

REPORTS FOR 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

Anne Padfield

At the APCM in May 2023, there were 39 people on the Electoral Roll, with 9 residents and 30 non-residents. (Residents of the parish are entitled to be on the Roll if they wish, even if they rarely attend church.)

During the year, two people have sadly died, Howard Ellis and Peter Doe. But we have welcomed new members, Lorna Benbrook (non-resident) and Zoe Benbrook (resident).

So the total stands the same at 39, with 10 residents and 29 non-residents.

PCC REPORT

Anne Padfield

The Parochial Church Council, along with the Incumbent, has the responsibility for promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish of Stapleford Tawney with Theydon Mount, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The Parochial Church Council also has maintenance responsibilities for the church buildings and churchyard.

Membership of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the last year the following served as members of the PCC:

Incumbent

Rev. John Fry

Associate Priest

Rev. Carol Newnham, who left us at the end of February for her own parish in Hertfordshire

Churchwardens

Margaret Dennis (St Mary's), Jo Shephard (St Michael's)

Deanery Synod Representatives

Martyn Lockwood, Gill Southall

Additional Elected PCC Members

Colin Flint, Edna Flint, Debbie Lee, Anne Padfield, Cindy Pridmore (Treasurer)

Parochial Church Council Meetings

The PCC met 6 times during the year, plus the APCM. Some meetings were via Zoom, others were in person.

The parish continues to work towards the shared Benefice Vision of the Theydon Parishes which is:-

To be loving, caring and welcoming congregations who nurture each other to grow in faith together, through quality worship, Bible teaching and prayer, sharing the love of God in Christ with others by example and our activities in the community and wider world.

Sub-committees

Events Committee: Organises social and fund-raising events to support the Church, chaired by Maggie Dennis. Regular Parish Lunches continue to be held, and for the first time this year, an organ recital at St Mary's. Mount church hosts monthly groups of visitors to Hill Hall during the summer.

Pastoral Care: Co-ordinates pastoral care needs and liaises with clergy, with Gill Southall acting as a hub.

Churchyard: Although not a formal committee, an informal group of neighbours meet to help maintain the churchyard on an occasional basis at St Mary's.

Church Services

The pattern of regular services was as follows:

Sundays, 10.45am

First Sunday	St Mary's Stapleford Tawney
Second Sunday	St Michael's Theydon Mount
Third Sunday	St Mary's Stapleford Tawney
Fourth Sunday	St Michael's Theydon Mount
Fifth Sunday	Joint Benefice Service (at 10a.m, rotating between the four churches)

Most services were Holy Communion, with some Services of the Word.

In July, a Pets' Service was held in the churchyard at St Mary's. There were also special services for Harvest, Nine Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. There was a Christingle service at Candlemas in February, and for the first time this year, a Benefice Lambing service in March outdoors. A lunchtime Lent course was held in the Parish Room at St Mary's. And finally there were services for Good Friday and Easter Day.

Visiting organists played on a rota arrangement. When no organist was available, electronic music was provided.

On an average Sunday, 10-20 adults attended worship. There were no weddings or baptisms at either church. There were two funeral services during the year, both at Tawney: Howard Ellis and Peter Doe.

VICAR'S REPORT

John Fry

At the beginning of 2023, our Diocesan Bishop launched "*Travelling Well Together*". This is not a new strategy or tagline for the Diocese of Chelmsford but a set of seven values designed to be principles which can inform our shared life as churches across Essex and East London. One of the values is an "Awareness of Grace", in other words "God always provides the resources required for the mission of the church to continue. An awareness of grace engenders a spirit of thankfulness and enables us to notice what we have, rather than grieve for what we lack".

Every year, I write of my thankfulness to the team of people who do so much to resource our worship, and the organizational tasks that take place behind the scenes. But this year, I am especially aware of the gift of grace which each person in the churches is and the considerable amount of time and skill which is offered by so many. As some know, 2023 was not the year I personally expected it to be, there

were joys and sorrows which led to my being away from the parishes for a time. At Bishop Guli's invitation, I had the privilege of serving for a season as Interim Cathedral Missioner in Chelmsford, in a half time capacity alongside my role in the Theydon Parishes, but also felt the pain of bereavement myself in the spring. I will always be grateful especially for the support I received from so many people in the Benefice, which enabled me to have space to grieve and process what had happened.

