

**ANNUAL REPORT
2022**

Lives changed through God's love

THE ANNUAL REPORT

VICAR'S INTRODUCTION

The year 2022 started with many of the pandemic restrictions still in place. It ended with a sense that we had returned to life "BC" (Before Covid) in many ways. Some of the negative effects of the lockdowns have remained with us (e.g. having paid staff paired down to a minimum) but there have also been many positive effects, including a stronger sense of the value and role of volunteers to enable us to stay open and function as a church. We have also retained the more creative and participative approach to worship that was born out of the lockdown experience. The congregation at the 10am Parish Eucharist at Holy Trinity grew steadily over the year and the introduction of instrumental music once a month at St. Helen's has boosted the congregation there. We also saw the introduction of the new 'Time Out' informal serve in the Parish Centre which now takes place monthly.

The year offered some great opportunities for connections with our local communities. We saw a wonderful response to the "Crowns for the Queen" project from community groups in Stratford, as Holy Trinity played a central role in the town's celebration of the Platinum Jubilee. The congregation at All Saints' has seen the positive results of outreach events in the village of Luddington.

A significant milestone was the retirement of Andy Winter as Parish Operations Manager in March. Our gratitude for all he did for the parish was expressed at the time. We were delighted to welcome his replacement, Lola Spetsioti into the role.

Other highlights of the year include the ordination of Thomas Powell as deacon (on the same day that Sarah Cushing, our Parish Administrator, was ordained priest!). It's been good to see Thomas growing into his role as curate in this parish. A new Five-Year plan for Holy Trinity was launched in October, based on the Six Focus Areas that we identified the year before.

The life and work of this parish is only possible because of the contribution of many, many people, who are offering their gifts and time for the building of God's kingdom. I am often humbled by the remarkable dedication and generosity shown, and would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone involved.

As you read this report, please pray for the work and ministry of the different groups and teams that are described, and thank God for those who serve through them. Finally, is God calling you to play a part in seeing lives changed through God's love through this parish? If so, we'd love to hear from you!

With my prayers and best wishes,



Patrick Taylor

Vicar of Holy Trinity Stratford-upon-Avon
with All Saints' Luddington
and St Helen's Clifford Chambers

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CLERGY AND STAFF

Clergy Team

The Revd. Patrick Taylor
The Revd. Steve Jarvis
The Revd. Kay Dyer
The Revd Thomas Powell
Mr Philip Harper

Vicar
Associate Vicar
Associate Priest
Curate
Children and Families' Minister

Ministry Team

The Revd. John Hall-Matthews
The Revd. Diane Patterson
The Revd. Jenny Rowland
The Ven. Brian Russell
The Revd. Graham Wilcox
The Revd. Penny Harrison
The Revd. Dr Paul Edmondson

Asst. Minister (Honorary)
Asst. Minister (Honorary)
Asst. Minister (Honorary)
Asst. Minister (Honorary)
Asst. Minister (Honorary)
Asst. Minister (Honorary)
Asst. Minister (Honorary)

Readers Licensed to the Parish

Mr Paul Gifford
Mr Phil Harper
Mr David Harrison

Music

Mr Douglas Keilitz
Mrs Rebecca Mills
Mr Stephen Dodsworth

Director of Music
Assistant Director of Music
Organist Emeritus

Parish Office

Miss Lola Spetsioti

Miss Sarah Cushing
Mrs Liz Marshall

Operations Manager (until 31st January 2023,
when she went on Maternity Leave)
Parish Administrator
Operations Manager (from 30th January
2023, when she started as Lola's
replacement)

Verger

Mr David White

Honorary Head Verger

The Parish Office, Old Town, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6BG

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Web site: www.stratford-upon-avon.org

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2022
4. Matters arising
5. Election of Churchwardens
6. Parish Charities

Liz Roome
Honorary Secretary

MINUTES OF THE 2022 ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners was held on Sunday 15th May 2022 in the Parish Centre Hall, commencing at 11.30 am. The Vicar, the Revd Patrick Taylor, took the chair.

- 1 The Vicar welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2 Apologies for absence were received from John & Tricia Hall Matthews, Jenny & Peter Rowland, John & Sally Cohen, Chris Cottrell, Diane & Alan Patterson, Sherron Guise, Tina & Keith Hillyard, Faith Piper, and Jane & Andrew Martin.
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 9th May 2021 were accepted.
- 4 There were no matters arising from the above Minutes.
- 5 Election of four churchwardens: There were four nominations for four vacancies: Helen Warrillow, Paul Lageu, Sherron Guise and Tim Raistrick, who were duly elected. The Vicar expressed his appreciation and thanks to the churchwardens for their commitment and dedication during the past year.
- 6 Parish Charities: The Treasurer explained that there were four Parish Charities administered by the Vicar and Churchwardens and described on page 30 of the financial report. This year £3241 was transferred from the Sunday School fund to support children's ministry and this closed the fund. £1000 had been transferred from the Evans fund to support clergy expenses and £100 from the Genge fund for Choir prizes. In total £4,351 had been transferred to parochial funds and over £10,000 is in the three remaining funds.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2022 Page 7
3. Matters arising
4. Vicar's Report (delivered as the sermon at the 10am Parish Eucharist)
5. Consideration of
 - a) Electoral Roll
 - b) Proceedings of Parochial Church Council
(Please see report for Charity Commission)
 - c) Church Accounts & finance update
 - d) Stewardship and Gift Aid Page 39
 - e) Appointment of Auditors
 - f) Clerk of Works Report Page 35
 - g) Deanery Synod Report Page 12
6. Elections
PCC 2 vacancies for 3 years
7. Any other business of parochial or general church interest

Liz Roome
Honorary Secretary

MINUTES OF THE 2022 ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting was held on Sunday 15th May 2022 in the Parish Centre Hall, commencing at 11.50 a.m., chaired by the Revd Patrick Taylor, Vicar. There was a good attendance.

- 1 **Apologies** for absence were received from John & Tricia Hall Matthews, Jenny & Peter Rowland, John & Sally Cohen, Chris Cottrell, Diane & Alan Patterson, Sherron Guise, Tina & Keith Hillyard, Faith Piper, and Jane & Andrew Martin.
- 2 **Minutes** of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday 9th May 2021 were accepted.
- 3 **Matters arising**
There were no matters arising from the above Minutes.

4

Vicar's Address

(given as the sermon at the 10am Parish Eucharist)

Acts 11.1–18, John 13.31–35

Love one another.

A friend of mine who is a vicar told me the story of the time when she was taking a primary school assembly on the theme of love. She began by asking the children: 'how do you know that you are loved?' She had first checked that the children each had someone who loved them, and all the hands went up, so that was ok! Then she asked them: how do you know? Hands flew up again and my friend tells me that there were some really touching examples. The one who stuck in her mind was a little girl whose answer was this: that when she wanted a drink of water and was too short to reach the tap, her auntie poured it for her. Something as simple as a cup of cold water meaning someone knew they were loved.

We heard again this morning the simple but challenging command that Jesus give us: love one another, as I have loved you. But what does that actually look like? How do we make this a reality? The answers the children gave in that school assembly were very like the answer the Church gives. Small actions, repeated often, taking place in the context of a relationship.

So, for the church that means:

- a warm greeting at the door
- a welcome without condition or prejudice
- sharing our simple, sacred meal of bread and wine
- the offer of support in the coming week

These are actions that both create relationships and strengthen them - these are how we can make sure people know they are loved. Surely anyone who has had a friend or been part of a family understands this. Our experience over the past two-and-a-bit years the pandemic, the lockdowns, have forced us to ask, what are those actions, those important things that we should be focussing on as a church to show God's love? What should we be doing to show our love for one another and for others in our community so that we're fulfilling that command of Jesus -love one another, as I have loved you?

In the end the PCC came up with a list of 6 things, which we have called our Parish Focus

Areas.

Welcome and Care

The pandemic reminded us how important it is to make sure we're looking after each other and especially those who are more vulnerable in our communities. That work continues and we're currently reviewing our arrangements for pastoral care, especially for those who might otherwise slip through the net, to make sure they don't get overlooked.

Worshipping God

Even when we had to close our church buildings, we didn't stop the worship. Not a single Sunday went by without a service being offered either on-line or in person or as we do now, a mixture of both. We came up with the concept of the walk-through service during the pandemic. These have proved to be very popular and accessible to a wide range of people, so we've continued with these for key occasions such as Christmas eve and Good Friday.

Outreach and Engagement

Jesus doesn't just want us to love one another and gather for services as though we're a cosy club! We're called to reach out to others. It's been great to see Coffee Stop and Stay and Play restart at the Ken Kennet Centre in the north of the parish, as well as the pop-up pub in Luddington. We've also seen a new outreach initiative in Clifford Chambers offering a simple lunch to those who live alone, during the winter months.

Making Disciples

Last year we continued with Soul Space on-line and our Lent course, again offered online had a good take up. Our home groups have been able to start meeting in person again. Coming out of Covid we've wanted this 10am service to be engaging for all ages so that we can nurture faith, wherever people are in their faith journey. We asked for feedback on this service, and I would like to thank all of you who took the time to do this. We had more than 120 responses! Some key messages were a general support for the involvement of a much wider range of people in planning and leading the services, and a real desire to see us engage as much as we can with children and families. The PCC are still considering what further changes we need to make in the light of that feedback, and we will let you know once any decisions have been made, hopefully after the next meeting at the end of this month.

Financial Sustainability

The dramatic drop in visitors caused by the lockdowns, and subsequent loss of donations caused us to look again at how the parish is financed. Giving has increased over the pandemic which is wonderful. Thank you to all those of you who support the church through your financial giving, and through being a volunteer in church so that we can receive donations from visitors. Things are still very tight and we're having to keep a very close eye on our expenditure. We will hear more from treasurer later in the meeting itself.

Buildings and Environment

Our buildings (churches, Parish Centre and houses owned by the parish) need to be cared for and we also want to take steps to limit our impact on the environment. We have pledged to achieve "net zero carbon emissions" by 2030 and have taken a big step towards gaining our eco church status by deciding to buy our electricity and gas from renewable sources. We're most grateful to the Friends of Shakespeare's Church who funded the restoration of the North Transept and ongoing maintenance.

