



Bathampton Parish Church

Annual Review 2024 (for APCM 2025)



**St Nicholas Church
Church Close Bathampton BA2 6TU**

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Background: St. Nicholas PCC has the responsibility of co-operation with the Revd. Jonty Frith, Incumbent, in promoting our Mission Statement that “We are a church focused on Jesus so that we love one another, serve the whole parish and touch the world.”

Charitable Status: The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC is a charity exempted from registration with the Charity Commission. The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church representation rules.

Bankers: Current account held with National Westminster Bank, Bath. Deposit and Investment accounts held with the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England (CFB), London.

Independent Examiner: Andrew Morrison

Financial Review: The full financial report is presented separately.

Reserves Policy: It is PCC policy to balance general income and expenditure each year and to invest our fund balances with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund. The PCC policy is to maintain, if possible, a balance of unrestricted funds equal to six months’ unrestricted payments to cover any emergency that may arise.

The PCC has three Charitable Trusts which donate money to the work of St. Nicholas Church, for which the rector and churchwardens act as Trustees:

- The Barlow Trust for the benefit of the sick and poor of the parish.
- The Ramsbottom Trust for the maintenance of the churchyard.
- The Rhodes Trust for Sunday School work in the parish.

PCC Members April 2024- April 2025

The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules. All elected PCC members are volunteers.

The following people served during 2024/25.

Ex officio:

Rector: Rev'd Jonty Frith

Churchwardens: Anna Young
(*elected annually*) Paul Bryant

Diocesan Synod: Phil Edge

Deanery Synod: Anna Young (*resigning 2025*)
(*to 2026*) Tim Laver

Elected Members:

To 2025: Nigel Shepherd (*since 2023*)
Helen Williams (*since 2023*)
Margaret White (*since 2022*)

To 2026: Hannah Findlay (*since 2020; resigned 2025*)
Anne-Marie Conn (*since 2023*)
Peter Hunt (*since 2023*)

To 2027: Sally Magee (*since 2023*)
Charles Laurie (*since 2024*)
Jane Buckley (*since 2024*)

Co-opted April 2024: The Revd Ian Lewis
Ian Williams

Chair The Rector
Vice Chair Anna Young
Secretary Peter Hunt

Treasurer: Rita Warboys

Safeguarding officer: Rachel Howlett/Natalie Mills

Paid Staff:

Childrens Minister: Rachel Howlett: 20 hours per week, until August 2024

Benefice Administrator: Natalie Mills: 12 hours per week

PCC Review of the Year:

PCC met eight times formally during 2024. Besides the regular items (including safeguarding and sub-committee reports), the PCC has discussed a variety of matters:

- We approved the *Re:Generations* tasks, detailed them in order of priority, and instructed the Appeal Committee to launch an appeal.
- We resolved that we wish to appoint a Children's & Families' Minister as soon as it is feasible.
- We unanimously approved to affirm the CEEC Basis of Faith (including Additional Declarations) as a statement of the teaching of our church and that all are welcome, regardless of whether they agree with all aspects of this document.
- We appointed Helen Williams to the position of Planned Giving Secretary, which was formerly called Planned Giving Officer.
- We agreed that Natalie Mills would be the Interim / Active Safeguarding Officer until Jane Buckley could become Parish Safeguarding Officer in early 2025.
- We notified the parish council of our likely intention to hand the responsibility for the churchyard over to them.
- We supported Helen Williams' endeavours to improve the biodiversity of the churchyard.

Peter Hunt

Finance:

See the Accounts published separately.

Rita Warboys

Churchwardens' Report:

We are grateful to Natalie (Benefice Administrator) for all the work she does to make our job easier, and to those who help with so many practical aspects of keeping St Nick's running, especially the Stewards, Fabric Committee, those on the tech, cleaning and flower rotas.

After a very successful time as our Children's and Families' Minister, Rachel left in the summer to train for ordination. We miss her, and pray that funds will be available to appoint a new person to this vital role in the near future. In the Autumn Term, we were thankful to have enough volunteers to be able to keep running Story Club and The Bridge running, and to do the Halloween outreach event again.

