

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

of

**St Lawrence, Bourton-on-the-Water
with St James, Clapton-on-the-Hill**

to be held on

Sunday 28th April 2024

*after a Service of Holy Communion at 11am
in St Lawrence, Bourton-on-the-Water*

**Annual Report
& Financial Statement
Year ended 31st December 2023**

Please bring this booklet
with you to the meeting

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL PARISHIONERS' MEETING & FOR THE APCM	3
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISHIONERS' MEETING 2023	4
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2023	5
STATUTORY REPORTS	8
PCC INFORMATION.....	8
PCC REVIEW OF THE YEAR - 2023.....	9
MINISTER'S REPORT 2023.....	10
SAFEGUARDING.....	12
REVIEW OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AND AFFAIRS.....	12
FABRIC REPORT - ST LAWRENCE, BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER.....	13
GENERAL REPORT INCLUDING FABRIC - ST JAMES, CLAPTON-ON-THE-HILL.....	14
ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT.....	14
NORTH COTSWOLD DEANERY SYNOD REPORT.....	14
ADDITIONAL REPORTS FOR CHURCH ACTIVITIES	15
BELLRINGERS' REPORT.....	15
BENEFICE HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023.....	16
BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER TRUST.....	17
BREAKFAST CHURCH.....	17
BUMBLEBEEZ.....	17
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES.....	18
CHURCH BOOKINGS.....	18
CHURCH WATCH.....	18
HOMEGROUPS & BOOK GROUP 2023.....	19
MR MEN FELLOWSHIP GROUP.....	19
MUSIC & WORSHIP.....	20
OPEN THE BOOK.....	21
PASTORAL CARE AND HOME COMMUNIONS INCLUDING JUBILEE LODGE.....	22
PRAYING TOGETHER FOR OUR CHURCH & COMMUNITY.....	22
TOGETHER ON TUESDAYS.....	22
WARM WELCOME SPACE.....	23
WELCOMERS.....	23
YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A CURATE.....	24

APPENDICES ARE AVAILABLE SEPARATELY

Appendix A – Accounts of the Bourton on the Water Trust

Appendix B – Accounts of St Lawrence, Bourton-on-the-Water with notes

Appendix C – Accounts of St James', Clapton-on-the-Hill

Agenda for the Annual Parishioners' Meeting & for the APCM

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer

Annual Meeting of Parishioners (Vestry Meeting)

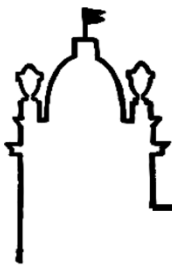
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of 2023 Minutes
4. Election of Church Wardens
5. Accounts of the Bourton on the Water Trust – *Appendix A*
6. Any other business – items to be approved in advance

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

7. Apologies for absence
8. Approval of Minutes of 2023 APCM
9. Elections to PCC
- ~~10. Elections to Deanery Synod every 3 years & not in 2024~~
11. Appointment of Independent Examiner
12. Safeguarding
13. To receive the Annual Reports and accounts of the PCC
 - Deanery Synod report
 - Electoral Roll report
 - Financial Review of the Year
 - Accounts and Financial Statement St Lawrence – *Appendix B*
 - Fabric report for St Lawrence
 - Accounts and Report, St James, Clapton on the Hill – *Appendix C*
 - Fabric report for St James, Clapton on the Hill
 - Reports for all other groups
14. Closing Prayer

PCC Meeting

15. Election of officers
16. Date of Next PCC Meeting: Monday 13th May at 7.30pm in Church (and thereafter usually the second Monday of the month)



Our Annual Parishioners' & Annual Parochial Church Meetings took place on Sunday 23rd April, after a Saint George's Day celebration with our local uniformed organisations and within a service of Holy Communion.

Minutes of the Annual Parishioners' Meeting 2023

1. There were 30 people present: Helen Adams, Jim Adams, Liz Alexander, Rev Hannah Allen, Jan Carless, David Fisher, Rachel Fisher, Ann Grinnell, Roger Harris, John Harvey, Cyril Jennings, Rev Rowena King, Ian Lepingwell, Terry Lewis, Mike Marshall, Chris Morphew, Robert Nelmes, Heather Paterson, Liz Russ, Brian Shakeshaft, Doreen Shakeshaft, Gill Shakeshaft, Patrick Smith, Julie Smith, Pat Taylor, Kevan Taylor, Dave Turnbull, Janet Turnbull, Chris Willett, Gill Willett

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

Doreen Alexander, Helen Pike, John Pike and Rosemary Pike

3. Approval of 2022 Parishioners' Meeting Minutes It was proposed by Heather Paterson and seconded by Cyril Jennings that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. This was accepted unanimously and there were no abstentions.

4. Election of Church Wardens

Julie Smith and Pat Taylor were thanked for all they have done this year. There was warm applause! We are really pleased that both are happy to stand again.

Julie Smith:

Proposed by Pat Taylor

Seconded by Kevan Taylor

Pat Taylor:

Proposed by Julie Smith

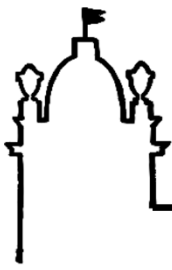
Seconded by Patrick Smith

Julie and Pat were unanimously accepted as Church Warden.

5. Accounts of the Bourton on the Water Trust – Appendix A With the amended sum here> it was proposed by Patrick Smith and seconded by Chris Willett that the accounts be adopted by the meeting. All in favour, no abstentions.

	2022	2021
Opening balances	2,901.69	3,245.57
Dividends	1,163.86	1,154.28
CBF Interest	12.38	1.84
Income	1,176.24	1,156.12
	£4,077.93	£4,401.69

6. Any other business – items to be approved in advance. The meeting closed at 12.03pm



Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023

1. Apologies for absence – as above

2. Approval of Minutes of 2022 APCM

The minutes were proposed by Julie Smith, seconded by Rachel Fisher and approved unanimously to be an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Elections to PCC

There are 3 full term vacancies on PCC this year as Terryl Lewis, Patrick Smith and Janet Turnbull's terms of office come to an end. PCC agreed at their last meeting that due to a shortened term of office due to COVID and current projects in hand that they could stand again this year if they so wished. There is also a one year vacancy as Tess Vanburick resigned in January 2023.