So, six focus areas. Everything that we do should contribute to one or more of these areas. This is who we are and what we're doing to fulfil our vision of lives changed through God's love. These are the things we must be attending to in order to be healthy and growing churches. One example of how these areas are shaping our church life is that the agendas of the Standing Committee who meet at least monthly, are organised around these headings. The next major piece of work our PCC will be doing is drawing up a new 5-year plan for Holy Trinity. The village churches have made good progress on their plans already. These plans are a description of the things we believe we should be making a priority under each of the six areas, with a timeline of when we want them to happen and how we are going to measure their impact.

"Love one another, as I have loved you," says Jesus. With all this talk of focus areas and 5 year plans it's easy if we're not careful to lose sight of what we're here for and called to do and be. Our life together as a church must be built on Christ not just our own plans or strategies or desire for success. But, remember those small actions, often repeated, taking place in the context of a relationship? It's these gestures of love which build the Kingdom as much as any big projects or grand plans. And these small acts of love are things that each one of us can all do, so that we can see, in the words of our vision, 'Lives changed through God's love'. Amen

5 Consideration of:

a) Electoral Roll

Mr T Raistrick reported that the number on the Electoral Roll stands at a total of 354, up from 351, as calculated at the official cut-off date.

The number is broken down as follows:

Holy Trinity 314 (2021: 312) - 12 added and 10 removed, net gain 2.
(1% increase)

All Saints 18 (2021: 17) - 2 added and 1 removed, net gain 1.
(6% increase)

St. Helen's 22 unchanged from 2021

Of the total 354, 26.9% are non-residents (i.e. live outside the official parish boundary)

The split by gender is 66.1% women and 33.9% men.

Tim Raistrick was thanked for his work on the Roll.

b) Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

These are contained within the Financial Statements of the PCC as required by the Charity Commission. The full PCC had met 6 times during the year. Mike Warrillow proposed that we accept the Report, seconded by Anthony Woollard, and carried, all in favour.

c) Church Accounts

Mike stated that the detailed accounts are on the church website. He then summarised the main points:

- In 2019 (prior to the pandemic) there was a large surplus. In 2020 (during the pandemic) there was a large loss. This year, 2021 (emerging from the pandemic) there is a small profit; we are more or less breaking even.

- Stewardship income has grown.
- Visitor income dropped during the pandemic. It is now beginning to recover.
- We have reserves, but, especially in the case of Holy Trinity, they are limited.
- We need to be thrifty going forward.

Reporting Change

- Reporting will in future reflect where money is coming from, but all payments will be made from the General Fund.
- An Organ Restoration Fund will be created.

The vicar thanked Mike for all his hard work as treasurer.

d) **Stewardship & Gift Aid**

Chris Kennedy referred the meeting to the report on page 17 of the Annual Report booklet. He highlighted a few points:

- We have lost some members who were regular givers.
- He encouraged people to meet their stewardship commitments by means of standing orders. This helps the church to budget more effectively, and more money comes to the church, since the bank levies charges when cash is banked.

e) **Appointment of Auditors**

Mike Warrillow proposed that Mazaar's Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors, of Dudley, West Midlands be retained as Independent Examiners of the accounts for 2021/22. All were in favour.

f) **Fabric, Goods, and Ornaments**

The Volunteer Clerk of Works, Mark Sayers, took the meeting through the report on page 18 of the Annual Report booklet. He ended by thanking the volunteer joinery team who have been effecting repairs to the pews.

g) **Deanery Synod Report**

This may be found on page 18 of the Annual Report booklet.

- The Vicar, who is now sole Area Dean said that he will be sharing Area Dean duties with colleagues in the deanery, so this role will not cause him to neglect his role as vicar of our Parish.
- The vicar informed us that Linda McDermott, former Parish Operations Manager of this parish, is to be installed as Vicar of Alveston on 7th July 2021.

5 **Elections**

a) **Parochial Church Council**

There were 4 vacancies for 3 years. 5 nominations had been received, so a vote was held. The following were elected: Marie McDougal, Heather Fletcher, Mike Warrillow and Becky Barton. A Rep from St Helen's will be co-opted, probably Julie Renfrew.

b) **Deanery Synod**

Lindsay McDonald had notified us that he would be standing down, so the PCC will have to arrange for this position to be filled.

6 Matters of Parochial and General Church Interest

- a) The vicar thanked the following people:
 - His colleagues on the clergy team;
 - The wider ministry team of retired clergy;
 - Sarah Cushing and Andy Winter for their work in the office;
 - The PCC, and especially members of the Standing Committee;
 - All the many volunteers;
 - Liz (PCC Secretary), Douglas (Music Director) and Rebecca (Trinity Voices).
- b) Helen Warrillow thanked Patrick and his family for all they do for the parish.
- c) Gina asked about the 8.00 a.m. Communion Service on a Sunday at Holy Trinity. Patrick replied that there is an ongoing review into the demand for such a service.
- d) Thanks was expressed to the Social & Events Team.

The Vicar led us in The Grace, and the meeting closed at 12.50 p.m.

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Fosse Deanery Synod met three times in the year – the first time it has been possible to have a full cycle of meetings since the lockdowns.

The year saw a number of changes at the top. Patrick is now sole Area Dean, having previously shared that role with Barry Jackson of Kineton. Orion Johnson from St Andrew's Shottery has been replaced as Lay Chair by Margaret Howard from Wellesbourne. The vacant post of Secretary was taken up by Pauline McIntosh (formerly Newbury) from our own parish. I am still "Deanery Treasurer", which really means coordinator of the annual Parish Share exercise in which all PCCs, and the Deanery itself, decide how much to contribute to the Diocese to meet our clergy costs. In addition, a new post was created to co-ordinate PCCs' responses to climate change. Initially this was filled by Pete Ashton from Kineton, a former Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod who has been a member of the Diocesan environment committees. Unfortunately, he has had to stand down and a replacement is being sought.

Two issues have dominated our agendas.

The first is the Deanery Plan. All Deaneries have been asked to offer plans for future development of their parishes, at a time when full-time clergy are in shorter supply and harder to afford. In our case, this has focused on the very rural group of parishes in the east of the Deanery where Nicki Chatterton is coming to the end of an interim post as incumbent. What has been proposed is the replacement of one full-time clergy post, through linking with the Edgehill benefice (based on Kineton), but with a part-time children and families worker appointment and the possibility of a part-time "house for duty" priest. Patrick has been working hard to negotiate this with the parishes concerned.

The second is Parish Share. Following Covid, a number of parishes are not in a good place financially, and negotiating their contribution to the common pot for clergy costs has been and remains difficult. Stratford PCC remains the largest single contributor to this, subsidising a number of others.

Apart from such money issues, we discussed the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith report on sexuality. This was led by Su McClellan, who is based at the Cathedral and has been one of the Diocesan leads on the issue, but is also well known to many of us as the wife of Craig Grocock, incumbent of Shottery.

Later in the year, Claire Strachan, who leads at Diocesan level on issues concerned with the care of church buildings, came to introduce a pilot survey, which PCCs in this Deanery have been asked to complete, on the state of their buildings and (inevitably) some of the financial implications of this. Our own Churchwardens have been working to complete that survey for this parish.

In addition to all this, parishes have been able to share their experiences of the Covid lockdowns, with all their implications for worship patterns and parish life generally. In the coming year we might hope to focus more on such issues of worship and spirituality.

It is easy for us, in a parish which is largely self-sufficient in human and financial resources, to see the work of Deanery Synod as having little to do with our own life. But if we are "members one of another", it is right that we should share ideas, people, money, and other resources with each other across a diverse Deanery.

All church members, whether elected voting parish representatives or not, are welcome at Deanery Synod meetings.

Anthony Woollard

THE VILLAGES

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, LUDDINGTON

On 29th May 2022 the Bishop of Warwick, the Right Reverend John Stroyan, joined us, along with, some members of the Holy Trinity choir and several members of the local community, to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the consecration of the present church in Luddington. Also marking the special occasion was the return of the Luddington Bible, which dates from 1591. The Bible was originally in the old chapel and was saved from the fire that destroyed that chapel. It was presented to All Saints' Church, on the day of consecration (8th May 1872) by John Baldwin. Following the Special Service of Choral Evensong we enjoyed drinks, nibbles and a celebratory cake in the churchyard.

The support of the retired clergy has enabled the reintroduction of weekly services at All Saints', part of our 5 Year Plan, which has been appreciated by all. We now need to re-establish our teams of sidespeople, communion assistants etc.

The Quinquennial repairs have now been completed and the churchyard is being kept tidy with the help of volunteers from the village. Until recently the churchyard had been maintained by another party. There are several building projects yet to be progressed, including a replacement cross at the east end of the roof, the introduction of a compostable toilet, the relocation of the 'preaching stone' to the churchyard, a replacement entrance gate, and a supporting wall to the side.

All Saints' continues to use energy for heating and lighting from 100% renewable sources, at no additional cost to the congregation.

We repeated our Harvest Service of 2021, having refreshments in the churchyard after the service. It was well attended, and we were again lucky with the weather.

In 2022 there was an unprecedented number of funerals at All Saints', including those of some key members of the village and church community. Despite this, the size of the congregation has regrown. We have several new members, including some children, who recently moved to Luddington, all of whom are very supportive.

With the loss of so many individuals from the local community and because, due to 'lockdown', some people were unable to attend funerals, we held an All Souls' service for the first time, followed by drinks and nibbles. It was well attended and appreciated.

We have had several joint social evenings with the Village Hall, the most popular being the Halloween Evening, comprising a family film followed by craft activities for the children, hot dogs and a bar. We are planning to do something similar during the Easter weekend.

The All Saints' Team, led by the Revd Steve Jarvis, held their first Community Pub Night, attended by more than 60 people, in 2019. The introduction of the pop-up pub, the 'All Saints' Arms', has encouraged other groups to provide a bar at other village events.