As mentioned in the 2023 report, the cost of replacing the heating system with something low-carbon and efficient was estimated to be £100,000. The decision was therefore taken in September 2024 to launch an appeal for a wider redevelopment project to make the church more welcoming and accessible to the community. Phase one of this project will be the heating and wiring, but having a larger project with a vision of handing the church down to future generations will enable us to approach various trusts for funding. The scope and final implementation of later phases are still to be determined, but phase one has begun with fund raising, feasibility studies and the necessary paperwork.

We hope to be able to consider some of the positive aspects of meeting in the Miller Room when discussing what changes we might make to the layout of the main church building as part of the *Re:Generations* project. As last year, we are grateful to the children for moving out of the Miller Room for several months to enable us to hold services there.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported us during our term of office and offer our best wishes to our replacements.

Anna Young & Paul Bryant

Rector's Report:

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:6-7

Growing in Christ has to remain our aim as we look to be a church focused on Jesus, so that we love one another, serve the parish and touch the world. Not moving on from him and the faith *as we were taught*, not

staying the same as we were or going back to what we have been, but growing in him as we live out lives with him as Lord.

Starting 2024 in our second cold winter with no heating in church, and finishing the year in our third winter without heating, the need to do something about it and the scale of the challenge ahead has inevitably been on our minds. But would it be a distraction from growing in Christ, or one of the means he would use to bring growth, increase our dependence on him, challenge and hone us and equip us for future growth?

We became convinced through the course of 2024 that we needed to do more with our building than simply heat it. We needed to work out how it could be developed to be more useful for God's purposes for Bathampton and for his people in this place to serve and grow. We had received a wonderful asset from generations before, it was in a bit of a sad state, and to honour the contributions of our predecessors our responsibility was not to return it to some former glory (with a working gas-fired hot-water-radiator system) but to hand it on to future generations in a more useful form that would better serve the purposes of God in this and future generations, sustainably heated and maintained without damaging the global or local environment, and enabling more people in Bathampton and beyond to see the glory of the Saviour, hear and receive the invitation of his word, and give glory to God.

Robin Donald is a man who thinks big. As chair of the Appeal Committee, he put the case to the PCC that now is the moment to aim higher than repairing or replacing the heating. If we had an appeal for £100,000, met the target, and sorted out the heating, that would be it. We would not then be able to have another appeal to do anything else. We needed to look ahead to what else we wanted to achieve, and roll it all into one multi-phase project to be launched now. So the vision grew for the *Re:Generations* Project.

- To welcome all, and be accessible to those with mobility problems showing that all are welcome, we need changes to the stepped entrance through the porch. Facilities in the Extension (especially the disabled toilet) need a review.
- To extend that welcome to those who are not familiar with the building or already comfortable with what we are inviting them into, glass doors will help them to see the way in. No longer will we give the impression of hiding away from the community.
- To give a sense of the light and love of God, openness with one another, and the ability to see, improved lighting and lighter flooring and furniture would help.
- We want church to be a place where people want to be and enjoy spending time together, so that we can encourage one another to grow in Christ. Warmth is an important part of that and the way it is generated (aiming for carbon-neutrality by moving from fossil fuel to electric power) matters. To keep running costs down, warm-up times can be reduced for the limited part of the week for which we need to be warm in a building of cold stone.
- The comfort of the seating is an equivalent issue to the temperature. Some people stay away from church because they find the seats painfully uncomfortable. The rigidity of rows all facing exactly the same way detracts from the awareness of God's presence being located in his people, and forces an unnaturally formal atmosphere. Nearly everyone who has experienced a Sunday service in the Miller Room has experienced a sense in which there is a better atmosphere where we are closer together and more able to encourage one another, as mentioned by the Wardens in their report. Of course warmth and comfortable chairs contribute to that, but so does the layout of the room being suited to the size of gathering: all physical factors that clear away obstacles to our engagement with God and with one another. We want to take the positives back with us into our beautiful church. Movable seating would allow for much more suitable provision for

different kinds of services, as well as other uses of the building by the church and community, for Gospel outreach, for generous sharing of the resource to be more fully used in community-building ways, and potentially for an income stream to help maintain an expensive building with wider “ownership”.