Terryl Lewis – to stand for one year.

Proposed by: Heather Paterson

Seconded by: Helen Pike

Chris Morpew – to stand for 3 years.

Proposed by: Pat Taylor

Seconded by: Gill Shakeshaft

Patrick Smith – to stand for 3 years.

Proposed by: Pat Taylor

Seconded by: Kevan Taylor

Janet Turnbull – to stand for 3 years.

Proposed by: Gill Shakeshaft

Seconded by: Helen Pike

A huge thanks to all who currently serve on PCC and to those who finish their 3 year term this year.

4. Elections to Deanery Synod – We need to elect 3 Deanery Synod Representatives this year.

Gill Shakeshaft

Proposed by: Janet Turnbull

Seconded by: Mike Marshall

Kevan Taylor

Proposed by: Chris Morpew

Seconded by: Dave Turnbull

Ian Lepingwell

Proposed by: Julie Smith

Seconded by: Patrick Smith

Thanks to Gill and Kevan for standing for the last 3 years. It is good to have our full complement of members to Deanery Synod again – it is a key part of the system of governance within the Church of England.

5. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Huge thanks to Dave Turnbull who has again agreed to be our Independent Examiner for next year. He was proposed by Chris Willett and seconded by Terryl Lewis. All in favour, no abstentions.

6. Safeguarding

We are following all current guidelines, and our policies are available via our Parish website (bourtonparishchurch.co.uk) and on our *A Church Near You* page. Our nominated safeguarding person is Gill Willett – huge thanks to her for coordinating all the DBS paperwork and the like so that our church is a safe and welcoming space.

7. To receive the Annual Reports and accounts of the PCC which have been made available previously on paper and via the website.

- *Deanery Synod report*
- *Electoral Roll report*
- *Financial Review of the Year*
- *Accounts and Financial Statement St Lawrence – Appendix B*
- *Fabric report for St Lawrence*
- *Accounts and Report, St James, Clapton on the Hill – Appendix C*
- *Fabric report for St James, Clapton on the Hill*
- *Reports for all other groups*

Huge thanks to ourselves – all of us - for all that we do, seen and unseen: we applauded ourselves (!) and heard The Last Beatitude by Malcom Guite.

Do read the report with a coffee during the week if you haven't already and pray for those things which are going on. We touch the lives of a huge number of people during the course of a year. Over 2000 children and young people, nearly 2000 with funeral ministry, over 400 at weddings and 2000+ views with live-streaming, our *A Church Near You* page has had 6000+ hits. If you ever feel disheartened – re-read this report, because 10,000+ have been touched by our ministry in this last

year. The COVID years have been hard, so it is good to read of things which are happening – the reality is that God is indeed working in and through us in this place. Feel reassured and feel the joy that God's spirit continues to move in the world – we join in as much as we are able. Thank you to Gill Shakeshaft for getting the report ready. Warm applause. Thanks to Chris Willett for doing all the behind the scene financial things. Warm applause. Thanks to everyone, we broke even *to the penny*. This year will be tougher. And thanks to rest of team: Terryl and Brian & Doreen. Warm applause.

A Last Beatitude

And blessed are the ones we overlook;
The faithful servers on the coffee rota,
The ones who hold no candle, bell or book
But keep the books and tally up the quota,
The gentle souls who come to 'do the flowers',
The quiet ones who organise the fete,
Church sitters who give up their weekday hours,
Doorkeepers who may open heaven's gate.
God knows the depths that often go unspoken
Amongst the shy, the quiet, and the kind,
Or the slow healing of a heart long broken
Placing each flower so for a year's mind.
Invisible on earth, without a voice,
In heaven their angels glory and rejoice.

Malcolm Guite

Mike Marshall expressed our thanks to Rev Rowena and Rev Hannah for all they do and keeping us all going. Rowena responded saying she enjoys it!

Proposed by: Patrick Smith

Seconded by: Mike Marshall

All in favour, no abstentions.

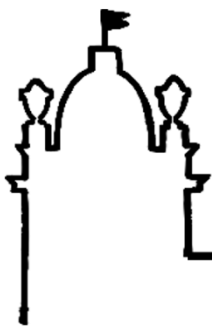
8. The meeting closed at 12.20pm and we received Holy Communion together.

9. Post APCM PCC Meeting to assign officers – held on Monday 24th April

Election of Officers: Chair: Rev Rowena King, Vice Chair: Julie Smith, Treasurer: Chris Willett, Secretary: Gill Shakeshaft with Helen Pike assisting with minutes.

Date of next PCC Meeting: PCC EXTRA to discuss Living in Love and Faith on Monday 24th April at 7.30pm in Church.

Our usual meetings take place on the 2nd Monday of the month from 7.30pm-9.30pm. However, our next meeting is on Monday 15th May because of the King's Coronation Bank Holiday on the 8th.



St Lawrence



Bourton-on-the-Water

with St James, Clapton-on-the-Hill

2024

Statutory Reports

PCC Information

Name: Parochial Church Council of St Lawrence, Bourton on the Water with St James, Clapton on the Hill.

Location: St Lawrence Church is situated in Bourton on the Water at one end of the High Street, set back from the road. St James is in the centre of the village of Clapton on the Hill. The parish is part of a wider Benefice, including the villages of Great, Little and Wyck Rissington and is in the Diocese of Gloucester, and part of the Church of England.

Correspondence address:

The Rectory, School Hill, Bourton on the Water, Cheltenham, GL54 2AW.

PCC members who have served from April 2023 – April 2024 are:

Ex-officio:

Rev Rowena King	Rector (until February 2024)
Rev Nina Summerfield	Associate Priest
Rev Hannah Allen	Assistant Curate
Julie Smith	Churchwarden
Pat Taylor	Churchwarden
Gill Shakeshaft	Deanery Synod
Kevan Taylor	Deanery Synod
Ian Lepingwell	Deanery Synod

Co-opted: none

Elected: (total of 9 available)

Helen Pike	elected 2021-2024
Rachel Fisher	elected 2021-2024
Terryl Lewis	elected 2023-2024 (elected for a one year term to cover resignation)
Heather Paterson	elected 2022-2025
Chris Willett	elected 2022-2025
Gill Willett	elected 2022-2025
Christine Morphew	elected 2023-2026
Patrick Smith	elected 2023-2026
Janet Turnbull	elected 2023-2026

In April 2024 we are looking to fill **3 vacancies** on the PCC (for 3 years). Given that we are now in vacancy, PCC agreed in January 2024 that any current members due to retire this year who wish to stand for immediate re-election, may do so in order to give stability and continuity.