Teresa Kristunas

ST HELEN'S CHURCH, CLIFFORD CHAMBERS

St Helens, like many rural churches, has struggled to return to a degree of normality following the restrictions posed by Covid.

Our congregation numbers did not recover to pre-covid levels, so we reluctantly decided to reduce our service pattern to two per month from September 2022. We now offer a Morning Praise service on the first Sunday and a Holy Communion service on the third Sunday.

In an attempt to encourage new people, we invited the Phoenix band to come and play at our Morning Praise service. They have introduced more modern songs, a relaxed environment and the opportunity to tweak the service format. These services have been welcomed and enjoyed by our congregation. After a slow start, we are finally seeing an increase in attendance with numbers on some weeks, in the region of 25 (previously we averaged 10 a week). We are hopeful that this a positive sign and our first Sunday service will continue to grow and evolve.

Our services over Christmas were reasonably attended (although numbers were still down by about half). There were 55 people at our Carol Service, 50 at our Christingle and 25 on Christmas Day.

We are also encouraging activities within the wider community:

- St Helen's management team in partnership with the Village Hall committee run a 'Sopreme Cafe' Community Venture between November and March. This

offers free soup and a roll every Friday lunchtime time from 12 – 2.00 p.m. The decision to use a smaller, easier to heat, room in the hall has proved popular, and we regularly have over 20 people each week.

- After a break of over 20 years, there is now a new bell ringing team at St Helen's who regularly ring for Sunday services, weddings and funerals.
- There are regular churchyard maintenance working parties each month.

In addition to concentrating on growing our church community, behind the scenes we have continued to struggle to balance our books, often running at a small deficit. Having bills of over £6k to pay for the Parish Share and annual insurance leaves very little from our £8460 projected income to cover our day to day running costs.

The St Helen's management team continue to be grateful for the support of Patrick and his clergy, particularly over the last year as we have been experimenting with our service formats.

Pat Woolvin

FRIENDS OF ST HELEN'S CHURCH

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR YEAR ENDED 4th April 2022

PRESENT: Reverend Kay Dyer, Winston North, Angela Wylam, and Jo Johnson (Trustees)
Gillian Nunn, Sally Abell and Andrew Martin (Supporters)

APOLOGIES: There were no apologies. All Supporters had been circulated with the date.

THE MEETING took place after the Morning Service at St Helen's church, Clifford Chambers. The Reverend Kay Dyer welcomed the Supporters and Trustees, and the minutes of last year's AGM were agreed and signed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Annual Report and Accounts have been prepared by Winston North, reviewed by independent accountant, Christopher Danes, and have been submitted to the Charity Commission. The Trust's total income for the twelve months ended 4th April 2022 was £4,607. This includes membership subscriptions and donations of £3,710, sale of Christmas cards £610 and other income £287. Total expenditure was £143. This included insurance of £126. Total net surplus of income over expenditure was £4,464. There were no distributions made to St Helen's Church in the year. The overall retained reserves of the Friends of St Helen's charity as at 4th April 2022 stood at £22,090. The net assets position as at 4th April 2022 was £22,090 which comprised entirely of the cash at bank and on deposit.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Angela Wylam reported that since, in the wake of the Covid pandemic, social activities had not re-started in the village until August 2021, the sale of Christmas cards (already in stock) had been the sole fund-raising activity. There were two generous donations which provided an increase in income over the previous year. This offset the impact of a small reduction in Supporter numbers. The Trustees are extremely grateful to the continuing number of donation Supporters, currently numbering 41. Looking forward, we have had informal notification of the church's intention to replace the aged gas heating system. It is the policy of the Diocese not to replace gas with gas and it is likely any future system will be run on electricity. A figure

of £10,000 has been mentioned. Work on the war memorial is still to be carried out. Fund-raising events are planned: the Plant Sale which has been successful in previous years, and the Secretary is in contact with the Meon Singers who may perform a concert in the summer.

The Secretary announced she will be stepping down from this role at the end of May. Andrew Martin offered to help with tasks involving the computer and this offer was accepted; he was warmly thanked by the Chair. We still need to recruit more Trustees, one of whom would be a Membership Secretary, and more publicity is planned. We remain grateful to our Patron, Sir Peter Rigby, and to all the Supporters of the Friends of St Helen's Church.

Angela Wylam

PARISH REPORTS

WORSHIPPING GOD

WORSHIP TEAMS

There are several volunteers who make up the four worship planning teams at Holy Trinity. Led by Paul Suter, Anthony Woollard, Jane Southard and Lori Shanebeck, who serve as coordinators, the teams meet, together with the clergy, to plan several of the worship services over the course of the year.

Lori Shanebeck

CHOIR AND MUSIC

2022 continued to be a year of transition for music and liturgy at Holy Trinity Church as we moved further away from the pandemic. January to July saw the continuation of modifications to the format of the 10.00 a.m. service, along with adjustments to the Holy Week services. But, as we began in September after a summer break, a more normal routine was established, and the Choir has met all the musical demands and challenges admirably.

Not only has the Choir provided the choral music for morning and afternoon services at Holy Trinity, but it also once again sang at Harvest Festivals and the Lessons & Carols services at All Saints' and St Helen's, as well as the Christmas Eve walk-through event in Holy Trinity. 2022 also witnessed the return of the Fauré Requiem for the All Souls' service, as well as the introduction of some new repertoire at the Advent and Christmas carol services. The Top Line choristers received their various end-of-season awards and recognition, and an indoor barbecue-and-games night completed the summer term of singing.

It was not long after returning from summer break, however, that the Choir found itself preparing for services in honour of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. As usual, the Choir proved very good at making quick adjustments at very short notice and offered the music at these services admirably.

It is easy to overlook specific Choir events because there are so many of them each year, but one must not forget the all-important Friday evening rehearsals without which none of the preceding could occur. Top Line attendance, however, continues to be an issue, a situation with several causes: GCSE preparations; altered behaviours during the pandemic; established habits pre-pandemic. Discussions with colleagues throughout the country indicate that this is indeed a widespread problem, and all agree this will change with new recruitment of probationers whose habits haven't been affected by the pandemic. There is indeed local proof of this in that Trinity Voices continues to attract new children and introduce them to ensemble singing (as witnessed recently in their musical offering on Mothering Sunday with the Choir), and they continue to be an excellent training choir, planting seeds of growth for potential new Top Line choristers.

The Holy Trinity Choir, the ultimate inter-generational group where young and older singers work together and learn from one another, is an ensemble to cherish. They give much of themselves throughout the year, and I am grateful for their service. I am especially grateful to Rebecca Mills, our Assistant Director of Music, and my right arm as we work together through the various challenges we're presented with. She is the ultimate professional in being supportive, creative, and willing to go the extra two miles for liturgical and choral music at Holy Trinity.

A brief word of thanks to all who have supported and encouraged the Choir this past year. It has been a challenging period for all, but challenges always strengthen bonds. I see nothing but a bright future for the choir programme at Holy Trinity as we emerge from the pandemic era and enter a new era of normalcy.

Douglas Keilitz

PARISH PRAYER DIARY

The Parish Prayer Diary continues to provide a real foundation for the parish, and an opportunity for individual members of the church family to pray each day for inhabitants of the same road and for same person on the Electoral Roll, as well as some other item of church or parish life.

The prayer diary icon, on the home page of the church website, leads directly to the current and past copies of the monthly prayer diary, which can be printed off for personal use. A link also appears in the weekly e- bulletin, available via email to all those who have filled in the online contact form. Thanks to Phil Harper, Paul Lageu and Sarah Cushing, printed copies continue to be delivered or posted to prayer diary recipients without internet access.

Christine Cottrell

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER GROUP

The Contemplative Prayer Group has met monthly in person this year on the first Tuesday of each month. While the size of the group has remained small, several new people have come regularly or occasionally during the year. It is always open to anyone to attend.

In the summer months we moved into Holy Trinity Church, where we met in St Peter's

Chapel. From November to March, we have gone back into the Lounge in the Parish Centre. In order to avoid disturbance by the noise of activities in the main hall, we have changed the time of our meetings to 5.30pm, which some members have also found more convenient.

The format of the meetings is to have a short time of greeting and sharing of personal news, followed by an introduction to the subject matter for prayer for that evening. This is often a text from Scripture, a spiritual writer, or a poem. Sometimes there is a short explanation of different ways of praying with a text. After a request to the Holy Spirit to lead us and a guided period of personal stilling in preparation, we have 30 minutes of silent prayer together. Members report that they find it easier to focus on their prayer when in a group than when praying alone.

We believe that our meetings help us to grow in our relationship with God, and make a contribution to the prayer life of the parish. We have missed the leadership and presence of Jenny Rowland over the past two and a half years and are hoping that she will feel able to re-join us soon.

John and Tricia Hall-Matthews

BELL RINGERS

The condition of the bells and fittings remains good, and we are indebted to Peter Bridges, Deputy Tower Captain, who keeps a close eye on the condition of the ropes and undertakes regular inspections of the fixtures and fittings.

The ringing team continues to make steady progress and the bells are rung regularly on a Sunday, and for weddings and on other occasions by request. We were delighted recently to welcome three new ringers to the band, Jennie Willis, Keith Archer and Malcolm Peters. It is great to have them as part of the team.

The Dumb Bell

The dumb bell has been used extensively, particularly in connection with teaching the completely new band of ringers at Clifford Chambers. Mark Sayers, with much appreciated additional support from members of our band and teachers from the Coventry Guild, has done a wonderful job ensuring that Clifford Chambers church now has a dedicated team of ringers. Well done to everyone concerned!

Recruitment is always high on the agenda, and I am delighted to report that two potential new ringers are currently being taught and there are others whose training will commence shortly.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the Queen's Funeral

2022 started off full of promise as a year of celebration, commemorating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at the beginning of June. Special ringing was scheduled to celebrate the 70-year reign of Elizabeth II, our longest reigning monarch. It was a privilege to be involved on such a significant national occasion, maintaining a current link to a long and well-established tradition.