- Aesthetics are important. Care over the appearance of the venue shows that we take church seriously and is a sign of our love for God, for one another and for visitors. Changes to heating and seating will bring necessary knock-on requirements for good, durable, acoustically-appropriate, accessible flooring, well-directed reliable and beautiful lighting, and the need to tidy up by removing ugly old now-redundant radiators and pipework, and to plan where chairs will be stored when not in use.
- The vestry is an under-used lovely room, in a good location for the church office to be a base for welcoming visitors to church during the week and support Sunday services. To re-purpose it will require a bit of renovation and adaptation, which will then free up the Palmer Room.
- The Palmer Room needs minor refurbishment when we move the Office out to the Vestry. This will enable Junior Church or creche to have a really useful room in which to care for young disciples close to parents in church, and various adult groups to have a versatile meeting room during the week. It adds to the usefulness of the whole building by giving an extra breakout room for day conferences hosted by ourselves, other churches, or other Christian organisations or hirers.
- We have an opportunity to “touch the world” through our many Australian, and other, visitors. They value the opportunity to visit the grave of Arthur Phillip, of which we are custodians. As we fulfil that responsibility and welcome them, we have a small opportunity to point them to Christ. The “new” First Fleet / Arthur Phillip display in the area under the Tower is greatly appreciated, and led to increased financial donations from visitors. It is now

looking a bit dated and tired, and some of the picture lights are broken. A renewed display of self-lit panels would refresh this aspect of our ministry.

- The exterior of the building plays a part in how we present to parishioners and passers-by. Many are unaware that there is a living church here that is interested in them. Tidying the churchyard, with attention to views of the church and to biodiversity, help with this, as would judicious use of floodlighting.
- At some point in the future the gas boilers now used only for the extension will need to be replaced. By then we hope to be able to replace that heating system as well with something more efficient and quiet, to enable more effective meetings and prayer times, and further reduce our carbon footprint.
- With the boilers gone from the crypt (saving the gas Standing Charge), it may be possible to install batteries there to reduce reliance on peak-time electricity use, which could also be combined (if permitted) with solar panels on our great expanse of South-facing roof.

As we have been richly blessed with the funds for Phase 1, Ian Williams and Paul Bryant are doing a fantastic job of getting the heating and electrical connection sorted out. Looking beyond this, the next phases of the project involve complex interconnected issues which will need careful management efficiently to oversee consultation, authorisation, design, procurement, construction and completion. I hope to share news on this at the Annual Meeting.

One well-known book on church growth is called *The Trellis and The Vine*. The idea is following the Lord Jesus' metaphor "I am the vine; you are the branches". The Body of Christ grows like a vine. It is interesting to see the restoration of ancient vineyards in Claverton, replanted with new vines. To grow healthily, a vine needs a supporting structure. Some work needs to be done building and maintaining the trellis. It is not the vine. It produces no grapes. But it enables the vine to flourish. Trellis-work is not

wine production. The viticulturist may find it a frustrating distraction from what they want to be doing, growing fruitful vines, and they prefer sowing, feeding, watering, protecting from pests, pruning and harvesting. They don't love the trellis as they love the vine. They don't build it for its own sake or as a thing of beauty. But they need trellis-work to enable good vine-work. So as we deal with matters of the supporting structures that enable the church to keep growing, let's keep them in perspective and give attention to the goal vine-work of making disciples of Jesus.

The situation in the Church of England that I described in my last annual report remains: gridlock arising from an embedded contradiction, and the future of faithful biblical ministry very much under threat within the established structures. A leadership crisis is part of the dismantling (undressing) of our beloved Church with multiple exposures of abuse and scandal. A positive development is the growth in support of The Alliance: an informal partnership of leaders from a broad range of orthodox networks working to establish a de facto parallel province where orthodox Christian teaching is protected. I receive significant encouragement in my own ministry through regular contact with my Alternative Spiritual Overseer.