Structure, governance & management of the PCC

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. The PCC is a charity, excepted from registration with the Charity Commission under the Charities (Exception from Registration) Regulations 1996.

Objectives & Activities

Under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measures 1956, the PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for St Lawrence's Church and St James' Church.

The Parish of Bourton on the Water with Clapton has also adopted the following local purpose statement:-

*"To receive God's love in our lives,
To be Christ's love in the world."*

PCC Review of the Year - 2023

The PCC met 11 times during 2023 beginning in January as we continued our study of the book "How Village Churches Thrive". Rev Rowena finished a Church of England Leadership Development course and the Bellringers' fund became a restricted fund under the PCC. In February our Open the Book team undertook online training whilst in March we refined our livestream policy and arranged a BIG church clean before Easter.

In June we purchased a new laptop to enable the livestreaming of services. In July we began the process of completing the Eco-Church survey, to get a baseline idea of what we currently do in readiness for taking this forward in 2024. Clapton financially supported the creation of a Church Trail Leaflet for the Benefice and a leaflet of our church services was produced to be taken to hotels and B&Bs.

In September Rev Rowena was invited to take up a secondment position of Collaborative Ministry Development Advisor within Gloucester Diocese for 7-8 hours a week and PCC supported her in this. We were notified that the North Cotswold Deanery was now a part of the Diocesan Funerals Project – to help streamline the administration involved and make it easier for people to arrange a church funeral. Rev Hannah encouraged us to start making cake for the primary school staffroom!

In October we began to reconsider the reintroduction of a prayer ministry team, but felt it best to proceed properly, with policies and procedures in place before restarting. Due to Rowena's departure this is now on hold until we come out of vacancy.

PCC have chosen a 100% green electricity tariff but are currently continuing with a non-green gas tariff, choosing to prioritise our parish share payments as we cannot afford to do both. We committed to revisiting this decision in 2 years' time. We were advised by the Parish Council that Memorial Stability Testing would take place in the churchyard in January 2024 (one memorial has been laid flat, another is to be maintained in April 2024).

In November, we were gifted a mobile Bluetooth speaker and microphones by Patrick and Julie Smith which has been used on the Green for a couple of Christmas Carol events (one school, one church) thus far. PCC agreed to the running of the Bereavement Journey Course from January 2024 and has had a Quinquennial inspection. We have had intermittent trouble with both Wi-Fi and the sum-up contactless giving machine during the year, but both are working again now.

On 9th November we learnt that Rev Rowena was leaving us in February 2024 to take up the position of Canon Missioner at Lincoln Cathedral. This was a huge surprise in the moment, but reading this yearly summary suggests maybe we should have been more prepared for her moving on!

In December we heard that the numbers attending Tuesday warm space had increased from 4 to 10 families.

Additionally this year, in April we had a meeting to discuss Living in Love & Faith - a Church of England conversation which has been taking place during the last 5 years around how the church responds to the LGBTQIA+ community. PCC want to emphasise our intention to be an inclusive church family in the richest sense, showing our love and inclusivity primarily through attitudes and actions, rather than through formal statements of intention in the first instance. This approach includes our use of liturgy for family-friendly Communion and Baptism services etc, as well as liturgy for same-sex blessings.

The PCC proposed and approved the following statement:

“We desire to be a welcoming and inclusive church community. Therefore, the PCC supports [the rector] acting on behalf of the Benefice, in using any of the Church of England liturgy authorised for use now and in the future.”

PCC have had another busy and productive year!

Minister's Report 2023



It feels strange to be writing a report I won't be here to deliver, yet equally it is an affirming and encouraging task to do in my final weeks in post, as I take time to reflect on and give thanks for all the ways the communities here at St Lawrence and St James have lived the Gospel in worship, prayer, welcome and outreach across 2023. I hope you find that same sense of gratitude and appreciation for our life together in reading this report as I have in writing it.

Some numbers:

Worship:

- We spoke a message of love and hope in the midst of grief through 25 funerals, 6 interments of ashes and our annual Living with Loss bereavement course.
- We celebrated God's love with 2 wedding couples, their family and friends.
- We celebrated welcome into God's family with 8 baptisms.
- An extra 7 households on average join services at St Lawrence each week through our live-stream. (2677 views/ 318.1hrs of viewing)
- The average Sunday attendance increased across the year and is now quite similar to pre-COVID as were Christmas attendances. The Carols on the Green remains successful and seems to draw in different people to the Carols service in church.
- Celebrated seasonal worship – including the Rogationtide Parish Pilgrimage, and the Benefice Easter Dawn service and Ascension Day services and party both held at Clapton Barn.
- Clapton saw good numbers again at their festival services (Harvest and Christmas)

Discipleship and Nurture:

A variety of activities took place across the year alongside our regular prayer meetings and home groups. They included:

- Lent study groups
- Gill's series of seasonal musical reflections, which were well received by the 10-20 people who attended each time and provided a prayerful space to pause and reflect.
- Book Group looking at *Inspired* by Rachel Held Evans
- Welcoming Susan Stein to perform the Etty Play
- Advent Quiet morning reflecting on Mary and the Magnificat

Children and Young People

- Our Youth Club continued to flourish under Hannah's leadership drawing up to 12 teenagers along each month. One particular highlight was the Greystone's bat walk led by Megan from the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.
- BumbleBeez continues to support around 15 tots and their carers each week and is always a joy to drop in on.
- Light Group continues to have fun and learn about Jesus during our 11am Communion services, drawing in up to 5 or 6 primary school children on some weeks.
- Breakfast Church continues to draw in up to 40 people of all ages who enjoy the social time connecting over breakfast and the informal worship.
- We began our first St George's Day with the uniformed organisations combined with our 11am worship. This service had stopped altogether during COVID and prior to that had usually happened in the afternoon. Both the Scouts and the congregation enjoyed celebrating together.
- Christian Union continues to run weekly at the Cotswold School, providing a safe place for connection and conversation.
- The Open the Book team continue to tell the Bible story each fortnight to the 250 students and staff from Bourton Primary.
- Hannah took over from Rowena as a school governor at Bourton Primary School and continues to build and maintain a close relationship with the school.
- Rowena gave a week of Easter assemblies to all 1500 students at the Cotswold school.