However, none of us could have known that within such a short time, the bells would be required again, but this time to commemorate the Queen's death at Balmoral on 8 September. The Queen's health had been a source of deep concern for many months,

but nevertheless, due to the unprecedented statements from Buckingham Palace issued during 8th September, the nation and the world became more aware that her life was ebbing towards its close.

During the days that followed her passing, the bells were rung fully muffled, apart from the tenor bell which was only half muffled. This totally unique sound, something that had not be heard since 1952 when King George V died, only occurs to mark the death of the sovereign. It was an honour and privilege for our band to be involved, something which those who took part will never forget.

Charles Wilson, Tower Captain

MAKING DISCIPLES

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Over the last year, the main focus of the work with Children & Families has been transitioning from the on-line work during the pandemic back to in-person. This started at the beginning of the year with the restarting of the Stay & Play group at the Ken Kennett Centre on Tuesday mornings and Trinity Tots at the Parish Centre on Thursday afternoons. In a lot of ways, we have had to start from scratch, as most of the children who previously came are now of school age. However, we have grown two well attended groups, with Val Payne and I running the Tuesday group and a team of 6 (including myself) helping with the Thursday group. The team at Trinity Tots has made a huge difference, not only on the practical side, but also in the welcome we can offer and the befriending of the parents. An unintended part of the outreach for the groups is supporting the asylum seekers in Stratford, both those from Ukraine and others staying in a local hotel. We have a number of families from those groups who regularly attend, and we have been able to support them in many ways.

To develop the work done at the Toddler Groups, in December, I began Tots@Trinity, a monthly service held in Holy Trinity Church on Wednesday afternoons. I felt it important to hold it inside Holy Trinity to allow children the opportunity to become used to the space. Most toddlers coming for the first time spend a lot of their first visit wandering around and becoming comfortable in a place so large to little eyes. We have had 3 services and the numbers, although low, are increasing. One of the thoughts for the group was to give those who attend the Toddler Groups a chance to take a next step in their journey of faith. Unfortunately, in the case of a lot of those who attend the groups, the children are in nursery on a Wednesday; the groups they attend take place when the parents aren't working. The plan now that the format is settled is to reach out to the parents of those we have Christened and other parents and carers in the town.

Also in December, we began the new Time Out service, a monthly informal service in the Parish Centre. Before the service began a team was formed to explore what expression of church the service may be, working with Rev'd Sally Buddle from Coventry Diocese. We experimented with holding the service at different times, but it seemed 4p.m. was the preferred time. The services so far have been based around Take Time meditations, a resource for both adults and used in schools which are based

on the Ignatian spirituality style. There is a team who meet to review and plan each service. We haven't advertised it much outside of the church community, so those attending are mainly from the current church congregation, but the next step is to widen the range of those we reach out to.

To help children engage during the Parish Eucharist in Holy Trinity, I have put together the Creative Corner. Rather than just being filled with toys and things to keep children occupied, the elements within it have been designed to help children join in and worship. There are boxes with a variety of items to be used at different points in the service. Everything has been designed so that it can be taken away from the Creative Corner, as I wish for families not to think they can only sit in the Creative Corner, but can sit anywhere in Holy Trinity. There are sets of instructions in the corner with suggestions on how to use the items. However, I would like to either do some training with parents and carers on how to use the items or create a video they can watch, so that they can get the most out of everything that's there.

Although there had been some contact with the local Primary Schools, via online assemblies, it has been great to be able to start going back into schools again, not only to take collective worship and assemblies, but also teaching sessions on different parts of the Christian faith, either in school or via tours of Holy Trinity. Being in the schools has allowed stronger relationships with the staff to develop, leading to other opportunities.

Before the pandemic, we had a Children & Families Team who worked with me to plan and develop the work in this area. I have been trying to recruit members to the team, but so far without much success. I would like to take this opportunity once again to appeal for people's support. To develop a flourishing Children & Families ministry within the church, we need a team of people, as there is a limit to how much I can do alone, especially taking into consideration my other duties. I wish to thank all those who have supported the work with children & families over the past year; your support, no matter how big or small, is always appreciated.

Phil Harper

HOME GROUPS AND COURSES

All our home groups are now meeting in person again, some weekly or fortnightly, some for the duration of the length of a course, and continue to use a wide variety of materials, including Cover to Cover study notes, our chosen Lent book for 2022, as well as more bespoke bible studies.

Following on from Soul Space, which was run in 2022, another home group has been developed, kindly led by the Rev'd Penny Harrison. This adds to those groups already in existence. However, there is still plenty of opportunity to grow further groups.

For anyone wishing to explore more whether they perhaps feel called to host or facilitate a homegroup, please speak with me.

During 2022, the parish also ran a successful "Living in Love and Faith" course, in conjunction with the parishes of Alveston and Shottery. This course was facilitated by the

Rev'd Sue McClellan, who is curate at the cathedral, and who is also married to the Rev'd Craig Grocock, Vicar of Shotton.

The Rev'd Steve Jarvis

SOUL SPACE

Eleven participants signed up for the workshop in 2022, which started in January. They were all people we had previous contact with, either through weddings or baptisms. Sessions were held online and led by a team of leaders consisting of Les Albiston, Jane Rogers, Michael Shanebeck, Patrick Taylor, Chris Tattersall, Rebecca White and Pauline McIntosh, who is the Administrator. Eight participants completed the sessions and three of them went forward for confirmation (including one who was also baptised) at a service in Holy Trinity in November.

Patrick Taylor

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT TEAM

The members of the team continue to contact the bereaved families of those whose funerals have been taken by one of the Clergy at Holy Trinity. The families are sent a post card of Holy Trinity with our condolences and informing them that we will be following up the card with a telephone call. If the bereaved person would like someone to talk to, then a visit is arranged.

In November at All Souls, we remember all those who have died during the past year, as well as loved ones whom members of the congregation would like to have remembered by name. Those who do not live in Stratford are contacted by telephone and are informed of the Remembrance service; also, all families receive a letter from the Parish office inviting them to this service. We also hold a Remembrance service in May for those who have died during the previous 6 months. After these services, members of the team as well as the Clergy provide coffee and support to those who need it.

We have produced a form entitled My Christian Funeral Plan. This form is available at the back of church for those wishing to make use of it.

All the members of the team are required to complete the requisite Safeguarding courses.

At the beginning of 2023, I stepped down from co-ordinating the Bereavement group after 35 years and Mr. David Harrison has agreed to take over. If you feel you would like to be part of the Bereavement Support Team please contact David on 01789 612634 or email him at: davidianharrison@hotmail.com

The Bereavement Support Group

We now hold a session for the bereaved to meet, so that they can discuss how they are managing their lives after losing a loved one. Those who are attending are finding it useful to see how others are coping with their new situation as well as making new friends. If anyone reading this would like to join us, we meet in the Parish Lounge on the First Monday of the month at 2. p.m. Just come along; we will be pleased to see you.

Gina Lodge Former Bereavement Support co-ordinator.

FOOD BANK

Following the Pandemic, we have been able once again to have a Foodbank donation chest in Holy Trinity. The Foodbank is always very grateful for the contributions, although these are not as plentiful as before the Pandemic. This I feel is largely because there are donation points in all Supermarkets. However, there are usually enough donations for a regular fortnightly trip to the Foodbank. This year there was also a very generous monetary donation from a member of the Congregation.

Lilian Hopkins

FRIENDS OF THE MUSIC

The aim of the Friends of the Music (FoM) is to promote and support all forms of musical activity at Holy Trinity Church. This encompasses both music in worship and music for external audiences. In 2022, emerging from the 18 months of disruption due to the pandemic, the Friends have been successfully re-establishing activities.

The Committee

With Josephine Walker as Chair of the Friends of the Music, the Friends Committee for 2022 comprised: Jane Taylor (Secretary), Martin Stanley (Treasurer), John Cohen, Stephen Dodsworth, Heather Fletcher, Robert Hornby, Carolyn and David Laverty; Douglas Keilitz and Rebecca Mills were Ex-Officio members. In November 2022, the Annual General Meeting of the FoM saw a number of changes in the committee. Josephine Walker, Jane Taylor, John Cohen and Robert Hornby all stepped down from their roles. Caroline Thomas was elected as Chair and Samuel Bridges as Secretary. Liz Johnson and Tim Raistrick joined as new members. Josephine Walker and John Cohen were co-opted back to the committee for a further year.

Supporting music in worship.

The Friends of the Music have:

- Provided funding for the post of the Assistant Director of Music. The post is held by Rebecca Mills. Rebecca has continued to support the Director of Music with the direction of the choir; she has also continued to train Trinity Voices (i.e. children of pre-choir age).
- Provided financial support for an organ scholarship. Amelia Parkin, a long-standing young member of the choir has been supported with contributions towards tuition and course fees. In addition to her choral commitment Amelia has been given opportunities to both play the organ and conduct the choir.
- Coordinated and funded the awarding of prizes and trophies to young choristers. With the return to normal choral activities, it has been heartening to see the continued engagement of the younger choristers, many of whom had their commitment and progress recognised with trophies and awards at the Annual General Meeting in November 2022.
- Commissioned the music for the Shakespeare birthday service. The anthem for the Shakespeare celebrations in 2022 was composed by the Director of Music, Douglas Keilitz. Douglas kindly asked that the fee due to him be donated to the Organ Appeal.

Providing music for external audiences

2022 has been an active year in terms of the promotion and hosting of concerts for external audiences, calling on the rich musical traditions, resources and facilities at Holy Trinity.

Soundbites

In 2022 the series of weekly, lunchtime concerts, which began in 2017, has been successful in terms of both income and the musical life and community outreach of the church. In 2022 there were 44 concerts with audience numbers typically 80 – 100 and growing. There are no ticket fees, but income is gained from a retiring collection and refreshment sales. Soundbites provides a welcoming community and has established an increasing core audience.

Performers, who are not paid any fees apart from travel expenses, have included local musicians, both amateur and professional, students from London and Birmingham music colleges and occasional overseas ensembles.