In particular I would like to pay tribute to the work and service of Rev Carol Newnham, who covered for me and who, in November 2023, was appointed to serve as House for Duty Rector to two parishes in the Diocese of St Alban's. We will miss her greatly, and the good heart that the parishes were in at the end of 2023 owes much to her pastoral ministry and the leadership she has given. Sarah Bowen also moved on from her role as Benefice Administrator and Daria Emery joined the team in that role.

Our team of 6 churchwardens, Mary Gill, Margaret Dennis, Jo Shephard, Hilary Mosely, John Chaplin and Andrew Crook, continue to be a source of great encouragement, and we are lucky to have such a dedicated team looking after our buildings and so much more. Our Benefice would be much poorer without them.

There are so many other people who go above and beyond in the Benefice, but in particular thanks are due to our team of vergers, Ann Clay, Anne Padfield and Carole Fenton who in their respective churches do so much behind the scenes to ensure that services and Occasional Offices run smoothly. And at the same time everyone is important, and everyone is valuable in the kingdom of God. The Theydon Parishes would not be the flourishing place they are without the contributions that each person makes. Financially each parish is solvent and is a going concern and despite the challenges, the total worshipping community has returned to pre-pandemic numbers. There is much to be grateful for.

The Benefice continues to be committed to doing all we can to be a safe space for all, and with the work of Andrea Crombie and John Chaplin as Parish Safeguarding Officers we have continued to follow the House of Bishops' guidance on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable adults, including following safer recruitment practices, and ensuring all PCC members and ministers complete regular training as expected by the Church of England. We continued to see significant sections of the Sunday congregation being made up of children and young people at St Mary's Theydon Bois and All Saints Theydon Garnon, where Sarah Twitchett (our allocated worker from Red Balloon Foundation) and Alison Mortimer continue respectively to lead the work.

Pastoral visiting continues to happen because people notice one another, but it is true to say that we would greatly benefit from a person whose primary calling in Christ is to animate this kind of caring ministry.

Paul's letter to the Romans reminds people that he is convinced that nothing can separate us from the love of God, not things from past, present or future can make that love smaller. It is true that there are challenges ahead for our Benefice, and there are a number of things which it would be good to have or to achieve. But as our Benefice Vision sets out, our core values are "Faith, Love and Community" and that we seek to live those out by welcoming all, caring and teaching. These are things which can be practised whether things are going well or when there are challenges, when we are blessed with the things which each parish would like to achieve and just

as much can be practised at the times when our respective parishes may not have achieved all that we set out to do. Let us in the year ahead not give up practising an awareness of grace, but still be open to noticing the new things which Christ calls us into, but above all, let us value the shared identity we have as parishes working together.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORTS

St Mary's Stapleford Tawney

Maggie Dennis

I would first of all like to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported me throughout last year, especially Anne, John and Martyn. I have now been given a clear bill of health and have fully recovered. It is a privilege to work with such a great team of people, where all support each other in good and less good times. Thank you.

Building

We are continuing to monitor the condition of the Ledger Stones in the Sanctuary. An approach has now been made to a local builder to come and inspect and advise on any action needed. Our bells have now had their ropes attached properly again - our thanks to Rob Hales who used a designated Charity Day to do this with a friend.

Churchyard

Again we must thank the Village WhatsApp group for working at keeping the graveyard trimmed. They along with our excellent mowers ensure it always looks loved and well kept. Keith has offered to refurbish the gates as they are really in a sorry state and we owe him our thanks.

Services

Our major 'Special Services' were well attended this year - Pet Service, Harvest Festival, All Saints, Carol Service, Christingle, Easter. This year we hosted the Lambing Service and were amazed at the size of the turnout - over 70!!!!

Congregation

Our numbers remain stable. We have attracted some younger members and that is wonderful. Sadly we have lost others - dear friends who will be greatly missed. Also there are those who are struggling with illness and treatment and we wish them well. We also said goodbye to Rev Carol and wish her well in her new Parish, she leaves quite a gap.

Charity

We continue to support Little Haven Children's Hospice, The Children's Society, The Manna Society and The Women's Refuge on Toy Sunday.