Outreach and Community

- Together on Tuesdays continued to provide a space for people to connect over a homemade soup lunch, drawing 20-35 people each week.
- Warm Welcome Space continues to grow and flourish and now brings together 15-20 primary school children and carers each Tuesday after school. If you are interested in being a part of this outreach, do speak to Hannah as she is looking to build a team to continue this important ministry.
- We continue to support many local groups and activities through the use of our building and facilities, including our partnership with the Catholic church who use our church for a midweek service.
- We have continued to support Christian Aid, Headspace, the North Cotswold Foodbank, Kate's Home Nursing, the Royal British Legion and The Children's Society through our fundraising events.
- We have begun to provide the Explore range of prayer cards to encourage and invite our visitors to pray.
- We developed and printed our 5 Churches Trail Benefice Walk pamphlet – supported by the St James' mission fund.

- Clapton held its first Advent Window trail across the village in December

You can read more about many of these activities and events in the reports below, but I hope this gives you a flavour of just how much of God's Kingdom life happens in our building and among our communities across a single year. Even this list doesn't do justice to all the smaller tasks and roles that people undertake - to tend, clean, arrange flowers, ring bells, mow and garden, smile and welcome, invite, visit, care and support – all of which reflect God's love in our relationships with those around us and through the sacred space of our building.

I feel privileged to have journeyed with you these past 5 and a bit years and will miss you all. However, I know that the love, strength and welcome of this community will continue in and through the vacancy and into the next stage of your life together.

Every blessing,
Rev Rowena

Rev Rowena King, Rector



*Rev'd Canon Rowena King
in Lincoln Cathedral*

Safeguarding

The role of PSO is to ensure that we meet all statutory and Diocesan regulations and requirements with regard to the Safeguarding of Young People and Vulnerable Adults. All PCC members now have up to date DBS checks and the majority have completed the latest safeguarding training. Any issues regarding safeguarding or cause for concern have been handled with the current guidelines

Gill Willett, March 2024

Review of Financial Activities and Affairs

Yet again God has blessed our giving, ending 2023 with a surplus of £610. Isn't God GREAT! It just goes to prove that by all of us getting involved in praying, serving and giving, great things are possible.

So, a big THANK YOU again to all of you who have so generously given, in both large and small amounts, to the ministry work in our Parish over the past 12 months. The work of our Church this year is likely to rise to £100,000 or £1,925 per week. We receive no support from outside sources so your continued giving and fund raising activities are vital to fund the mission and pastoral work in our village and the surrounding area, and it contributes to a continued Christian presence in Bourton. The more we stir each other up in love and faith, the more God multiples our gifts of time and money to do even greater things in our Church and community!

The detail behind the numbers is in the notes attached to the accounts. Significantly, giving to the Church increased by 19%, which helped us increase our contribution to the Parish Share and support the pastoral work and mission in our community.

There are many ways to give to the Church. The most efficient way is through the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), which now accounts for 70% of our planned giving. Giving through the PGS is very simple, is done on-line and the donor stays in control. It benefits our cash-flow and significantly

reduces the administration time involved in managing the finances. If you would like to know more, then please contact me or click the link in Pews News.

The accounts show donations made to charities that passed through the PCC accounts. Additionally during the year, Church members also supported Christian Aid and the Christmas Toy Appeal. 2024 will bring our biggest challenge yet. We need to find an additional £11,000 to meet the increased costs of energy and our increased commitment to the ministry and mission costs in our community through the Parish Share. Once again, we step out in faith, trusting that God will provide. Please prayerfully consider what else you can give and please also support our fundraising activities. I would like to thank the rest of the team who help with the financial management of the Church – to Brian & Doreen Shakeshaft for continuing to do our banking, to Terry Lewis, for managing the Gift Aid, to Dave Turnbull for his work as Independent Examiner and to Kevan Taylor for his work with the Benefice finances and reserves policy.

Chris Willett, Treasurer, March 2024

For detailed accounts see Appendix B.

Fabric Report - St Lawrence, Bourton-on-the-Water

A roof survey was carried out by P Morse of Cirencester early in the year as there were several tiles loose in different areas of the roof. They cleaned out the guttering and lead areas to ensure no leaks and replaced the broken or missing tiles.

There was an attempted break in to the meeting room that caused damage to the lock which had to be replaced. The incident was captured on our CCTV and reported to the police and an incident number raised. Although we got a good photo of the person the police decided there was not enough information to proceed with an investigation.

Service works were required on the boilers this year.

A Quinquennial inspection of the registers and paperwork was carried out this summer. Everything was satisfactory and we gained knowledge on how to make the next one easier on everyone. The Quinquennial inspection carried out on the church buildings has also taken place and highlighted repairs we will need to address as a PCC over the coming months/years. A copy is available on request.

The full 5-year electrical inspection was carried out by Bayliss and Higgs who carried out the electrical installation at the time of reordering.

Quite a few tiles on the low boiler roof have broken and will be replaced soon, again by P Morse of Cirencester.

To remain compliant with Fire regulations our fire extinguishers are now sited on stands with correct signage.

All annual servicing has been carried out and the Terrier and Logbook have been checked.

Julie Smith, Churchwarden

General Report including Fabric - St James, Clapton-on-the-Hill

St James Clapton is still in the process of organising works mentioned in the Quinquennial 2022 and have appointed Toby Falconer Architects Ltd. Toby Falconer has a wealth of experience with Church buildings and he is working closely with us in preparation to start some of the building works in the next 12 months as the weather improves, with appropriate quotes and permissions obtained.