Churchwardens have an essential role in the life of the church. They carry a serious responsibility and keep all sorts of things and people (including the Rector) going. Paul and Anna are treasures. They have made a very positive difference to our 2024 in many ways. Paul is always the first to arrive, and quietly gets many things ready. His unhurried attention helps everyone else to do their thing, and leaves him time in peace to spend time with the Lord, which bears fruit in his never having a harsh word for anyone and always being willing kindly to serve. He has worked well with Ian Williams throughout the first phase of *Re:Generations*, from being the first in December 2022 to work out what the trickling sound meant and where it was coming from as the heating failed, through buying and operating temporary gas-fired space-heaters, to having imaginative ideas on how to hang heaters and route cables. His will be hard shoes to fill,

and we will need to share out amongst many volunteers the things he has had covered. Anna is like Paul but different. Her invaluable service has also been grounded on a firm faith and deep understanding of the grace of God in Jesus, whom she seeks to put first in her life. Anna is gifted with a sharp mind and has been a useful churchwarden, willing and able to go through accounts or policy documents and spot key issues, as well as participating in the life of the wider church through the SWGP Women's Conference committee (with Rebecca Frith), and the C of E Bath Deanery Pastoral and Mission Group. We thank God for Paul and Anna and their years of service as churchwardens in Bathampton.

Our two paid staff members have also enabled much. Natalie is a much-loved member of the church family, with her children. She has gained a good grasp of how things operate and is a joy to work with, able to make things happen efficiently. Our social media presence, previously almost non-existent, has become a thing in 2024 through Natalie. We felt the impact of this when many previously-uncontacted families turned up in church for our Nativity service! Rachel's time with us was all-too-short. But in that time Story Club was re-established, a good effort was made at launching The Bridge, and she forged good relationships with the school. We wish her well in her curacy at Peasedown starting this summer. After Rachel left, volunteers have done a great job of stepping up to keep Story Club and Junior Church going.

We feel the lack of leadership from a paid children's minister, and the PCC felt unable to commit resources to replace Rachel straight away. But thankfully our regular giving has increased, and it is looking as though the process of recruitment will be able to start soon. We look to the Lord to provide and thank God, as the hymn says, that

*all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

Jonty Frith

Deanery Synod:

In February, Deanery Synod heard about the Parish Giving Scheme and discussed the Deanery Plan. The Deanery Plan appears to have been re-shaped by two factors: the arrival of Bishop Michael, and the change in Parish Shares, which are now Benefice Shares (i.e. St Nick's and St Mary's are sent a combined bill, with a suggested split based on congregation size). This change was consulted and approved over the Summer and is being implemented over five years. The new calculation is simpler, with three components: the cost of employing a vicar and providing housing, a per-head contribution to central Diocesan costs (including safeguarding), and a 'generosity' payment to enable wealthier churches to support those who cannot meet their costs. For St Nick's, the new calculation has turned out to be similar to our previous Parish Share, but there is a significant increase for St Mary's.

In May, Deanery Synod heard stories of partnership in ministry and mission from different initiatives across the city. These presentations included Grace Church Bath, a Deanery church plant set up to serve the sporting communities of Bath (many sporting fixtures clash with Sunday morning church services), and A2 Youth, a monthly youth event run by a group of churches including St Matt's Widcombe.

The Area Dean (Stephen Girling) retired over the summer and was not replaced until December. The new Area Dean is Roger Driver (Rector of St Michaels Without). The Assistant Area Dean is Debbie Pow. The Lay Dean is still Pippa Page, and Harry Musselwhite was elected as Assistant Area Dean in October.

Anna Young and Tim Laver

The Diocese and Bishop's Council

My work on Bishops Council and the allied Audit and Risk Management Group is tough. The Diocese struggles with major financial issues and other issues, which slow progress toward the core desire to grow the Lord's kingdom, though growing numbers of disciples. It is a varied Diocese with about 450 Parishes, the majority of which are rural. Many

of the Parishes depend upon the mutuality of the churches, for financial and missional support. I have another 2.5 years to serve on Council and hope to see less financial worry for all who work in the Diocese and more time to concentrate on that core desire.

