

# The Parish Church of St Peter's, Bengeworth Annual Report and Accounts 2024



St Peter's  
Bengeworth

[www.stpetersbengeworth.org](http://www.stpetersbengeworth.org)

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# Incumbent's Report

Just a couple of weeks ago, I said that my hope for St Peter's is that we'd become an increasingly **fruitful** community...

But I'm gradually realising that growing abundant fruit doesn't happen overnight. It takes time, care, attention, and a concerted effort to ensure the conditions are conducive to growth.

I sometimes feel like things can move frustratingly slowly at St Peter's!...the impatient part of me wants everything to be 'sorted' (whatever that means) now! now! now!...but as I reflect on how things have developed over the last three years, maybe slow and steady really is the better way? Because this year we've seen noticeable signs of growth and fruitfulness.

Maybe it's felt slow because we've just been doing our bit and trusting God for his miracle of growth rather than attempting to force things into being? After all, it's only God who can make things grow, and in this season the Holy Spirit seems to be doing a new thing not only here in Evesham, but across our nation.

In a recent report called 'The Quiet Revival' looking at the state of the church in the UK it says:

*'In 2018, just 4% of 18-24 year olds said they attended church at least monthly. Today this has risen to 16% with young men increasing from 4 to 21% and young women from 3-12%. This is now the second most likely age group to attend church'*

As I've said before, I often get a bit twitchy when people say: 'revival's coming!' and whether what we're seeing in this moment is the beginnings of true revival in our nation, only time will tell, but what we can say for certain is that something's shifted in the cultural landscape and **there's currently a significant resurgence in curiosity about faith among young people, and they're beginning to look to the Church once again for answers**. But let's be clear about something...This is not something the Church has achieved through its own brilliance. This has not come about through a fancy strategy. This is the work of the Holy Spirit and ever since I read this report, the thought that's been swirling around in my mind is **'are we ready to welcome them in?'**

St Peter's new Mission Statement is:

**Worshipping Jesus.**

**Growing Disciples.**

**Journeying with the Curious.**

And whilst this was discerned and developed before the 'Quiet Revival' report was published, it feels to me like the timing couldn't be better, because as young people begin to return, ***they'll be hungry to see, hear, and experience something entirely different to the secular culture that many of them will have grown up with...***

What they'll need from us is:

- To see an unashamedly Christ-centred community where **Worshipping Jesus** is at the centre of everything we do.
- Examples of **Growing Disciples**, committed to holiness and who are 'bearing good fruit' and living in contrast to what the world has to offer.
- People patiently and lovingly **Journeying with the Curious**, hearing their questions, and walking with them as they explore.

For decades, the story of the western Church has been one of seemingly inevitable decline, but the tide is very definitely turning.

This is an exciting season, not just for our church, but for *The Church*.

Let's remain committed to nurturing the right conditions for growth. Let's continue to place our trust in God - the only one who can grow abundant fruit, and let's be expectant that he will do great things among us.

*Andy (Incumbent)*

# Parish of St Peter's, Bengeworth

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting

### Minutes

(Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 3.30pm in Church House, Bengeworth)

Revd. Andy Smith in the chair.

#### **Opening:**

Andy Smith welcomed those attending the meeting.

**Apologies:** Phil and Tina Cooper, Roz Harvey, Chris and Emma Pettifer, Jane Richards.

Those attending the APCM joined together in prayer, giving thanks for what God has done through St Peter's and the local community in the past year.

Highlights mentioned included: baptisms, the supportive church family, the YouNite youth group, the appointment of Jayne (our church organist), the success of joint Sunday services, and the Alpha course.

Revd Andy Smith advised those attending of the roles that will be voted on during this APCM and gave an overview of the responsibilities for each position: Church wardens, Deanery Synod Reps, and PCC Members.

## Annual Meeting of Parishioners

#### **Approval of Last Year's Meeting Minutes:**

Proposed by Tim Clack, seconded by Tessa Bartlett, all in favour. Objections none. Abstentions none.