Events

Our Parish Lunches continue to be well supported and The Organ Recital was well attended.

Again a big thank you to all who help to keep everything running smoothly with their hidden efforts.

St Michael's Theydon Mount

Jo Shephard

Thankfully our 2-weekly worship pattern has continued over the last year. Sadly our congregation numbers are small but we have a warm caring atmosphere that compensates and rewards with good friendships.

Winter weather has necessitated repairs to the wooden tower slats and an emergency repair/replacement of a drainage down-pipe which was leaking water alarmingly into the church, close behind a newly refurbished hatchment.

Mr Eckton our faithful local builder attended promptly & averted a possible disaster. Many thanks to him!

My thanks for continued invaluable support from Rev John Fry, to Colin and Edna Flint for sorting hymns, music and our small church choir.

My particular personal thanks to Anne Padfield, Martyn Lockwood & Cindy Pridmore for always being available with help and advice.

Also to John Fradd for his care of the churchyard – to passers-by it immediately sends out the message that St Michael's Church is alive and well.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The parish continues to follow the House of Bishops' Promoting a Safer Church Policy Statement. John Chaplin served as Parish Safeguarding Officer, and PCC members engaged with Basic and Foundation Safeguarding Training and Domestic Violence Awareness training.

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Martyn Lockwood

At the start of the new synod year I stood down as Lay Chair after 13 plus years and handed over the reins to Richard Kinder from St Mary's, Chigwell. I wish him every success especially as we have moved into the Chelmsford Archdeaconry.

Our Rural Dean Lee Batson was appointed Dean of Newcastle Cathedral during the year. His replacement was John and we offer him our support.

I was unable to attend the last meeting as I was unwell so can offer no report.

TREASURER'S REPORT for Jan-Dec 2023

Reading the statement of Accounts for 2023, you will see that there has been a change in our financial position compared to the end of 2022.

There are several reasons for this. As I explained in my report for 2022, we were expecting an increase in expenses for 2023, and this did indeed materialise. We did, however, see an increase in income from events, which is very rewarding when we consider the generosity and hard work of all who put on and support these events.

The main increases to note are:

The Parish Share, which rose to £1000 per month; we are paying our full Parish share.

The price of electricity has increased, and this has had an impact on our finances. A new 2 year contract has been put in place for 2024, with the best price that we could negotiate at the time of renewal.

You will also see that the price of oil has increased, and for 2023 we spent an additional £1000 on this.

We received some financial support to help pay our energy bills, in the form of a grant for £2,280 from the Diocese, which was a great help in difficult times.

One of the biggest calls on our finances for 2023 was paying for grounds maintenance. The amount we paid this year was £5,565. As you can see, we did not pay anything in 2022; the reason this figure is so high is because no invoice was submitted for 2020, 2021 and 2022. You may remember that there was an issue with the grounds maintenance company that took a little time to resolve, and invoices were not submitted until early 2023. At this point we cleared all outstanding payments. For 2023 we have not received any monies from either of the Parish Councils towards grounds upkeep.

Our costs for building maintenance have been much lower in 2023, but we should remain aware that the cost of maintaining the two listed church buildings will always be a major part of our general running costs.

We received a generous bequest from Maurice Padfield, which he stipulated should benefit St Mary's church, and this will be put into the CCLA account, in order that the money can earn some interest, as the rates have improved considerably over the past year. I will also be moving the large bequest received in 2022 to the St Michael's CCLA account.

As you can see, the deposit accounts have benefited from this increase in interest rates.

Please also note that these accounts do not include any figures for the Gift Aid that we can claim. This will be 25% of donations and regular giving to the church. I am as always, very grateful to Anne Padfield for all the work she does in claiming our Gift Aid; the figures will be made known to the PCC and the general congregation once they have been confirmed in 2024.

Finally, as always, I thank everyone who supports the church and enables me to manage the finances, with donations, fund raising, regular giving, as well as helping me as Treasurer. That support and help is always appreciated.

Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Stapleford Tawney and St Michael's Theydon Mount						
Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2023						
Receipts and Payments Account						
	Nat West					
	General Account	Capital Reserve	St Mary's Fund	St Michael's Fund	TOTAL	2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance Brought Forward 1st January 2023	52,208.74	11,173.43	9,979.38	9,450.28	82,811.83	54,443.40
Receipts						
Green	1,200.00				1,200.00	8,235.00
Yellow	3,138.00				3,138.00	1,482.58
Loose	702.46				702.46	511.92
Donations	978.00				978.00	17,475.89
Events	1,580.60				1,580.60	828.00
Hire	80.00				80.00	350.00
Regular/Transfers	7,106.00				7,106.00	0.00
Weddings	0.00				0.00	512.67
Funerals	3,186.34				3,186.34	2,927.99
Auto Credits for Regular Giving	0.00				0.00	8,477.00
Interest	0.00	433.43	387.11	366.60	1,187.14	199.95
Grounds Maintenance	0.00				0.00	1,200.00
Gift Aid	0.00				0.00	3,550.07
Memorial Stones	201.00				201.00	0.00
Grant for Fuel	2,280.00				2,280.00	0.00
Bank Compensation	100.00				100.00	0.00
Legacy from Maurice Padfield	10,260.60				10,260.60	0.00
Tea Towel Sales	0.00				0.00	5.00
	30,813.00	433.43	387.11	366.60	32,000.14	45,756.07
Payments						
Parish Share	-11,000.00				-11,000.00	-9,000.00
Insurance	-3,164.32				-3,164.32	-3,124.17
CCLI Licence	-223.30				-223.30	-209.89
Priest Expenses	-419.32				-419.32	-378.66
Admin Wages	-737.88				-737.88	-737.88
Electricity - Mount	-237.41				-237.41	
Electricity - Tawney	-1,588.61				-1,588.61	-907.51
Oil	-1,352.43				-1,352.43	-313.74
Water	-125.36				-125.36	-119.23
Grounds Upkeep	-5,565.00				-5,565.00	0.00
Organist	-660.00				-660.00	-720.00
Septic tank	0.00				0.00	-312.00
Organ tuning	-493.00				-493.00	-161.00
Event Expenses	-79.90				-79.90	-89.56
Building Maintenance	-216.00				-216.00	-1,002.00
Security Services	-324.00				-324.00	-312.00
	-26,186.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	-26,186.53	-17,387.64
Net Receipts / Payments for year	4,626.47	433.43	387.11	366.60	5,813.61	28,368.43
Balances Carried Forward 31st December 2023	56,835.21	11,606.86	10,366.49	9,816.88	£ 88,625.44	£ 82,811.83

Note: These financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting regulations 2006

Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Stapleford Tawney and St Michael's Theydon Mount
 Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2023
 Statement of Assets and Liabilities

At 31st December 2023						
ASSETS	General Account	Hatchments Fund	Capital Reserve	St Mary's Fund	St Michael's Fund	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£	
Cash at Bank	56,835.21	0.00	11,606.86	10,366.49	9,816.88	88,625.44
Cash in Hand						0.00
Total Cash	56,835.21	0.00	11,606.86	10,366.49	9,816.88	88,625.44
Debtors						0.00
Current Assets	56,835.21	0.00	11,606.86	10,366.49	9,816.88	88,625.44
Assets retained for the Churchs' use						0.00
						0.00
						0.00
Fixed Assets	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	56,835.21	0.00	11,606.86	10,366.49	9,816.88	88,625.44
LIABILITIES						0.00
NET ASSETS	56,835.21	0.00	11,606.86	10,366.49	9,816.88	88,625.44

At 31st December 2022						
ASSETS	General Account	Hatchments Fund	Capital Reserve	St Mary's Fund	St Michael's Fund	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£	
Cash at Bank	52,208.74	0.00	11,173.43	9,979.38	9,450.28	82,811.83
Cash in Hand						0.00
Total Cash	52,208.74	0.00	11,173.43	9,979.38	9,450.28	82,811.83
Debtors						0.00
Current Assets	52,208.74	0.00	11,173.43	9,979.38	9,450.28	82,811.83
Assets retained for the Churchs' use						0.00
						0.00
						0.00
Fixed Assets	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	52,208.74	0.00	11,173.43	9,979.38	9,450.28	82,811.83
LIABILITIES						0.00
NET ASSETS	52,208.74	0.00	11,173.43	9,979.38	9,450.28	82,811.83

The Independent Examiner's report is attached separately.