Phil Edge – Bishop's Council Member

Worship, Teaching and Equipping

Homegroups:

Both evening groups are following the Sunday series for our Bible Study and are important means of expression and growth of encouraging, prayerful friendships within the church.

Wednesday Group

I currently lead the Wednesday group which meets fortnightly in the Vicarage. We have had some members stop attending and others join us, and have grown in our prayerful support of one another.

Jonty Frith

Tuesday Group:

We normally meet in Jan and Ian's home at 7.30 pm on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, with the option of also meeting when there is a fifth Tuesday, perhaps for a social evening or to do something different. Once again we helped with the hot chocolate distribution at Halloween. Usually, we look together at bible passages following the sermon series and are encouraged by thoughts, suggestions and experiences shared between us. Discussion then turns to prayer for concerns shared by those present and often also from those absent. We have continued to grow in prayerful support of one another, and have been open to receiving new members, subject to practical limits of space.

Ian Williams

Faith & Friendship Ladies Group

The women's "Faith and Friendship" group at St Nicholas' has continued to thrive over the last year. Our eleven, committed members have been steadily working our way through St Mark's Gospel and have enjoyed some interesting, and sometimes challenging, studies. These are always followed by informal fellowship over coffee and cakes. In the Summer, we shared a lovely lunch together which we were able to enjoy outdoors on one of the few hot, sunny days of the year! More recently, we had our Christmas social which included a light-hearted Quiz.

We look forward to another year in which we hope, through the group, to deepen our understanding of God, grow in our faith and continue to deepen our friendships.

Linda Lewis

Music:

*Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,
always giving thanks to God the Father for everything,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 5:19-20

We continue to be blessed with the faithful service of a team of regular musicians, meaning that most weeks we are able to be led by voice and piano, with welcome contributions on saxophone, horn, flute, cornet and cajon adding to our sung praises. We continue to be grateful to God for gifting members of the church family in this way, and for their generous willingness to share their time and expertise for our benefit and to His praise and glory. In particular, we remain very grateful for the generous contributions made by the Howlett family during their time with us, and we were pleased once again to be joined by other members of the regular congregation, friends and family members for the church carol service.

As a result, we have been able to continue to sing a mix of old favourites and well-loved contemporary worship songs to express our praise and thanks to God for his love, faithfulness and goodness to us. In addition, new songs to the repertoire have received a warm reception and help us to remember that we are part of the larger world-wide body of Christ, singing the praises of Him who one day will be acknowledged by all creation as its one true King.

*Were creation suddenly articulate
With a thousand tongues to lift one cry
Then from north to south and east to west
We'd hear 'Christ be magnified!'*

Margaret White

Banner Group

No new banners made during 2024 but all those banners designed and made prior to that date have been well used.

Andy Lloyd Williams

Prayer Meeting:

The monthly Prayer Meeting is the backbone of the praying life of the whole church, on the first Thursday at 7.30pm for an hour. Not many of the church members have been participating, but everyone is welcome. The Lord has blessed our little gathering, draws near to us and hears our prayers.

Jonty Frith

Prayer Ministry:

The group of prayer ministers all enjoy the time we spend together in prayer and in prayer with others. Few people take advantage of this ministry and we all wish that more would join with us in prayer at the end of services.

The service a few weeks ago, based solely around prayer, with 15 minutes of silence for personal prayer, coupled with worship, was well

received and we hope to follow with a similar service, in the weeks to come.

Phil Edge

Stewards:

The job of a Steward is very important - not only are they a help to the Wardens in making a service run smoothly, but they are usually the first people that visitors meet on entering the church for a service and therefore a bright cheery welcome is much appreciated. I think our Stewards fill that role well and we are grateful to them for their continued support. If anyone else would be interested in joining our team please let me know.