Earlier in the year our safe had to be repaired due to a faulty lock. This was completed but was an expense we had not budgeted for.

Having obtained a report on the Bird Cherry Tree in the Churchyard stating it was diseased it was decided that it had to be removed. The relevant permissions were sought and it was agreed we could replace it with a *malus transitoria* which is a small crab apple tree. This will be completed in the spring.

The relevant inspections have been completed for the Electrical installation and Fire extinguishers with certificates obtained. In July we had our Register inspection which was satisfactory.

We have continued to have another very good year attendance wise and also a lot of visitors from overseas. The prayer cards have proven to be very popular with our congregation and visitors. Once again we had a high turnout for our Easter Services, including a Dawn Service, and Ascension Day. Harvest and the Christmas Carol service also saw the village coming together to worship. Food donations this year have been very generous and are greatly appreciated by the recipients. One of our well supported events was an inaugural Advent Window Trail this was enthusiastically received by the villagers. Rev Hannah and daughter Beth were the judges and the entries were so good that there were two worthy winners, the prize being chocolates and wine.

We continue to be grateful to Peter Tisshaw for his devotion to the maintenance of St James' Churchyard and the memorial garden. May was particularly busy with the King's Coronation celebration and a Churchyard Working Party which involved many of the villagers coming forward to help. We are also grateful to Gill Shakeshaft who supports us at our Festival services with the music and this year organising and printing our new Carol Service booklet. A big thank you to Sue and David who provided and fitted the beautiful Christmas lights around the Church Porch.

Pat Taylor & Liz Alexander, on behalf of Clapton-on-the-Hill

Electoral Roll Report

There are currently **99** members on the roll for Bourton with Clapton. We have gained some new members but a number of church stalwarts have died during the last 12 months.

Please can we encourage those who have been worshipping with us regularly for six months or who live within the parish to join the electoral roll. Forms are available in the porch or on request.

Maureen Ratcliffe, Electoral Roll Officer

North Cotswold Deanery Synod Report

Three Synods were held during 2023: in March at Lower Slaughter Village Hall, at Great Barrington Village Hall in July and at St Edward's Stow on the Wold in October.

7th March Synod: The focus of our March synod was ‘Flourishing Creation’ and Revd Cate Williams, Diocesan Environmental Engagement Officer, reminded us why as Christians we should put energy, time and money into caring for God’s creation. As Christians we are well placed to help bridge the disconnect between humans and creation (noting crises in climate and biodiversity) on a national and international scale. We were encouraged by good news stories from around the deanery about environmental actions and services already taking place. Being part of the eco-church award is an important step which individual parishes can take both to learn more and have a positive impact.

6th July Synod: We heard good news stories from around the Deanery on the theme of ‘Flourishing Families’ and the Revd Helen Sammon spoke to us about the Sylvanus Lysons charity which supports projects connecting with families and those who are disadvantaged or on the margins of our churches.

12th October Synod: Meeting in a newly refurbished St Edward’s, we heard stories of ‘Flourishing in our Church Lives’ and heard of connections with funeral, wedding and school ministries and how we can all use our gifts to support one another and grow communities. We were reminded that one of our aims is to see our ministries flourishing as a collaboration between clergy and laity and that *‘we are all a little broken and a little brilliant’!* There is an evolving Deanery Action Plan for Churches of the North Cotswolds to help shape our planning and create a sustainable and fruitful future.

Gill Shakeshaft, Kevan Taylor & Ian Lepingwell – Deanery Synod Representatives

Additional Reports for church activities

Bellringers’ Report

Once again we have had a full year of ringing commencing on 4th January. We have had visiting ringers coming to ring Quarter Peals in February and May. We also rang for Weddings and a Funeral (Gladys Oakey). 4th Sunday ringing has also taken place when we have had enough ringers.

On 6th May we rang for the Coronation of King Charles III. We started in Bourton, then we went to Wyck Rissington, Great Rissington and then a few went to Cold Aston. This was followed by drinks to toast the new King.

On 31st August we had the cluster flies come back to join us in the Tower but luckily they seemed to have mostly disappeared by the end of September! A few of the ringers from Bourton and Great Rissington took part in the striking competition which was won by Mickleton. The last ringing of the year was on Christmas Morning.

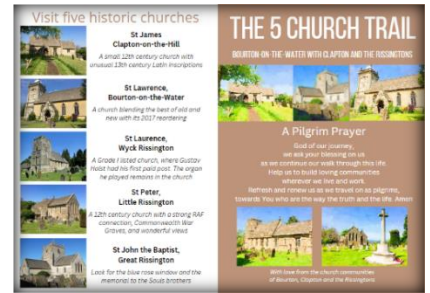
I would like to thank all the ringers from Bourton and Great Rissington for another great year of ringing and look forward to seeing any new ringers – returning or beginners.

If you are interested please contact me Stephanie Hemming
(stephaniehemming@aol.com or ring 01451 810996)

Stephanie Hemming

Benefice Highlights of 2023

A number of events which the whole benefice enjoy together have settled themselves into our yearly calendar. In case you're new to Bourton & Clapton (or the Rissingtons) here are a few of our favourite things:



> The Rogation Walk/Benefice Pilgrimage, which takes place in the late spring was the inspiration for the 5 Church Trail leaflet, funded by Clapton.



< Our Ascension Day service looking out across the valley from Clapton is enjoyed by everyone

> Shrove Tuesday Party in 2023 welcomed 80 folks from across the Benefice for food and fun!



> Youth Group which started late in 2022 has grown during the year and now has members from across the Benefice who are led by Rev Hannah and Emily.

It has become a regular fixture in the church calendar meeting monthly in term time throughout the year. The focus is upon creation care and we have had two guided sessions from the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust at Greystones, one looking for bats with echolocators and one identifying birds.



Sessions in between have been craft, games, churchyard species surveying, water quality measuring, joining in with the crib service and Christmas tree festival in Great Rissington and the benefice rogation walk. 7-10 young people of secondary age regularly come along.