#### **Election of Church Wardens:**

A special thanks was given to Dave Cockram for his years of service in the role of church warden. Thanks were also given to Steve Bramley for his hard work and support of the church and Andy personally.

Dave Cockram is standing down as church warden for personal reasons. Andy and those at the meeting gave thanks to Dave for his outstanding work and everything he has done to support Andy and the church.

Steve Bramley has expressed interest to continue being a churchwarden. Steve has been nominated and seconded already – and duly appointed as warden.

The church is currently lacking one additional Warden and there have been no applications yet. Attendees present at the meeting were asked and no one expressed interest.

# Annual Parochial Church Meeting:

## **Approval of Last Year's Meeting Minutes:**

Proposed by Sandra Cockram and seconded by Shelagh Moore, all voted in favour – no objections or abstentions.

## **Matters arising:**

None.

## **Electoral Roll Report:**

The report was given to those present. 91 people are on the church role, which is a slight decrease from last year (down from 96).

## **Treasurer's Report:** (provided by Tim Clack)

Thank you to Mike Freer (retired treasurer) for all of his tireless work looking after the accounts for many years.

There has been a delay in communication from the auditor of accounts and we have not yet received these in full. Accounts will follow on soon after this meeting and will be circulated to the church/freely available for inspection within the church.

Income has increased in the past year, and despite an also increased expenditure, the church has a £8000 surplus compared to last year.

The Parish Giving Scheme donations have increased- now totalling approximately £3000 per month. Tim asked those attending if they are thinking of giving to please consider utilising the parish giving scheme as gift aid is more easily applied to donations.

The parish share was paid in full.

The John Martin Charity is financially a big help to the church. We have about £24000 to spend this year. Funds from this charity are intended mainly for propagation of the gospel. A special project fund will help to pay for new church carpeting (75% of expected cost).

Ministry share: is expected to increase soon because the end of the renewal project funding coming up. This will be approximately £36,000 this year, £47,000 the next, and £58,000 the year after.

The church received a substantial financial gift which is being used as the ARK fund (Acts of radical kindness) totalling £6,500. This is intended to bless the local community. The PCC are discussing how this project will work, and planning is in the initial stages. Attendees were asked to contribute any ideas for use of the fund.

Mission spending: the church aims to give back to local, national, and international causes. The PCC will discuss the budget for giving. Attendees were asked to contribute any ideas for charities we could support.

Overall summary: the church accounts are looking healthy and are moving in the right direction.

Questions opened to the floor. None.

Andy Smith gave thanks to Tim Clack for his work over the past year, with recognition of the huge amount of work being treasurer entails. Big thanks were also given to everyone who has given to the church financially.

Election of lay representatives to the PCC:

Thanks were given to everyone serving on the PCC for their time and energy. Special thanks were also given to those whose PCC term is coming to an end, including Jane Richards, and Sandra Cockram.

Due to personal reasons, Krysia Bateman, and Margaret Wade have also stepped down from serving on the PCC.

The PCC currently has vacancies for 4 full and 2 casual vacancies.

### **PCC Elections:**

Phil Cooper: (not present) Simon Browning nominated, and Tim Clack seconded, all in favour.

Two further people have expressed interest to stand for the PCC – but have not been on the electoral roll long enough. They can be co-opted to the PCC and adopted as full members when they meet the criteria.

The floor was opened for anyone else would like to stand for PCC: No further applicants.

### **Deanery Synod Rep Elections:**

Krysia Bateman is stepping down.

Dave Cockram is re-standing. He will continue in the role.

Open to floor for anyone else like to stand: no applicants.

### **Appointment of the independent accounts examiners for this year:**

Boys Accountants were proposed to continue in the role by Tim Clack, Steve Bramley seconded – all in favour. No objections or abstentions.

### **Questions and Discussion:**

An update was provided on Church House. Revd Andy Smith advised those attending that the past year has been challenging as several committee members have now stepped down. Heather Uncles is continuing as the booking secretary, and Andy is acting as Chair. (If anyone else interested in being chair, please speak with Andy Smith).