Jane Buckley

Worship committee

In our services in 2024 we completed the 5-series project through the book of Isaiah hearing God's word to us. We caught glimpses into heaven in Revelation, saw the growth of the church in Acts, and enjoyed the Lord Jesus opening his heart to his disciples in John. One particularly memorable short series showed how the Gospel of Jesus transforms relationships from Paul's letter to Philemon. The Miller Room winter experience was again positive, and we have been thinking further on how to take the positives into the main church building. Our church gatherings benefit from a gifted and devoted team of preachers and service leaders greatly supported by those who set up, operate tech (including continuing to offer Church At Home via Zoom), welcome, lead music, read, lead prayers, and serve refreshments.

Jonty Frith

Pray-ers and Readers Rota:

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to our services of worship this past year either by leading prayers or by reading the Bible in church

(or both!). It would be great to have more people willing to lead prayers so that each person appears less frequently on the rota; please let Jonty or me know if you would help in this way.

Jan Williams

Re:Generations Project Phase 1 Implementation:

We hope this brief report is very much out-of-date by the time you are reading it, and that significant progress will have taken place by then. During 2024 we visited several churches with different infra-red heating installations to assess what would be best for St Nicholas, and we visited the Herschel factory where the chandelier-style far-IR heaters are made. Successful tests were performed to check the load-bearing capability of the ceiling rings from which these units will be suspended, and enquiries are underway about installation of the 3-phase electrical power supply, along with rewiring of the church and revamping of the lighting.

Paul Bryant & Ian Williams

Getting to Know and Care for One Another

Men's Group:

The Men's Group provides an opportunity for men of the church, whether regular or occasional members, to discuss current subjects of interest to members, whether secular or faith orientated. It is a source of friendship and support for St Nicholas. Discussions around The *Re:Generations* project will continue to feature, particularly as many members are also members of the Fabric Committee.

The first meeting of the Group took place at Bathampton Lodge, Hight Street, some 30 years ago. Meetings continue in the same vein, except for several years we have met at different members' houses. We also enjoyed a trip on the K&A on Rob and Trish Munday's (Canal Ministries)

narrowboat followed by fish and chips at The George. More recently we held our Christmas celebration dinner at The Boatman.

Inevitably as more senior members of the Church, we have over the last year sadly said farewell to a few long-standing members. Nevertheless we maintain a healthy membership of 10 or so and our doors are always open. We meet the third Monday evening in the month, 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

Ray Bennett

Coffee Rota:

The coffee rota is struggling at the moment. Two people have left the rota which only leaves us with 5 people on it. This means a lot of pressure on the remaining people, who are, however, reliable and committed. It will be necessary to recruit more people onto the rota this year.

The trolley is still being used when the services are in the church and is a very successful way of serving the coffee. As the services are in the Miller Room at the moment, the coffee can be served from the kitchen.

I still order the coffee which has slightly increased in cost but the cost of providing the refreshments after the service over the year seems to be good value. Generally people on the rota don't claim for the cost of milk and biscuits.

In conclusion, I will be making a request for more people to join the rota this year but other than that it is functioning well.

Helen Williams

Pastoral Visiting Team:

Members of the Pastoral Visiting Group, as part of the church's care for the village, have seen several people during the year. Those who are unwell or unable to leave their homes, those who are bereaved or lonely; these are the people that we want to visit. We enjoy chatting with them,

maybe helping with something that they are finding it difficult to do and, also, say a prayer with them. Please let us know if there is someone who would like a visit from one of our group.

Angela Donald

Outreach

Parish Outreach:

We aim in church to resource and encourage one another to reach out for the Lord in whatever contexts he places us through the week. Distributing Easter and Christmas cards to every home, opening the church midweek, and holding a Marquee Service following the Village Show have all helped to supplement the other ministries reported on in this section. Our Village Show stall focused on raising awareness of the *Re:Generations* project and inviting people to take part in Abseiling or Teddy Parachuting. Some money was raised through the former and some extra people came to the harvest service in connection with the latter. Two guest events were highlights of the year: a Magic Show (followed by magician Bertie Pearce preaching at the Harvest service) and the Nativity Puppet Show. Five participants did the *Christianity Explored* course in the autumn. *The Bridge* team faithfully offered coffee on Tuesday mornings and made some contact with school families; a few came into the Miller Room but in the new year 2025 the team decided it was time to try something else and to stop *The Bridge* in its current form at Easter. In a new development, in liaison with Genesis Trust we have been distributing free coal to eligible people living on canal boats, which they collected by coming into The Bridge.