> 5th Sunday Taizé inspired service led by the U3A Recorders and Singers has been taking place ever since church re-opened after our 2017 re-ordering. It is a service which we hope will attract a greater congregation in months to come



Bourton-on-the-Water Trust

Statement of accounts prepared by the Clerk, Dave Turnbull – see Appendix A

Breakfast Church

Our Breakfast Church congregation continues to flourish enjoying good food, company and informal worship together each 2nd Saturday. We gather over a leisurely breakfast of sausage or bacon butties, croissants, jam, fruit and drinks prepared by one of our 3 kitchen teams (thank you Julie & Patrick, Cliff & Lucy and Dave & Rachel) and then spend time catching up with each other. A special thank you to Rachel who does the food shopping each month!



As the children finish eating they make their way to the meeting room for a craft prepared by Audrey-Ann or Helen which usually links to the theme of the day, whilst the grown-ups keep chatting! During 2023 we thought about Stepping out in faith, Love, Choosing to follow Jesus, Jesus as King, Jesus as the vine, Shining like Stars, New Beginnings, Saying Thank you to God, reflecting on Joy as a gift of the Holy Spirit and remembering that Jesus is always a light shining at the centre of things at our December Christingle.



Our time together on a Saturday finishes with an informal 15 minutes of worship usually led this year by one of Sheila Owen, Rachel Fisher, Rev Rowena, Rev Hannah, or Gill Shakeshaft.

Many of us were also at Good Friday Special in April when we were reminded of our God, the servant King, who died for us. This service especially benefits from moving the pews into the round for Holy Week as the children can do crafts as part of the worship circle, joining in with actions and songs as they creatively multi-task!

We will miss Rowena, Lizzy and Malcolm on 2nd Saturdays but will continue to sing Our God is a Great BIG God and My Lighthouse with gusto and all the actions – do come and join in – it is a great way to experience worship if you aren't good at being quiet all the time – and it really is a fabulous wake-up call at the end of a busy week – very hard to go home feeling anything but energised!

Gill Shakeshaft on behalf of the Breakfast Church Congregation

BumbleBeez



The toddler group continues to meet weekly on a Thursday morning and we generally get about a dozen mums, dads or carers . There is a good core of regular attendees and it is lovely to see the children grow up week by week. We have also had a few new mums recently. It is an unstructured time ; we just put out the toys and provide refreshments but it is a very good way of allowing the children to socialise and the parents to meet each other. At Christmas we had a bring and share party and Father Christmas put in an appearance!

Christine Morphew

Children and Young People's Activities

In Church on a Sunday morning, the Light Group continues to meet 3 times a month, giving our children an opportunity to explore faith in a fun way. There is a small but growing quorum of children who join us regularly and it is important to offer Light Group as part of our outreach to young families. Our thanks to Helen Pike and Rachel Fisher for supporting this activity.

We've also just enjoyed (in 2024) another Pancake party with over 100 people in attendance and where we lost count of the number of pancakes served up. A huge thank you to all involved.

Unfortunately we have been unable to run the termly parties this year due to work commitments but please do continue to pray for this important ministry and to claim Christ's victory as we seek to do his work.

Gill & Chris Willett

Church Bookings

It is wonderful to see this lovely building being used by members of our community as well as for the many church events and I am grateful to all who help in this ministry. Events are continuing to pick up again Post-Covid and during the past 12 months we have played host to the MacMillan coffee morning; Kate's Home Nursing; Christian Aid, the Dementia Café, various concerts and school events, including schools from further afield.

We continue to be a popular local venue and have some regular bookings as well as for one off events. We are also receiving enquiries from organisations out of the area. I am responsible for co-ordinating enquiries for Church Bookings and the Church Calendar so please contact me to check availability and book any part of the church for your event

Gill Willett

Church Watch

A loyal band of Watchers continue to offer this service throughout the months of April to October. This is a general welcoming role to our visitors from all parts of the country and an increasing number from abroad. It is not a security role, but a smile and a friendly "Hello, do come in and look around. You are very welcome," is a great reassurance to many visitors. Most visitors just want to look around, some ask questions about the church, the village etc, but you do not have to be an expert to deal with 95 percent of the enquiries.

The Watchers do a morning or afternoon session once per month, always on the same day for each month, to fit in with their other commitments. Sadly there are many gaps when we are unable to cover all the times throughout each month, so if you think this is something you may enjoy and would like to try it out, please get in touch with me.

Mike Marshall



Homegroups & Book Group 2023

> The church Book Group, led by Rev Rowena or Rev Hannah, has met at Church during an afternoon and looked at various books with a church/theological theme.

We have gathered up to about ten people which has resulted in lively, informative and thought-provoking discussions. The most relatable one we all felt was How to be a Bad Christian by Dave Tomlinson. The most recent one is "Inspired" by Katy Held Evans (one woman's journey back to loving the Bible).

> A group of about eight of us have met at Rev David Cook's House during the year. We have looked at St. Mark, St Luke, The Acts of The Apostles and The Beatitudes among others. Our time together has included art and poetry as well as our own personal experiences. We have been greatly informed by David's life experiences, knowledge and enthusiasm.

> The house group meeting at John & Rosemary's home has been meeting since 6th November 2013 and currently has 5 members from Bourton, Wyck and Little Rissington. Last year we studied Romans which is challenging at times and we should complete it at our next meeting which will be after Easter 2024. We currently have 5 members and we meet provided 4 are available. Our meetings are on the first and third Wednesday mornings. We would welcome one or two new members.

Robert Nelmes & John Pike

Mr Men Fellowship Group

It is with great pleasure that I write the annual APCM report for the Mr Men fellowship group.



We have met very regularly on the first and third Wednesday of each month during the last year, usually one meeting online and one in the bar at The Old Manse in the village per month. The numbers meeting vary with up to seven or eight attending. Our meetings generally take the form of a general catch up with each other discussing current affairs, sport, local news and many other topics. This we try to limit to around 40 minutes followed by Bible study for the remainder of the meeting. We wind up the meeting with some time of prayer.

Christian fellowship and support of each other is very much at the centre of Mr Men.

During the last year we have looked at the book of Proverbs, some Psalms and chapters of John's Gospel about the crucifixion at Easter, reading and discussing the message that we have listened to. (We're currently looking at the book of James).