In 2022 the donations from the Soundbites series returned to pre-Covid levels and has accounted for over 90% of the Friends income.

Year	No. of Events	Income (£)
2019	44	9,907
2020	6	1,533
2021	11	2,687
2022	44	11,744

Evening concerts

In 2022, the Friends hosted a ticketed piano recital given by Antonio Oyarzabal, on 14th May.

Caroline Thomas, Chair Friends of the Music

HOLY TRINITY CoFE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Holy Trinity School continues to have a good reputation with positive external reports rating the quality of education as good.

The motto of the school is “Rooted in Faith we Reach for the Stars.” The governors and staff have been looking at developing the vision and values of Christian Distinctiveness and the verse from Ephesians 3:17 “May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith as we are rooted and grounded in love” is being used, along with other ideas, to expand the concept behind the motto.

The school has worked hard on establishing Collective Worship which embodies the Church of England’s three basic principles of being Inclusive, Invitational and Inspirational. New ways and ideas for worship are being developed.

We have three representatives on the governing body (Foundation Governors): Patrick Taylor as Vicar and two appointed by the PPC, who are Laura Taylor and Val Payne.

Each year the church gives a book to each Year 6 leaver, and this year we are planning to give them an age-appropriate version of the bible, funded by gifts from the congregation.

Val Payne

HOLY TRINITY IN THE COMMUNITY

The mainstay of Holy Trinity in the Community is its small grants programme, and administration of the Mission & Outreach Fund. With a reduced contribution from the

share of commercial proceeds for a third year, it has been fortunate that we have again had no demand for small grants. Therefore, the main focus of our activities has continued to be the Christmas collections. These were distributed to the following three charities:

- We donated £2,576 to the Trussell Trust, which is a national charity that supports the vast majority of FoodBanks within the UK, including our own FoodBank here in Stratford-upon-Avon.
- We gave £2,576 to the Citizens Advice Bureau in support of their general work, and £1,975 to our local CAB, specifically for the support of families and individuals struggling with fuel poverty during this present cost of living crisis. Thank you to all those who donated their Winter Fuel Allowance for this specific cause.
- We gave £1000 to the Church Mission Society in support of the work of our CMS link partners, Tom & Verity Clare, in their work in Africa.

In addition, as a church, we also raised money for the UKRDEC appeal for the Ukraine. In particular, we express our huge thanks to the Fletcher family for making the blue and yellow ribbons, which raised £13,094 during 2022.

Where we were able to, we continued to organise the Mothering Sunday toiletries' collection, the Harvest Foodbank donations, and Christmas appeals. For 2022, for the second time, we chose not to organise our own shoebox appeal. Instead, we again encouraged individuals to support a shoebox scheme run by the Stratford Baptist Church.

We extend our grateful thanks for the generosity of our congregation and visitors.

The Rev'd Steve Jarvis

LAY CHAPLAINCY

At the start of the year, we had six regular Lay Chaplains, and the church was open to visitors for 2 hours each morning on six days a week, staffed solely by volunteers. This meant that we could have most open sessions covered by a Lay Chaplain on duty.

In April one of our chaplains resigned and it was decided that the Wednesday morning pre-Soundbites was less viable as it was often cut short. In July we lost another chaplain, but we did find a suitable additional Lay Chaplain for August. However, from September onwards we have found it more difficult to cover all sessions because of a smaller team.

In September, following the sad passing of our wonderful Queen Elizabeth II, during the period of National Mourning, we were able to provide a Lay Chaplain during most sessions when the church was open with the Books of Condolence. There was an incredibly reverent atmosphere in the church during this period and the numerous visitors were very respectful.

In November and December, for the winter period opening, there were mainly only two sessions per week which were Wednesday afternoons and Saturdays.

Our main role is to be a listening ear and to offer comfort and prayer in a non-judgemental way and, by doing this, to act as an ambassador for the church and the Christian faith. This could be to an existing member of the congregation, a local person, or a visitor from the UK or from overseas. It is impossible to know this until one engages with the visitor in conversation. We also get a few foreign visitors who are studying or working in the

UK. The visitors come to Holy Trinity Church for various reasons: some to pray for a lost loved one or to find spiritual solace, some because they love visiting churches, and most come as part of the Shakespeare experience. When we are on duty, we engage with the visitors, and endeavour to answer their questions, thus attempting to improve their experience of Holy Trinity Church. When appropriate, we offer them comfort or prayer and give them a blessing. Sometimes after we have said lectern prayers, an opportunity may open up to talk about faith issues.

I believe that all the Lay Chaplains have been called by God to perform this vital service in our church; since all are individuals, we relate to the visitors in different ways. However, after most duties I can honestly say that we as Lay Chaplains feel enriched to have met people who love to talk to us and even feel envious of our lives here in Stratford. We sometimes even get a mention in Trip Advisor!

Each year as a group we affect the lives of thousands of our visitors. Is there anyone reading this who feels that they would like to join us? Phone Keith on 266242 for an informal chat!

Keith Payne

MUNICIPAL CHARITIES

Almshouses

Within the five current properties with a total of 46 apartments, we have been able to offer housing to 9 new single persons from the qualifying Stratford and district area. Each new apartment has had a full refurbishment of the bathroom and kitchen, as well as all rooms being redecorated. We currently have 45 residents in total; however, application for the last apartment available is well underway.

Relief in Need

In 2022, we were able to support several local Stratford Families with replacement white goods, furniture, beds and carpets, as well as making generous donations to the food bank, CAB, Welcome Here and The Parenting Project.

Properties in Stratford

During the last 18 months, 11 Guild Street has been taken back into full ownership, with the purpose of letting commercial office rooms. To date 9 rooms out of the 15 available are now raising income to cover refurbishment expenses and provide income for Relief in Need. 14 Guild Street has just been taken back, with the long-term aim of creating additional Almshouse apartments. In the short term, we have the use of two domestic flats, a working laundry and paid car parking for up to 12 cars.

We will continue to support the Stratford community from the income available from our permanent invested endowments.

Mark W Sayers

Trustee on behalf of Holy Trinity

NOVEL THEOLOGY

The Novel Theology group has continued to meet, usually monthly, with a membership of 6-8. We have now moved away from Zoom and back to in-person meetings.

Our reading has as always been varied. There is perhaps a certain bias towards the classics, with, for example, “Oliver Twist” and “Emma” featuring in the past year. But we have also read a number of contemporary novels such as “Where the Crawdads Sing” and “The Great Passion”. Our main venture into more religious/theological writing was the memorable book by Frances Ward, former Dean of St Edmundsbury, “Like there’s no tomorrow” which deals with the implications of climate change and other current crises for our civilisation and our faith.

We are in no way a learned theological book group – just a reading group which happens to consist of church members – and no prior theological knowledge is required. We simply offer a relaxing opportunity, so necessary in a busy town and a busy church, to engage honestly with literature, with faith, and with each other, in ways which may enable us to grow. New members, and new ideas for books to read, are always welcome; please contact me on 01789 204923 or at awoollard@joyousgard.org.uk
Anthony Woollard

PRAYER MINISTRY

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. (Ephesians 6:18)

For many years there has been a tradition in Holy Trinity of providing Prayer Ministry during the Sunday Morning Eucharist. There are always two members in each Prayer Team, and anyone can go for prayer during communion; one doesn’t have to give a reason – one can simply ask for a blessing.

All prayer requests remain confidential: prayers can be asked for a family member or friend, or for a problem situation, or just to have the relief of knowing that a problem shared is a problem reduced. From time to time, all of us feel the need for prayer whether it’s for ourselves or for friends and family who may be ill or in difficulty or anxious.

This ministry usually happens in St Peter’s Chapel and is accessed on your return from receiving communion in the Chancel. The prayer can only be short during this service, but if more prayer is required, this can be arranged.

If nobody comes for prayer, the prayer team will pray for people whom they know need prayer and/or pray through the list on the Pew Sheet.

At this time, we have seven prayer team members; if anyone else would like to be involved in this ministry, please contact Keith on 266242 for an informal chat and to ascertain the training requirements.

Keith Payne

SOCIAL TEAM

During this year the Social Team has organised 8 events, starting with the most ambitious, the Jubilee Street Party, on Sunday June 5th. This was an opportunity for outreach to Holy Trinity Primary School, both to the children, who provided colourful bunting, and their families, some of whom joined us for the bring-and-share lunch. Rain

prevented the lunch from being held in the churchyard, as planned, but the joyful atmosphere in the church, enhanced by a 7-piece jazz band, made this a real community celebration, shared by more than 120 people present.

Saturday morning walks in July and September allowed for closer links with the villages of Clifford Chambers (exploring the butterflies and insect life) and Luddington, enjoying a riverside walk.

Harvest was celebrated, in October with a Ceilidh and supper, followed by a repeat Tenpin Bowling trip in November. A Christmas Wreath making workshop proved a popular new venture in December. In 2023 a Beetle Drive in January, and a Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday provided our diverse church family with a chance to have fun and get to know one another better.

We are very grateful to all those who support events in any way, by attending or volunteering to help on the day. Over the last year, Julie Renfrew, Faith Piper, Hazel Tattersall and Beckey Barton have all had to withdraw from the team. This has been a great loss and we are very grateful to each of them for their commitment to the events that they helped to organise. We are therefore very pleased to welcome Rosie Blumire and Christine Ross to the Social Team, but still feel the need for additional members to share the responsibility of planning events for 2023.

Christine Cottrell

HOSPITALITY TEAS

It was only possible to have Teas served on 11 dates last year instead of around 30, due to the Church not being available, Weddings etc, and a lack of Volunteers to help serve the teas. However, we were able to raise just over £1,000.00 for Church Funds. Many thanks are extended to those few willing Volunteers who baked for the Teas and to the Servers. All involved with this Ministry always enjoy the interaction with fellow Church members and with the general public.