Jonty Frith

Marriage Ministry:

We had two weddings in Bathampton in 2024, in both cases the bridegroom being known and loved in St Nicholas: Tim Burden and Peter Hunt. It has been a delight to welcome Peter's wife Hilla into the church.

Jonty Frith

Funeral Ministry:

There were eight funerals in St Nicholas': three burials and five cremations.

In addition we held six burials of cremated remains in the churchyard. Church family members and visitors value the coming together of a main church service and this small special event when this happens on a Sunday.

Jonty Frith

World Mission:

We are committed to prayer for and financial support of several partners on a yearly basis. As a church family, we rotate our prayer focus on specific individuals and organisations for periods of a few months at a time.

In 2024, we supported: Delhi Bible Institute; Dan Mak; Wycliffe Bible Translators; Open Doors; UCCF; and Samaritans Purse. We plan to support a similar range of entities in 2025, subject to PCC approval.

Particular highlights of 2024 included our ongoing support for Dan Mak (for whom it has been a delight and privilege to pray; his studies are going well) and a wonderful sense of support, at Christmas time, for Operation Christmas Child (Samaritan's Purse). It has also been good to support Delhi Bible Institute for the first time.

New volunteers to join the World Mission Committee are warmly welcomed.

Anne-Marie Conn

Engaging Children and Youth

Junior Church:

For a time we held separate “youth” (age 9-14) and “Junior Church (age 4-8) groups. When Rachel left this became unsustainable, both because of child numbers with many attending infrequently, and because of shortage of leaders. So for the time being the groups have recombined. Some of the older children prefer to remain in adult church. Volunteer leaders coped well with the restrictions imposed by lack of space in the winter (the Miller Room being used for church) and the challenging age range. It is very encouraging that Peter and Hilla Hunt are taking on responsibility for leading the team from Easter 2025.

Jonty Frith

Story Club:

Ten or a dozen children, mainly from outside church, love coming to hear the stories of Jesus, eat cake, play games and do related craft activities. There are more girls than boys. Jan Wilcock and Natalie provide great refreshments and help respectively every week, with Daisy as Assistant Leader and a team of three leaders in rotation: Jonty, Sally and Suzi, who is a Bathampton parent kindly joining us from St Swithin's.

Jonty Frith

Bathampton Primary School:

Rachel and Jonty between them had happy involvement in assemblies and some lessons throughout 2024, and a strengthening relationship with the school. Groups came into church for the Arthur Phillip service in October and Armistice Day in November, as well as the Leavers' Service in July and the Christmas Performances.

Jonty Frith

Support Ministries

Administration:

In 2023, significant changes were made, including the transition from Vodafone to Yappl, and the introduction of wireless access points in the Miller Room and church. The phone line is now VOIP, with calls redirected to the Benefice Administrator's mobile during working hours, and the printer was upgraded to reduce costs. All these changes have helped to streamline the job as Administrator. Due to family commitments, during 2024 Natalie's hours were reduced from 18 to 12 hours per week.

In 2025, there are plans to create a church contact list, separate from the electoral roll, to help the church family stay connected, particularly during times of hardship.

Natalie's role is made significantly easier by the wonderful Churchwardens who are always at the end of the phone and also the great number of volunteers who help in every aspect of Church life.

Natalie Mills

Safeguarding:

The safeguarding processes in the parish continued to develop throughout 2024, with key improvements made in tracking and monitoring safeguarding activities. The introduction of a parish dashboard and hub, using a traffic light system, has helped identify outstanding tasks, such as training and DBS checks. The transition to the 31:8 DBS system has made tracking DBS renewals more efficient, and we currently have 31 individuals with up-to-date DBS checks.

The safeguarding team now consists of: Natalie Mills (Interim Parish Safeguarding Officer and DBS Administrator) and Jonty Frith (Incumbent).