Steve Bramley is present as warden, and Hannah Clack is now the treasurer of Church House. Mandy Taylor is helping with grant applications for church house. Any grants will be used to help with structural repairs, including to the front doors, glazing, sky lights, kitchen refurb etc. and general improvements to facilities.

Mike Edwards is a new prospective curate who will be joining the church to work alongside Andy. He is expected to arrive around August and start in September.

Youth Worker – the vacancy is currently open for the role and applications are now arriving. A shortlist of applicants will be reviewed in a few weeks and interviews held. The PCC, Andy Smith and Simon Hill will shortlist the applicants. The church is aiming to potentially have someone in post within a few months. Funding is provided mainly through the Healthier Churches fund. Prayers were asked for the success of this venture.

### **Vicar's Report: (Revd Andy Smith)**

There have been some sad losses of people from the church in the past year, and reflection was given for those who have passed away.

Andy gave thanks for the joy of welcoming new people to the church, and the success of the Alpha course. This has resulted in people coming to faith and joining the church congregation, or exploring Christianity, and their beliefs further. There is lots to look forward to in the year ahead.

Andy is currently working on many ventures and projects, including planning for a new curate, The Point Community Café / Hub (that Mike may be involved in), recruitment of a new Youth and Children's worker, progression of the Ark fund, obtaining permission for, and installation of church carpets.

The proposed new church carpeting could not proceed earlier this year due to complications with the installation (a specialist fitter is needed) and appropriate permissions. Alternative options are now in discussion and Andy will be back in touch with the Archdeacon. New faculty applications will be submitted as needed.

### **Reflection:**

The meeting closed with reflection on growth and change at St Peter's Church in the past year – particularly towards 'Making Christ Visible in Bengeworth'. Prayers were given for the future. Prayers to close.



# **Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May, 3.30pm at Church House

## **Agenda**

### **Welcome, Introduction, Apologies and Worship**

#### **Annual Meeting of Parishioners**

- 1). Approval of the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (formerly the Vestry Meeting) from 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024
- 2). Election of Church Warden(s)

#### **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

- 1). Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting from 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024
- 2). Matters arising from the minutes
- 3). Receipt of the Annual Report and Accounts 2023 and the Ministry Review
  - a) Electoral Role Report
  - b) Treasurer's Report
- 4). Election of lay representatives to the PCC
  - a) Election of PCC representatives
  - b) Election of Deanery Synod Representatives
- 5). Appointment of independent examiners for the year to December 2023
- 6). Questions?
- 7). Incumbent's Report
- 8). Closing Prayer

# Administrative information

## **Curate In Charge**

Revd Andy Smith, 31 Mansion Gardens, Evesham, Worcestershire. WR11 1BX

## **Bankers**

Barclays Bank PLC, 50 High Street, Evesham. WR11 4LX.

## **Independent Examiner**

Boyds Chartered Accountants, 20 Sansome Walk, Worcester. WR1 1LR.

## **Architect**

Joanna Daykin, Falconer & Gilbert Scott Architects  
45 Rodney Road, Cheltenham, GL50 1HX  
Telephone: 01242 582 362

## **PCC Membership 2024-2025**

### **Churchwardens (one year term)**

Steve Bramley (elected 2024)

### **Deanery Synod Representatives (three year term)**

David Cockram (elected 2024)

### **PCC Members (three year term)**

Revd Andy Smith, (Incumbent and chair from 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021)

Mike Edwards (Curate)

Tim Clack (Treasurer)

Simon Browning (elected 2023)

Simon Cooper (elected 2023)

Lucy Anstey (elected 2024)

Patsy Chick (co-opted 2024)

Phil Cooper (elected 2024)

### **PCC Secretary**

Kimberley Gunn

# Objectives and Purposes

Our primary objective and purpose is laid out in

## **Our Vision:**

*That all in Evesham would*

**know Jesus,  
discover purpose,  
be transformed.**

*That St Peter's would be a diverse community where*

**all are loved,  
sanctuary is found,  
hope is restored.**

*by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
so that  
God may be glorified.*

*This Vision will be realised through a commitment to living out*

## **Our Mission:**

**Worshipping  
Jesus.**

**Growing  
Disciples.**

**Journeying  
with the Curious.**

Our Mission will be underpinned by living according to

## **Our Values:**

*Faithfully*

**Prayerful**

*Joyfully*

**Welcoming**

*Radically*

**Humble**

*Relentlessly*

**Forgiving**

*Intentionally*

**Encouraging**

# Achievements and Performance

Details of our achievements and performance for the year 23/24 can be read about in the Ministry Review.