Lilian Hopkins

STRATFORD CHURCHES TOGETHER

The ministers or representatives of the churches of various denominations in the Stratford area have continued to meet every other month. We share news, have fellowship, and consider ways in which we can work together and support the churches in our Christian witness and service to the town. Examples include: supporting refugees and asylum seekers, helping the homeless (including the role of the Fred Winter Centre), responding to the cost-of-living crisis, addressing climate change, (including Eco Chat) and working with young people. The Town Chaplaincy and Street Pastors also send representatives who share updates on their important ministry in the town centre. Churches together also organised the Good Friday Walk of Witness and a joint service to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Joint adverts for the Easter and Christmas services in all the churches were placed in the Stratford Herald last year, and a contribution was made to the Herald's funeral guide, giving a Christian perspective on Funerals.

Patrick Taylor

STREET PASTORS

Once again, I am pleased (and relieved) with the way the year has panned out. Despite losing two Street Pastors, we have managed to send out patrols on every Friday during the year – no small achievement considering how few we are! This is due to the willingness of everyone to ‘pull together’ and be very loyal and committed to the Street Pastor movement, for which I am very grateful!

Other groups nationally may be much larger, but I think that our small group may well show more cohesion and willingness to “step up” if the need arises. People are always adaptable, trying to fit in if there is a problem with the rota, and we are very grateful to Phil Mottram, for example, for filling in again on a couple of occasions, especially when someone carelessly went and broke an arm!

It does, of course, bring home the fact that we really need to find more Street Pastors to join us. We all need to chat seriously to our Church friends and try to persuade them to at least come out one time on patrol to see what is involved and experience how rewarding and non-threatening it can be! Last year’s efforts in bringing the Churches’ attention to Street Pastors sadly didn’t materialize in any new recruits, although we are delighted to welcome two new Prayer Pastors. One possible new Street Pastor has had to delay his training due to illness, but we hope that he will soon be able to start, and it would be excellent if we could find others to join him!!

A few statistics for you: in the past year we have sent out 52 patrols, which involved 641 hours walking the streets, helped 136 ‘vulnerable’ people by chatting and listening to them, and giving practical help, like warm hats, socks and gloves (and it has been very cold!), as well as hot drinks and food. We have given out 83 bottles of water, 35 safety blankets, 6 pairs of flip flops, have picked up 265 bottles and 358 cans, and – have handed out 2629 lollipops!! We have spoken to many people curious about what we do and have received expressions of support and praise from over 329 members of the public. In addition, it is good to know that the Police and door staff are also grateful for our input into the night-time economy,

The Management Team continues to meet every 2 months. They all work hard on behalf of Street Pastors and Prayer Pastors, and I thank them for their input. All in all, I think we are in good shape, and with God’s help, we can go forward with confidence that we are making a difference to many peoples’ lives in Stratford.

Linda Horrocks, Stratford-upon-Avon Street Pastor Coordinator

THE KEN KENNET CENTRE

This year we have continued rebuilding our momentum with outreach from the Ken Kennett Centre. The Parish has continued its commitment to renting the Ken Kennett centre for outreach purposes every Tuesday morning, with new members bringing an average of 20 people plus at each session.

Thanks again to the Revd Diane Patterson and Jane Armitage, who have continued with the running of “Coffee Stop”, which is a regular coffee morning for those in the local area. It has been particularly appreciated by those more elderly members of the community who experienced considerable social isolation. From this outreach, we are continuing to see new people accessing Sunday worship, seasonal services, Soundbites and Trinity Folk.

Stay & Play restarted in 2022 and has been growing in popularity. The church also ran the tea tent at the Justins Avenue fun day in July 2022. This is something we will be repeating in 2023.

The leadership team extend their thank to Revd Diane Patterson, Jane Armitage, Phil Harper and the church volunteers for their time and commitment to this valuable outreach in the north of the parish.

The Rev'd Steve Jarvis

TRINITY COFFEE STOP

Coffee Stop continues to flourish on the 3rd Saturday of each month. This now happens in the Church, and we have regular customers as well as Visitors to the Church who enjoy the welcoming atmosphere and especially the homemade cakes. All profits are donated to Church Funds.

Lilian Hopkins

TRINITY LADIES

It has been good to have a whole year's meeting without interruption by Covid. We have had a variety of speakers and our membership has increased to approx. 56. Some of the highlights of the year were:

- Our Charity Tea Party in aid of the Fred Winter Centre; we raised £385 and made it up to £400 which they were very grateful for.
- As part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, we had Alexandra Messervy to tell us about her life working at the Royal Palaces.
- In May we went to the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham which was enjoyed by those who were able to go.
- In June Pru Porretta talked about the real Lady Godiva and the history of Coventry, which was fascinating.
- We finished our year by holding a delicious lunch in the Parish Centre cooked by Carl who provides the meals at Briar Croft.

In November we held our AGM and appointed a new committee as follows: Gina Lodge (Chair), Rev Diane Patterson (Secretary), Diane Edwards (Treasurer), Tina Allen (Speakers Secretary), Frances Walker (Almoner), and Margaret Wilcox, Anne Blaire, Sian Wade, Gillian Nunn and Barbara Bartos (plus other members when necessary) as our refreshments team. Joan Forbes and Eithne Mulryne look after our Raffle. I am very grateful to all these members for their support.

Our Carol Service was taken by Rev Steve Jarvis followed by our usual mince pies, cakes etc, and very much enjoyed by all who attended.

If you would like to join us, please come to the Parish Centre on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 2 p.m. We will be pleased to see you.

Gina Lodge

TRINITY PLAYERS

We were delighted to be back with live audiences in 2022 and no longer limited to 6 actors on the stage at any one time – though we can look back in laughter at our methods of coping!

In March we reached our target of £1000 towards the restoration of the Shakespeare Statue on the Town Hall, and thoroughly enjoyed reading “The Winter’s Tale” – in costume of course - as part of Paul Edmundson’s Community Project, “Shakespeare’s Coming Home!”

For the fourth time since 2008, we staged our Easter Play Message of the Cross. Each time there are changes as new actors and readers join the core team to tell the story as if they had been there, two thousand years ago. Our thanks to those of you who donated to the retiring collection: we were able to send £375 including Gift Aid to UNICEF Ukraine and £200 to Stratford Town Centre Chaplaincy.

Then on April 22 we were back in Holy Trinity for our annual celebration of the Bard’s Birthday, “Coffee, Cake & Shakespeare”. Our thanks to Lilian and Brenda who make the coffee, to Marie for the cake and to David White who helped us act out the tradition of a Verger carrying it in.

We were invited to perform our Mummers’ Play, “The Holy Trinity Play of St George”, at the Albany Road Jubilee Street Party and then twice as part of the Stratford Town Centre Celebrations. Fortunately, these traditional plays, each adapted by the Performers for their own community are for all seasons, so Old Father Christmas became the Green Man and Roger Taylor wrote us a jolly tune for a Jubilee Song.

Our major production was Shakespeare’s “The Winter’s Tale” which attracted some brilliant young actors, enthusiastic audiences, excellent reviews and was included in the Stratford Herald Arts Section among the highlights of the year. We were able to donate £1800 to Church Funds.

We continue to meet each month to read plays and share favourite verse and prose.

The downside is, as ever, lack of appropriate space for our large collection of stage costume. There is no more space in cupboards and on doors in my house for the most precious costumes, and the number of us who can manage the precarious descent under the stage in the parish centre for the rest is dwindling. Accessible storage space is urgently needed.

Ursula Russell

TRINITY TIMES

Despite the dramatic impact of the pandemic, Trinity Times has continued to chronicle our common life, and perhaps been more important than ever in keeping communication flowing. We have once again recorded, in words and images, all the main events in the life of our parish, with particularly valuable features written by Judith Dorricott on both events and people, and we have been given much to think about through the contributions of our leadership team (one of whom writes each month’s editorial) and a number of others.

Because of the cost and effort of physically producing and distributing a high-quality parish magazine with a large circulation, in a situation when both money and people's time have been at a premium, we have continued to "circulate" the magazine primarily online, with only very limited numbers physically printed in-house and distributed by volunteers. However, towards the end of 2021, a decision was taken to encourage some expansion of that printed provision, at a slightly increased price. So far, take-up has been limited, though it has been increasing (some 90 copies of each edition are now printed and distributed), and it has not been worth returning to out-of-house commercial printing. This will be kept under review.

Some of the costs of publication have historically been met through carrying small amounts of advertising. During the year, Karen Hollis, the team member who managed advertising, has had to resign through pressure of work. It is hoped to recruit a new team member who can carry this on.

Contributions to the magazine, written or visual, are always welcome, and each edition gives the cut-off date for contributions to the following one. We often approach the deadline wondering how we will fill some spaces, but we always do fill them – exactly! Please keep your material coming in.

Anthony Woollard

TRINITY VOICES

Trinity Voices was formed in March 2017 and grew directly from the outreach work which Benedict Wilson and I set up in 2015. After a break during the pandemic, the choir restarted in March 2022, with a debut performance for the new group at the 2022 Easter Sunday morning service. The highlight of 2022 was taking part in the atmospheric Christingle service, which the children thoroughly enjoyed.

The choir meets every Monday in term time after school for drinks, all-important biscuits and games, followed by a fun rehearsal. They also enjoy ministry in the form of an interactive Bible story, delivered expertly each week by Phil Harper. Amelia Parkin, our Organ Scholar, has been an invaluable help accompanying at the piano, showing the children how the church organ works, and even leading a rehearsal when I was off sick with Covid. Kade McDougall, one of our choristers, has also been a great help singing with and looking after the children. Marie McDougall also deserves thanks for her sterling work as group chaperone.

The new group is made up of younger children, ranging in age from 5 to 8, which is exciting because we have more time with them to teach them vocal skills and the confidence to sing up before they progress to the Church Choir. Children learn all the songs off by heart but have also started some basic training on pitch matching and intervals. They have learned some very tricky songs, both in terms of words and music, which they have soaked up like little sponges! They have also started to bond as a group and have increased their knowledge of the church, faith and the Bible through stories and general discussions which arise in rehearsals.

The group will perform on Mothering Sunday 2023 in a piece with the Church Choir, with a verse to sing by themselves. The children are very excited about joining in with the 'big

choir'!