A highlight of this year was a meal out near Christmas, which we enjoyed at the Lamb Inn in Great Rissington. Eight members attended and we all had a fun evening together.

New members would be warmly welcomed to our group at any time.

David Fisher

Music & Worship

Our pattern of worship in 2023 has continued to follow the rhythm of the lectionary and the church seasons. Rev Rowena has prepared a series of Holy Communion Services for us to use at 11am which make use of lots of the variety available within Common Worship each week. A variety of confessions, creeds and Eucharistic Prayers have been incorporated, so that our worship always feels familiar, yet not the same. We also have an order to use on a First Sunday and a couple of Morning Worship orders called Dwelling in the Word and Dwelling in Creation to call upon when the clergy are unavailable.

There are rotas for intercessors, readers and PowerPoint operators each week, so there is quite a lot going on behind the scenes as everyone prepares to play their part! (Janet Turnbull organises this rota – do have a chat to her if you'd like to join in!). We also have a team who administer the chalice at Holy Communion.

I choose the music each week, having reflected on the readings and then make the PowerPoint to use in church. The same PowerPoint is made available via our website to be accessed during the service or by folks joining the livestream from home (bourtonparishchurch.co.uk/sermons). There are also hymnbooks and service booklets available for anyone who finds it hard to follow the service on the big screen. It is a blessing that our music, prayers and sermon come together with such regularity in the moment, given that those involved have often not spoken to each other – only to God – in their preparation! And it is fantastic that we can share Sundays with others around the country and around the world!

A big thank you to Patrick especially, for setting up and operating the livestream each week!

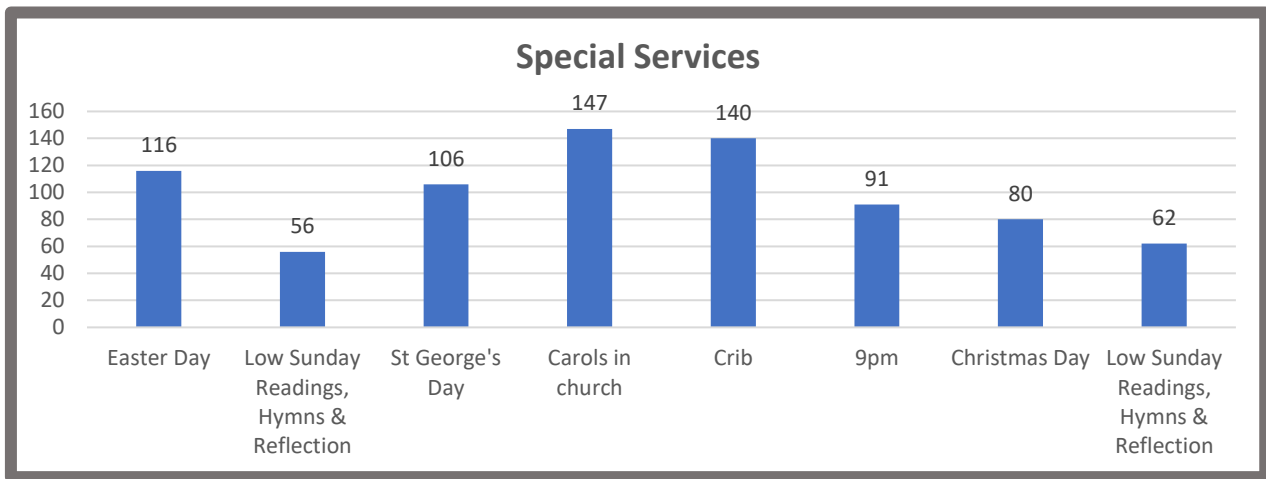
Some facts and figures...

I know that numbers aren't everything, but they can serve as an encouragement – and as we move into vacancy that is, I think, important! An average of 48 adults met each Sunday at 11am during 2023 in St Lawrence (the average was only 42 last year) and I was delighted to discover that we had at least one child under 16 every week too! On one memorable Sunday in August we had 11 youngsters gathered around the colouring table!

- Our 8am congregation averages 8, but as many as 12 at times.
- The 6pm Holy Communion service held on the first Sunday averages 12, but welcomed more than that on 4 occasions during the year.
- The midweek communion at 10am on a Wednesday averages 7, but has been showing an upward trend since coffee started being served afterwards.
- Breakfast Church on a second Saturday averages 10 children and 23 adults.

With PCC's approval, and after the success of the previous year, pews were again moved into the round for Holy Week, and Good Friday Special welcomed 22 children and 37 adults for coffee and hot cross buns followed by a short interactive service. The pews were back in place for Easter Day when 16 children and 100 adults worshipped together. We were delighted when the scouts, cubs, beavers et al joined worship for St George's Day in April (67 adults and 39 children) and are already planning to repeat this in 2024.





Carols on the Green has become a regular occurrence post-COVID and a goodly number wrapped up around the tree for a sing, using our new portable microphone and speaker, followed by Carols by Candlelight in Church the following weekend (132 adults and 15 children taking us back to something like pre-COVID attendance levels for the first time). We were glad that the Mr Men fellowship group prepared and served mulled wine for us again. Church felt really busy – we might re-organise drinks distribution next time and get some LED candles or lights for the balcony too!



All our musical usage is reported as part of our Church Copyright Licence every year and we do sing a goodly range of things during the course of 12 months. Those things which we sing most often I think reflect the tone of our worship and our gathered faith community:

WE COME: *To God be the glory | At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow | Bless the Lord O my soul Jesus calls us here to meet him | Here and now we're drawn together | In Christ Alone my hope is found*

WE MEET GOD: *King of kings, majesty, God of heaven living in me | I the Lord of sea and sky... Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night | Great is thy faithfulness*

WE GO: *Guide me o thou great redeemer | One more step along the world I go | Lord, the light of your love is shining | The church is wherever God's people are praising!*

Gill Shakeshaft

Open the Book

About six sessions a term, our small team presents an acted-out Bible story to Bourton Primary school who come down to the church to watch. We dress up and with the aid of a few props present the Bible stories in an interactive, fun way. The children often join in with words or actions and some are recruited to minor roles which they really enjoy. The Lion Storyteller Bible is the basis of the scripts. It would make life a bit easier if we had a few more people to draw on, especially men, so if you think this is something which you could be involved in please see me.