## Structure, Governance and Management

### Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. PCC members are appointed in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. All committed members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and consider standing for election to the PCC. The Parish of St Peter, Bengeworth is a parish in the Pershore and Evesham Deanery within the Diocese of Worcester.

### Current PCC membership:

Andy Smith - Incumbent and Chair  
Mike Edwards - Curate  
Steve Bramley Churchwarden  
Tim Clack – Treasurer  
Dave Cockram – Deanery Synod Rep  
Lucy Anstey – PCC Member  
Simon Browning – PCC Member  
Simon Cooper – PCC Member  
Phil Cooper – PCC Member  
Patsy Chick – PCC Member

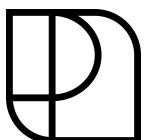
The PCC is responsible for health and safety, safeguarding, child protection, and prevention of discrimination. The PCC is responsible for supporting the clergy in promoting the whole mission of the Church; pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical in the parish. The PCC also has responsibility for the upkeep of both the church building itself and of Church House (now, 'St Peter's Community Hall') on Broadway Road.

### Standing Committee

The PCC delegates some business to the Standing Committee comprised of Church Warden(s), Treasurer, Incumbent, and (if possible) two PCC members (nominated by the PCC). It is responsible for making certain decisions on behalf of the wider PCC, particularly decisions that are required urgently but have been agreed in principle by the PCC and who have duly authorized the Standing Committee to make a final decision.

### Current Standing Committee

Andy Smith – Incumbent and Chair  
Steve Bramley - Churchwarden  
Tim Clack - Treasurer  
Patsy Chick -PCC Member



# Ministry Review

## An Initial 'Thank You!'

I say this every year but it's hugely important so...

- Thank you to everyone who cleans, hovers, dusts and tidies...without you, our wonderful church would be a dirty, messy, health and safety hazard, but because of you, it's a wonderful space where people can come and meet with Jesus, safely and with joy. Well-done good and faithful servants!
- Thank you to those who care for our grounds and gardens and look after the amazing outside space we have. It is beautiful and you all keep it that way. You are amazing and so appreciated.
- Thank you to anyone involved in putting together beautiful flower displays, setting up Easter gardens and nativity scenes. The seasons just wouldn't be the same without you.
- Thank you to anyone that's ever served a cup of tea or coffee or biscuits or cakes. We all know that the church is fuelled by prayer, but it also runs on coffee...lots and lots of coffee (praise God for his bountiful provision!)
- Thank you for anyone who's ever guided one of our children in how to read the Bible, led a youth activity, sung a song, strummed a guitar, set up sound equipment, attended a prayer meeting, played an organ, preached a sermon, joined in enthusiastically and positively with a meeting...(oh, so many meetings Lord!), just managed to make it to church on a Sunday and join in with something when they're tired, anxious or depressed and struggling, or anything else I may have failed to mention...

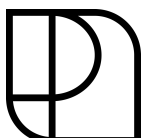
Church just wouldn't be the same without you.

*Andy Smith*

## Curate's Report

We're so thankful to Andy and Debbie and the whole St. Peter's community for welcoming us as a family into Bengeworth. We have been so wonderfully loved and encouraged since arriving. It's been a particular joy to join in with Andy and Kimberley as a Staff Team; they are both absolute gems, but I think Andy and I would both say that neither of us could actually function without Kimberley, who really runs the Church.