We have further service dates coming up and will be setting up some community events such as singing in care homes this Christmas.

As ever, we are on the lookout for new members: if you know a child who may be interested in joining, please email rebecca.mills@stratford-upon-avon.org
Rebecca Mills

WELCOME AND CARE

WELCOME TEAM

The number of new worshippers has reduced since the last report, but I'm happy to say that the majority of new worshippers from the last report are now coming to church on a regular basis, and some have become involved in volunteering which has been a great delight to me and the team.

This year we have had in the region of 19 new worshippers excluding their children. There are an additional 4 worshippers who have filled out a form, but they have only appeared in the last couple of weeks.

The Welcome team plus the Wardens have keen eyes, spotting any new worshippers at the 10.00a.m. service on Sunday morning and, between us, we hope to make contact with possible new congregation members. We also have a large number of visitors, and we are delighted that they come to our services too.

We are going to try a different approach to the Welcome Mingle. Instead of having a Sunday lunchtime and a Thursday evening Mingle, we have decided to cut it down to just one on a Sunday, since the attendance at the Thursday evening Mingle has been poor, despite confirmation from the new worshippers that they would attend.

The Sunday Mingle will take place after the 10.00a.m. service, and tea and coffee will be served in an area of the church where we can chat. Patrick will then do a tour of the church with everyone, and probably finish in St Peters Chapel to talk through issues such as stewardship and volunteering. This way we should capture most of the new worshippers in one go, and it will be beneficial to everyone.

Eve Archer

PASTORAL CONTACT TEAM

As we came out of the Covid Pandemic, the need to have multiple pastoral contact teams and thirty-two pastoral leaders was considered no longer the best approach, although we were extremely grateful for all that they had done to keep in touch with everyone, one way or another.

Instead, we decided to move to a more streamlined system where we would try to look out for people who were not already in touch with one of the existing groups across the church family. For example, if someone belongs to Trinity Ladies, the members will notice

when someone is missing or in need and alert the leaders, who, if they feel it necessary, will alert the clergy that a phone call or visit is needed. However, someone who does not belong to a church group or team of some kind may be more easily missed. Also, those who do not yet belong to a group might be encouraged to join one if they wish, otherwise they can be cared for by the pastoral team of clergy and other lay leaders who now meet monthly to review our pastoral care needs and arrangements.

Establishing a list of who belongs to which group (and importantly, who does not belong to any group) has taken a little longer than hoped, as we moved from Church Desk to our new software system (called iKnowChurch). However, but the new pastoral contact process seems to be working well so far.

Kay Dyer – Associate Priest

SAFEGUARDING

This year has been a challenging one for Safeguarding as the three Parishes have returned to the pre-pandemic level of services and activities. Many of the operational functions are performed by volunteers and lockdown meant that there have been many changes in the numbers and rotas.

The current figures show that we have 214 people involved in tasks requiring monitoring for Safeguarding, of whom 127 have received Basic Training and 82 have completed Foundation Level. This obviously has involved some considerable record-keeping, in reminders and noting the dates for completion certificates. Also, there is a continually fluctuating list of staff and volunteers, who may not be aware of the Safeguarding requirements for their individual roles. Much of the application and referee work-load is undertaken by Team Leaders and Church Wardens, as they are the first contact and are better able to keep abreast of change.

The Parishes are lucky to offer a wide diversity of services, social events, and community links, including many involving children and vulnerable adults, and these obviously require monitoring by Safeguarding.

Many Safeguarding tasks were originally done routinely by office staff but financial considerations have resulted in less availability of this central function and therefore a greater volunteer responsibility. This has unfortunately had a negative impact on the record-keeping and work has recently been done to improve this and establish tighter routines for paperwork and records.

There have been no major incidents during the year; however, minor problems do arise that involve some staff and clergy input and time. These always remain strictly confidential.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all who have supported the Safeguarding work throughout the year.

Jane Armitage

SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE

We are pleased to report that number of parishioners staying for coffee after the 10am Eucharist on Sunday mornings has been steadily increasing, and all are very appreciative of a hot drink, especially during the cold winter months. Thankfully donations have been increasing, though possibly not in line with inflation!

We have an excellent but dwindling group of willing parishioners to help serve refreshments. We are therefore desperately seeking new members (male or female) to join this worthwhile ministry in order to help spread the load. Serving refreshments is on a rota basis, usually in a group of three people, and should only occur about once every six weeks or so. If you are interested, just contact us after the Service – your help will be most welcome.

Diane Edwards and Tina Hillyard

BUILDINGS AND ENVIRONMENT

CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE VOLUNTEERS

We are a team of volunteers who meet regularly to keep the churchyard tidy. Our aim is to make the churchyard a pleasant place for everyone who walks through or comes to visit the church. Our being there also provides opportunities to talk with visitors and to represent the church community.

Members of the team during 2022 were: Richard Hartley, Hester Hawkes, Robert Hornby, Liz Johnson, Lindsay MacDonald, Marion Mitchell, Bridget Sorel-Cameron, Valerie Thompson, and John Heritage. We had a two-hour session on alternate Monday afternoons, with a total of 22 sessions between February and November. The average attendance was 5.3 volunteers per session, and the total time contributed over the year was 234 person-hours. The team continues to be notable for a great spirit of cooperation and camaraderie, and for its “can do” approach. The award for best attendance went to Valerie, who was present for 21 out of the 22 sessions. Bridget and Hester provided marvellous home-made cakes for tea.

Tasks accomplished during the year included:

- Kept the main avenue and pathways free of litter;
- Picked up fallen twigs and branches under trees throughout churchyard;
- Removed grass and weeds along the edges of paths and around church building;
- Installed a further eight birdboxes in the trees;
- Planted various shrubs and wildflowers;
- Removed weeds from base of the wall on Mill Lane (outside on the road);
- Cut suckers from lime trees up to a height of 4 metres;
- Maintained the shrubs in the bed alongside the southern path;
- Maintained the enclosed garden behind the Parish Centre.

The year began with clearing up after a severe storm in February, which tore several large branches off the cedar tree near the west door (this was brought as a seedling from the Garden of Gethsemane in 1872). A chainsaw was required (thanks to Robert) to cut them up. The usable logs of cedar wood were given to the Warwickshire Woodturners.

The highlight of the year was planting a tree for the Queen's Jubilee. We chose a Liquidambar styraciflua, related to a maple, which has spectacular autumn leaf colours, and selected a location for it by the western wall, in a gap in the line of lime trees. A bronze plaque was placed in front of it. In late May, a dedication ceremony was held, attended by the Lord Lieutenant, the leader of the District Council and the Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon. The event was featured in the Herald.

Also, during the year, we cut a cross in the turf near the river to the south of the chancel and planted it with wildflower seeds. This was linked with the Town Council's 'Carpets for the Queen' initiative. Several shrubs were planted in other locations, which needed careful watering during the drought and fierce heat of July and August. Fortunately, we now have access to a water supply in the Bier House.

The experience of volunteering continues to be positive, and we have worked well together as a team. The appearance of the churchyard has been maintained at a high standard, and we have received many compliments from both visitors and members of the congregation. We welcome anyone who would like to join us, even occasionally, to assist with this satisfying activity in such a glorious situation.

Lindsay MacDonald

CLERK OF WORKS REPORT

The maintenance team for Holy Trinity and the Parish Centre consists of Dr John Rees, Ian Johnston, and me. We meet at 10.00 a.m. on Friday mornings and, for a couple of hours, do the odd jobs that the Parish Administrator has requested of us.

During the course of last year, we sanded down and painted the front of the Parish Hall, and replaced 30 middle-leg supports to the church pews. Following the many break-ins, we replaced and mended doors and locks many times. In the Parish Centre, we painted the kitchen, Meeting Room, access hallway and the Gents' loo, and did other minor jobs requested of us. Before our former Parish Administrator, Andy Winter, retired, we remodelled the Parish Office, installing new shelving and worktops, and moved the printer – allowing the adjacent space to become an interview room/quiet space/office.

Following Mark Sayer's retirement as Clerk of Works due to all the work he undertakes for the Municipal Charities, I was asked by Patrick to take on the role of Clerk of Works. Mike Warrilow, as our Building Manager, has been guiding me in this role, and I must thank him for his due diligence and patience. Having started my working life as a Carpenter and Joiner, and retired as a local Building Contractor, I have, over the years, been involved with many aspects of the building industry, which makes me well qualified for this role.

Having to deal with important aspects of the maintenance of a Grade 1 Star Listed building, with deep heritage demands, as well as an aging Parish Hall, is indeed challenging.

- **The August 2021 Quinquennial Inspection** by Stephen Oliver, Church Architect, produced 86 pages, 80 of which detail recommendations for maintenance and repair:
 - 10 items are A listed and require urgent attention.
 - 154 items are B listed and should be attended to in the current year.

- C, D and E items are numerous, but not so urgent.