Chris Morphew

Pastoral Care and Home Communions including Jubilee Lodge

Rev Hannah has continued to offer monthly services of Holy Communion in Jubilee Lodge. It is a joy to get to know residents and staff as we share the bread and wine blessed in St Lawrence as part of the wider St Lawrence church community.

Ann and Hannah have offered Home Communions which are particularly appreciated by those who are unable to get to church as is the ministry of Pews News delivery led by Terry!

As well as pastoral visiting by clergy, pastoral care continues to be offered through informal networks of support in the village with clergy available should someone want to speak with them.

Times of fellowship over coffee after the Sunday service and after midweek communion as well as Together on Tuesday lunches are all part of growing our community of mutual care and friendship.

Rev Hannah, Ann Grinnell, Terry Lewis

Praying Together for our Church & Community

Friday prayer

We meet in church weekly at 9.15am for prayer apart from the 1st Friday of the month when we meet at the Riverside café for coffee, prayer and chat. We feel it's important to pray for the church, our community and the wider world, as of course I'm sure we all do. We have been very encouraged this year that our number has increased, with Ann joining us from Upper Rissington, and Audrey Ann with baby Lev. This means that our prayers focus on our Benefice, the younger and older generation, plus everything else that we are called to pray for.

When asking the group for comments about our time together, they replied:

"Lots of people ask us to pray either for themselves, or others"

We have had several answers to prayer, praise God

"It's been lovely getting to know what happens in the Benefice"

"Great to have a younger member"

I could never pray out loud before, but I'm growing in confidence

"Would like to have another man join us"

We need to be prayer warriors, as we know prayer changes everything!

When you have come a couple, of times you are drawn to come again

Finally, why not come and join us on a Friday morning, we would love to have you. 😊

Heather Paterson

Together on Tuesdays

Although we started Together on Tuesdays in January 2020, Covid and Lock Down restrictions meant that 2023 was the first full year in which we were able to operate without external interruptions, and what a success it proved to be. The fact that during the year we served 1027 guests (nearly 2000 bowls of soup), showed that it was fulfilling a very useful function in the Bourton area. We always had 3

different home-made soups on offer, and we have never had to dip into the emergency supply (once or twice it was a near run thing!)

We owe a massive thank you to the very loyal teams of volunteers who made this possible; the soup makers, the waiters, the people who set up the tables, and tidy up, on a regular basis. Also, the people who fill in the gaps that occur due to illness or when there are 5 Tuesdays in the month. Thank you all for your hard work, loyalty and reliability.

We are gaining new customers all the time, and we have had to set up an extra table to accommodate the numbers that appeared at the start of our 2024 session, and make an appeal for extra help to cope with this increase. It is a nice problem to have, and the general chatter, laughter and friendship is rewarding for the guests and workers alike.

Mike Marshall

Warm Welcome Space

The Warm Welcome Space began as a conversation between Rev Rowena and the Head Teacher of Bourton Primary. The idea being to offer to school families the warmth of the church building during winter, once a week after school.

Rev Hannah and Ann, supported by members of the PCC, have been able to offer this space for more than a year and by the end of 2023 there were regularly more than 20 children and carers present. Board games, craft, tea, squash and biscuits together with a warm welcome and offer of conversation and relationship has created a community which the children call, "Church on Tuesday". Summer came and still the children and families wanted to come, valuing the hospitality and gentle time of conversation and play.

Rev Hannah travelled with the children through advent using Godly Play materials and scripts and has shared stores from Nick Butterworth's, "Stories Jesus Told". A big thank you to the Coop who have provided biscuits throughout the year. The children made thank you cards in recognition of this.

Rev Hannah



Welcomers

A big thank you to all who have helped out with this valuable ministry at our services.

It is so important for all who come into our church to be greeted and welcomed. There are currently several spaces on this rota which is on the table at the back of church during Sunday morning services. If you think this is something you would like to be involved with on occasions then please speak to me or fill your name in on the sheet. There is always someone around to help you, the only requirement is a smile!



Gill Willett

Year in the life of a Curate

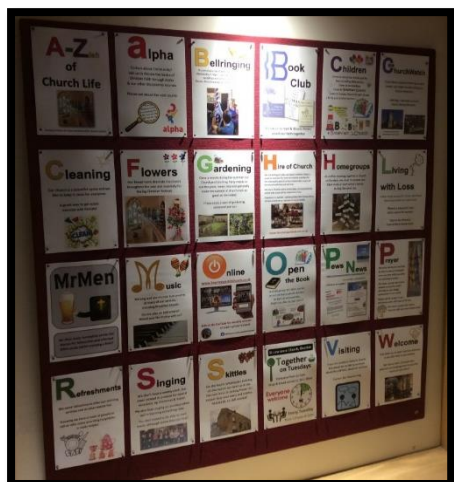
One of the highlights of this year was my priesting in Gloucester Cathedral and looking out to see so many familiar and precious faces from the benefice offering support and encouragement. Thank you! Once priested, I became able to lead more services alone. It is such a privilege to preside here among you and I have particularly enjoyed the variety the reordered St Lawrence allows, sometimes presiding from the High Altar and sometimes from the dais in the nave.

The variety found in the worshipping life of St Lawrence reflects the many traditions held comfortably together here. This creates a great place of learning for a curate but is also a credit to the community which you all are – one of welcome and openness which seeks to embrace everyone on their journey of faith.

Growing and deepening relationships within the church community and the wider village has been a joy this year and I am struck how the flexible interior of St Lawrence creates the conditions for this: Fellowship over coffee or lunch, BumbleBeez, refreshments after the Kate's Home service, Together on Tuesday, Youth Group, coffee after Wednesday Communion are just a few examples of the Kingdom of God at work in St Lawrence as people come in, are welcomed and share in God's love.

The end of my year was focused upon the upcoming vacancy, a new training incumbent in Rev Katrina Scott, second year papers to complete and the reminder to look up, put my hand in God's and say, along with you all, here I am Lord, lead me

Rev Hannah Allen



God is Good
ALL THE TIME

All the time
GOD IS GOOD