Andy has been absolutely incredible as my Training Incumbent ever since my curacy was announced, and I don't just say this because my pre-Priesting Curate's Report is currently sat on his desk waiting to be filled in. He has viewed all my involvement through the lens of what will benefit my training, as opposed to simply viewing me as an additional pair of hands. His feedback has been constructive, encouraging and invaluable as I continue to try to grow in my calling. More than anything, Andy has taught me that anybody's criteria for 'success' is simply faithful obedience to Jesus, and has lived that out as his key metric for all I have done. It has been a profoundly important lesson for me, and should be important for all of us. He has also just been a great friend to me, and that is priceless.



I have loved all that I've gotten to be involved in so far in the role. Leading and preaching in our weekly gatherings, at both the 9:15am and 11am has been a genuine joy, and I'm thankful to all of you for the ongoing encouragement and feedback. I've particularly enjoyed my role as Governor at Bengeworth Academy and the other various bits of work I've done in the school ranging from assemblies, to Governor Visits, to a recent trip to Cambridge.

Similarly, getting The Point off the ground and running alongside Karen Shakespeare has been another joyful area of ministry and I'm excited for all that is to come in that space as we push out. I also enjoyed getting pushed out of my comfort zone and joining the Occasional Choir for Christmas, including being pushed to even sing some Liturgy by Jayne.

There are various other things that are too many to mention that have been formative so far, but suffice to say I am just deeply thankful to be in this community for my Curacy. It is a community of grace and support, with genuine warmth and a spirit of both kindness and encouragement, and for that we are thankful as a family. I learn from each of you on a near daily basis, and am truly thankful for it.



I am looking forward particularly to submitting my MPhil in late June, and also (God willing) being priested, so that I can both expand my weekly capacity and also spread into wider areas to be able to cover and support Andy. Do pray for me ahead of both.

*Mike Edwards*

## **Safeguarding Statement**

The PCC of St Peters Church, Bengeworth, is aware of its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. In 2023 the PCC used the "Safeguarding Dashboard" provided by the Diocese as a way of self-assessment to seek to ensure it fulfils that duty.

## **Safeguarding**

It has been a challenging year regarding Safeguarding within the Church of England with the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Liverpool over historical issues. It does highlight the need for each of us to take responsibility for Safeguarding within our church. It is more important than ever to adhere to the strict recruiting and safeguarding procedures to keep people safe.

The Worcester Diocese team continue to be very knowledgeable and supportive of the Parishes and the PSO's and have robust safeguarding procedures in place. This was born out by the very positive outcome from the Safeguarding Audit that took place in July 2024. Thankyou to all those who completed the auditor's questionnaire to contribute



your views. You can read the full report of their findings and improvements for the future on the Worcester Diocese website.

As St Peter's family grows and new initiatives have begun, such as more children's work, the Creche and The Point, there have been lots more people recruited to new roles so more people have DBS clearance within the church and have Safeguarding Training. Please can I ask that when training is completed you let me know so that I can keep our records up to date. Thank you all for helping to keep our Church a safer place for everyone.

*Julie Rowell (Parish Safeguarding Officer)*

### **St Peter's Electoral Roll Report**

The electoral roll currently has 88 people listed. This year, a new roll was created to follow CofE guidance. Everyone previously listed on the church electoral roll was removed and all interested in being on the new roll had to reapply. The church made efforts to contact all of those on the previous roll via verbal announcements, e-newsletters, printed weekly sheets, posters, direct calls, emails, and letters for those we could not reach by other means. There has been a small decrease in the number of people on the new roll (down from 91 in 2024).

The proportion of non-resident members has increased, with 45 now listed. The number of parish residents currently stands at 43.

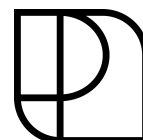
*Kimberley Gunn*

### **Prayer**

As part of the Body of Christ in Evesham our church family is called to pray. St Peter's prayer group has consistently met over the past year with a regular faithful number (7-9), occasionally more, gathering each Tuesday evening at 7:30pm for an hour. We have yet to finish by 8:30pm and more often than not it is closer to 9:00pm. Often our gathering will start with a shared portion of scripture which one of us has felt significant for the group or church family or a thought by one or more of the group which may lead us to pray in a certain direction. There have been occasions when we have simply started with a chat and gone straight into prayer waiting on the Holy Spirit's leading.