In 2025, Jane Buckley will take over from Natalie Mills as the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

As we move forward, we aim to improve training accessibility and ensure all safeguarding requirements are met.

Natalie Mills

Church Cleaning:

For 3 years the church have continued to use Rachel Leonard to provide professional cleaning for the extension each week, and this system has worked beautifully, ensuring that all the rooms have been kept in an excellent state for both church and external users alike. Rachel is kept up to date with the calendar and works around events held in the Miller Room as and when needed. The church itself is cleaned by volunteers.

Natalie Mills

The Flower Team:

Firstly, thank you to our team of four or five for their constant support. We try to refresh the church flowers every one or two weeks. (No flowers during Lent). Obviously while the heating isn't functioning, there are less services in Church and it is cooler, so flowers last longer! When we get back to regular services in Church (or sooner if you are keen to help before that!), we would be delighted to have more help and offers to put flowers in vases : plus decorating for Festivals. Do please give me a call on 01225 465454 or email on palw@talk21.com.

Andy Lloyd Williams

Tech Team

The tech team has continued with little change in the last year. We have a handful of regular attendees on Zoom and the sermon is still uploaded to YouTube each week. We struggle to recruit helpers. I'm hopeful that when the church is re-wired we'll be able to make the setup simpler, perhaps even eliminating the role of "tech-person" entirely.

Bellringers:

Two of our long-standing bellringers retired in 2024 but we are rebuilding the team in order that we can ring all six of the bells with a well-trained team. Stuart Burroughs took over as Tower Captain in the Autumn replacing Candy McCabe who retired as Captain and as a ringer due to other commitments.

With help of Bellringing Tutor Maggie Willans – of Bath Abbey- we are training up a group of learners and as well as ringing for events and festivals we are intending, from January 26th, 2025, to be able to ring for at least one Sunday morning service each month, from 10.15 a.m. to 10.45 a.m. We hope to be able ring every Sunday when we have trained up our team.

We are replacing a set of bell ropes ‘tail ends’ thanks to a generous donation towards their costs and with assistance from Bath Abbey will fit the new rope elements later in the Spring.

We are always looking for potential ringers and extend a welcome to anyone might be interested in finding our more. Bathampton has two of the oldest bells (from 1540) in the area and we intend to keep ringing them until these bells celebrate their 500th birthday! And beyond.

Contact Stuart Burroughs via director@museumofbath.org

Stuart Burroughs, Captain of the Tower

Church Rooms Bookings:

On a very similar note to last year there was a steady, if only moderate, usage of the church rooms during 2024. There were occasional bookings from external organisations, as well as a number of post-funeral events. The Miller Room is often used for Story Club and Children’s Church and again this year we have been very grateful for the heating in the Miller Room whilst we have held our services in there during the winter months.

Natalie Mills

Fabric Committee:

The Committee is responsible for the day to day upkeep of the church and churchyard and for the progress of the repairs and professional surveys listed in the Quinquennial Inspection reports. Work is carried out using in-house effort where possible but calling in contractor assistance as appropriate where funding is available.

The Fabric Committee has a team of hardworking and professional members who individually look after separate aspects of our work according to their expertise.

The 2024 Quinquennial Inspection was carried out on 4th July 2024 but not reported until 20th December 2024. This has delayed the Fabric Committee from planning the recommended works.

The biennial churchyard tree survey was carried out on the 17th December 2024 and promptly reported. The recommendation will be carried out in 2025 to maintain churchyard safety and appearance. A part time churchyard gardening contract with agreed standards of performance is in operation. Regular tomb safety inspections and repairs remain ongoing to maintain churchyard safety. The historic tombs are listed.

The gullies, hoppers and drains and ground gullies are cleared regularly to keep the church dry. Recent storms have overwhelmed the roof and ground drains and improved drains and overflows are required. Routine repairs and redecorations are undertaken by the team as required.

In 2023 the church heating pipework buried under the flagstone and marble flooring was found by the Fabric Committee to be badly corroded and beyond repair. PCC directed Paul Bryant to lead studies on alternative heating options. The Fabric Committee has supported Paul as required.

David Lascelles, Chairman



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