Some of the A items we are addressing are:

- A managed system for accessing gutters to all roofs, and ladders for safe access to the Spire, which could cost in excess of £30,000.
 - Repointing to lead flashings on the West side and general re-pointing: degradation of the stone is a general item, with repointing required in many places, as well as the removal of moss.
 - Stratford Town Council have been requested to trim/cut back the pine tree adjacent to the South Entrance, and the tree branches, which are brushing the West parapets and causing some stone detachment.
 - Some concern was expressed concerning the South Aisle roof, which appeared to have some flex in it. A removal of lead and a hole into the void below allowing for an inspection by our Structural Engineer and Architect proved that the structure is still sound, but that the lead covering has reached its expected lifespan and will need replacing in the near future. The report is awaited: this repair will possibly cost some £200,000.
 - The concerning feature of the South elevation clear storey is the degradation of much of the stonework. Oliver Architects have surveyed it, and are detailing, the requirements, in order to produce a quotation.
 - The gutter cleaning and clearing of leaves has been completed by the maintenance team on the lower levels, and contractors have inspected, and are quoting, in order to deal with the more inaccessible areas, the Tower and East elevation, which will need a cherry picker for access.
 - The Hall ceiling has been insulated, which should conserve energy.
 - A new dishwasher has been provided in the kitchen, and the base and work tops altered to accommodate it.
- **The Electrical Installation Condition Report 2018** by Yorke Electrical Ltd.
- This report came in as “unsatisfactory”. However, because of the disruptions caused by Covid, I suspect that this report was not addressed in full. I am assured by Yorke Electrical Ltd that, following minor adjustments – such as moving items away from electrical boxes and appliances - the Church and Hall are now “satisfactory”.
 - However, there are areas where multiple sockets and leads contravene fire regulations, and these must be addressed as soon as possible. If anyone reading this report is responsible for such items, please be advised that we will have to make different arrangements. The Chapel is a prime example, and I have requested a quotation for the provision of additional 13-amp sockets.
 - We have requested a quote for upgraded LED lighting in the Hall, as existing bulbs are out of date, and keep blowing.
- **The Fire Risk Assessment Report for Holy Trinity, and the Parish Hall**, was prepared on 8 November 2022, and is 137 pages long. Issues highlighted in this report are divided into categories: High, Medium and Advisory Risk.
- The comments in this report are various and many. I believe we conform to the majority of the requirements, but understand that the Churchwardens are preparing a fire statement and instructions for all who are users and servants of the Church and Hall.

- It is inevitably difficult to be prescriptive about fire safety, as, after an event, there is always something overlooked. For all people who use the Church and Hall, it is important to know what to do in the event of fire: the basic instructions being to make sure that all persons have evacuated the building and to call 999 for fire services.

I should like to thank the Friday morning maintenance team for all their work, and also Mike, Lola, and the Churchwardens for their advice and help in keeping our ancient and wonderful Church in good repair for future generations. I appreciate that, inevitably, I will have left out items that you may wish to question me on, and I will, of course, do my very best to answer.

David Neale

ECO-CHURCH TEAM

The Eco Church team – consisting primarily of Mike Warrillow, Samuel Jupe, Lindsay MacDonald, Tricia Hall-Matthews and me, but with contributions also from such as Amelia Parkin, Kevin Bond and Tony Guy – has tried during the year to keep before the Parochial Parish Council and the congregation the extreme importance to our mission of the stewardship of Creation in response to the climate emergency.

The PCC has made some progress in fulfilling that stewardship. We pledged two years ago to aim for “net zero carbon emissions” by 2030, and we have already largely achieved that through buying our electricity and even (so far as is possible at present) our gas from renewable sources rather than using fossil fuels. We have improved the insulation in the Parish Centre, and plan to experiment with new and more efficient approaches to heating in the church. Projects are afoot to make the churchyard more friendly to wildlife, and some of these – and other projects as well – will be developed in conjunction with Holy Trinity School. Not just Holy Trinity but our village churches have contributions to make in such areas too.

In terms of educating ourselves and the wider public, initiatives range from the “eco tips” in our weekly bulletin to the monthly ecumenical Eco Chat sessions, to which some of our members have contributed significantly.

As a result of these efforts, the national Eco Church organisation in November presented us with a Silver award, the second-highest level, for our contribution to the care of creation and the combating of climate change. We join a handful of local churches, and an increasing number nationally, in having our contribution thus recognised. The attainment of a Gold award, such as our Methodist neighbours have gained, may prove beyond us because of such factors as the nature of our historic building. However, the Church at national level is continuing to encourage progress in all parishes and issue guidance as to how it might be achieved, and the team will continue to look for opportunities to make the care of creation even more central in our life and witness.

A fuller account of our progress is to be found on the recently revised Eco Church page on our website (www.stratford-upon-avon.org).

Anthony Woollard

FLOWER TEAM

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic in previous years, 2022 was a bumper year for bridal parties, with over twenty-five weddings taking place during the summer months alone. These occasions are a great pleasure for the willing teams of voluntary flower arrangers, but the occasional hiccup occurs, such as Harvest Festival Sunday clashing with a big wedding on the Saturday afternoon: the bride (understandably) informed the team that she had no wish to walk up and down the aisle surrounded by carrots, tins of tomatoes or sheafs of wheat! So quick thinking and quick action was required by all those arranging – and re-arranging – the flowers that weekend.

The flower arrangers are organized into four teams, so that each team only works every fourth week. At Christmas and Easter, all the teams join in to decorate the church with considerable flair, panache, and enthusiasm. Members of the flower teams have been known to comb the hedgerows in the countryside to gather enough ivy to cover all the high window-sills in church before the Christmas celebrations begin.

For the current year, a different system will be trialled, as the number of weddings has incurred considerable work for all, with bridal parties often hoping the voluntary teams can produce complicated and exotic arrangements. In 2023, the flower teams will continue to provide basic arrangements throughout the church, at a cost of about £40 per week, and these decorations will remain in church all week at no cost to the bridal parties. The bridal parties will be free to provide any extra flowers of their own choice (for example pew ends, extra pedestals or bowers) and these, of course, will be at their own expense, and organized through their own florists. Naturally, the volunteers will liaise with the brides to ensure that church flowers co-ordinate with the colours of the bridal party.

The flower teams usually meet on a Friday morning to renew the arrangements, and members are always willing to swap weeks if circumstances dictate. Currently there are twelve members in the group, and more participants are always welcome.

Please contact Judith Dorricott if you are interested in joining the group on judithdorricott@btinternet.com.

FRIENDS OF SHAKESPEARE'S CHURCH

2022 was a year of change for the FOSC. At the AGM in June, Alan Haigh stood down after three years as Chair and Kevin Taylor took up the reins. In November Kevin resigned and the Deputy Chair, Diana Owen, is now acting as Chair whilst the search for a new Chair goes on. The FOSC's long-time Treasurer, Graham Poole, has also announced his intention to stand down in April 2023, and so the FOSC is also looking for a new Treasurer. During the year, the FOSC's constitution was scrutinised, and the Board decided to update its policies, e.g. on managing conflicts of interest and rotation of trustees, in line with modern charity good governance, rather than embark on revising its current constitution.

Two new members of the Board have taken on the roles of Secretary - Cait Fanin - and Membership Secretary - Jennie Ewing.

An inaugural Friends Annual Lecture was held in September delivered by Rev Dr Paul Edmondson, Trustee, assisted by actor, Robert Lister. This was a very successful event with about 80 people attending and over £1000 was raised.

A full programme of events is planned for 2023 and we are working with the Church operations team to manage free entry for the Friends to the chancel. It is hoped that this might also be an opportunity to recruit new Friends.

At the end of 2022, the FOSC had 150 Friends. In 2023, the FOSC donated £10,000 towards the annual maintenance costs of the Church. In addition, it contributed £1,770 towards flashings and doors, £14,983 to complete the restoration of the North transept stonework, £7,465 for the balance of the King James' Bible case and £817 towards the King James' chained Bible restoration.

Mike Warrilow

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

STEWARDSHIP SCHEME AND GIFT AID 2022

Members of the Stewardship Scheme make regular donations to Holy Trinity either through a standing order arranged through their bank or by using personalised envelopes. Joining the scheme brings considerable benefit to the church as the certainty of regular donations assists it in planning for the future, in terms both of its ministry and the upkeep of its buildings.

During 2022 some 185 people, including 13 new donors, contributed to the scheme. However, 19 donors had left by the end of the year, meaning that we start 2023 with 166 members, of whom 140 donate by standing order and 26 by using envelopes. Each year, more members opt for the former method, which helps to streamline the scheme's administration, though donations from either source are equally welcome.

This reduction in membership is doubtless responsible at least in part for the scheme's lower overall total in 2022, although, as can be seen in the table below, this still represents a good increase on the years before the pandemic. Much more significantly, the average weekly donation increased again in 2022 to £14.20, a testament to the enduring generosity of Stewardship donors, which is no less remarkable for its consistency.

Most members of the Stewardship Scheme also complete a Gift Aid declaration, which means that the church can reclaim tax on their donations at no cost to the donor; thus, for every £1 donated, the church receives an additional 25p from the government. The Stewardship total in 2022 of £122,539 was boosted by a Gift Aid reclaim of £28,236 to give an overall total of £150,775.

Our lives have undergone many changes since the arrival of Covid-19. The church's long periods of closure during the pandemic, society's ever-accelerating move away from cash and the cost-of-living crisis have all had an impact on the donations that the church has received over the past few years. It is to be hoped that, as we become used to these new

circumstances, membership of the Stewardship Scheme, and the amount it raises, will increase again in the future.

Stewardship Scheme donations since 2019:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Donations to Holy Trinity	£111,072	£113,443	£125,7441	£122,539
Members at Year End	202	200	183	166
Weekly Average	£10.57	£10.91	£13.21	£14.20
Tax Reclaimed	£26,101	£26,122	£30,986	£28,236
TOTAL	£137,176	£139,565	£156,727	£150,775

In addition to the above:

- £1,065 was donated through the Christmas card amnesty, which, along with a Gift Aid reclaim of £252.50, was included in the total distributed to Holy Trinity's Christmas charities.
- Some £4,879 was donated in support of Ukraine and enlarged by a tax reclaim of £1,219.50.
- The Gift Aid scheme is also used by visitors to the church who donate using the white donation envelopes that are found in the pews; in 2022 these one-off donations totalled £5,476, which was swollen by a further £1,369 in reclaimed tax.
- Finally, under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme the church can reclaim tax on offertory donations up to a total of £8,000, and we were able to claim the maximum of £2,000 from this source.

The church is always pleased to welcome new members to the Stewardship Scheme, especially those who are on Holy Trinity's electoral roll but do not currently participate. Any donation, large or small, is greatly valued, and giving through the Gift Aid scheme – which is open to all UK taxpayers – is a simple way of boosting Holy Trinity's revenue, as well as enlarging the charitable donations that the church itself makes on special occasions. Although tax cannot be reclaimed on their donations, many non-taxpayers also participate in the Stewardship Scheme and their membership is no less valued.

Please consider joining the scheme if you are not yet a member. If you would like details of how to join, please contact me through the parish office or direct on 01789 299785.
Chris Kennedy, Stewardship Officer

