and plans were afoot to change the status of membership which will mean that there will be no need for officers and their responsibilities. This decision was not taken lightly, however.

Prayer Chain

Jean Jenner

This year there has been a constant flow of requests and from feedback our prayers have been much appreciated. It would appear that just to know someone cares and prayers are offered is a great comfort.

During these past months we offered to pray for a person who was doubtful about believing but, although the results were not what we had prayed for, this person found his faith and was comforted.

It is a great privilege to continue this ministry and it is surprising that, when someone discusses a problem or concern, an introduction to our prayer chain seems to help them even though they may not necessarily believe.

Stewardship

Helen and David Wakely

2023 has been the eighth 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 one-off gift 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 2023, there were 40 who give through the Parish Giving Scheme, numerous one-off gifts and 5 by regular direct debit. We now have the option to give online using *Give a Little* through the Church website.

The achievements for the year are as follows:

General donor giving 2023

	2023	2022	Variance
Year-end PGS members	40	43	-3
	£	£	£
PGS NGA	1,323	1,448	-125
PGS GA	21,033	24,573	-3,540
GA tax total recovered	8,803	7,638	1,165
OOGA	335	6,824	-6,489
Standing orders	1,164	1,174	-10
Give a little	444	69	375
	33,102	41,726	-8,624

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

As we have no kneelers in the pipeline, the last one nearly completed by me for the choir's remembrance of Andrew Curtis. I am announcing my retirement from this task, and unless somebody would like to keep it going, it will cease. As we have loads of kneelers, perhaps it is time to stop making more.

There is quite a lot of stock and equipment, and this will need to be disposed of. If there is no one willing to take it on I think we need to decide what we are going to do with it. The church will have to store it until a solution is found. I can no longer get into my loft where it is stored, so someone will need to get it out.

Home Communion Visiting Team

Jean Jenner

Requests usually come from those who are no longer able to get to Church or those who are recovering from operations. We continue to visit Margaret Allen House and St George's Residential Home. It is a pleasure and a privilege to visit these people and to get to know them.

Young Church

Shelia Richardson

Not much to report. We have had a few visiting children and some from Sunday baptisms, but as yet no regulars. We do provide appropriate activities for all children who come.

We have got some new cupboards now and are currently trying to raise money for a carpet, noticeboard and hopefully other items to make the children's corner a cosy, warm and appealing place to children.