Luke 11v1: *One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "**Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.**"* This is our ongoing request: that God would teach us to pray.

Our main focus is that St Peter's to be totally reliant of the leading of the Holy Spirit and to stand firm on God's Word, the Bible for the way forward and therefore bring Glory and Honour to our Father. It is imperative that we fully recognise that this is the Lord's Church and the fellowship will only be blessed if we follow His lead.





The group has been really excited as we have seen prayers, including healing and restoration answered. It has been our privilege to join with, and host on a couple of occasions, Evesham Prayer Compass quarterly prayer celebrations over the last year. It is so encouraging to join with so many others from the wider Evesham church fellowships to pray together ignoring our denominational differences and to seek God's will and purpose for our town.



Martin Luther once said: "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing".

Please do consider joining us to be part of this important aspect of St Peter's family life.

*Pete Rowell*

### **Worship @ 8am**

The 8.00am service on Sundays is a very quiet one using the language of The Book of Common Prayer. It is very reflective time and calm time. It lasts about half an hour and is supported by about eight to ten people every Sunday. They are a very friendly group and support each fully.

*Julian Bomyer*

### **Worship at 9.15am and Choir**

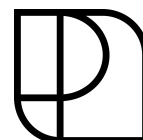
The last twelve months at the 9.15am service with regards to the music and its place in the worship at St Peter's has been exciting. None of the changes, new music and genres could have been achieved without the wonderful support and hard work of the resident choir here. Everything I have asked of them, has happened!

We have introduced Taize, Sankey hymns, African hymns and anthems. This year, the choir also sang a Walmisley setting of the Nunc Dimittis at Candlemas.

It was wonderful to have the two congregations worship together in Holy Week last year and at Christmas time.

During Advent and the Christmas Services, we also had an 'Occasional Choir' who joined the regulars. We had a ball at choir practises, and a great and joyous sound resulted in the worship!

I am hoping that we can also have the 'Occasional Choir' join us for Holy Week this year. I am thankful that I am able to use the gifts God has graciously given me, in his service. When choosing the music for services, I always start with the Bible readings and consider the 'theme' for the service and the liturgical time of year. I produce a draft list of



hymns/music for the month. Andy or whoever is taking the service can change hymns if they so wish.

I am happy for anyone to come discuss, make suggestions about the music, or tell me I am playing too slowly (you know who you are!).

I have been very happy at St Peters and feel God is going to do great things! I pray that he continues to use me in his service and thank everyone for their welcome, support and, I am sure, prayers, as the choir and I continue to move forward as part of God's family here.



Jayne Llewellyn (Organist and Choir Director)

## Worship @ 11am

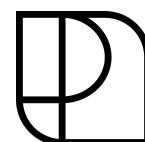
Worship at 11am is about encountering God through sung worship, hearing from God's word, prayer, and breaking bread together as family. The current pattern of worship is that the young people are in their groups on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday being a shorter session after communion. On the 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays, everyone is in together for something shorter and more interactive.



I am so grateful to the kid's church team that serve so faithfully meaning the young people get to have a great time with their leaders and allows time for more in-depth teaching for the adults. **Whilst the kid's team is amazing, it is still far smaller than we ideally need it to be so if you think you could support this vital area of church life, please do speak to myself or Simon Hill to find out more.**

It has been a wonderful this year to have Mike supporting both services this year, especially with some excellent preaching. It's also been wonderful to hear a few other people leading us in prayer. I'm hopeful that in the coming months and years, there will be more people involved in leading gatherings, leading prayers, reading and preaching.

*Andy Smith*



## Midweek Communion Services

Our little weekly gathering for the Eucharist continues to be a quiet and supportive spiritual bolthole for those who come. Most are regulars, while some like to come when they've been unable to attend worship on the preceding Sunday.

Our change from Wednesday mornings (back) to Tuesdays last year sadly meant that one of our regulars from Abbey House could no longer attend, but it has nonetheless helped us provide a regular 10am midweek Communion service between the main Anglican Evesham churches on Tuesdays (here), Wednesdays (Hampton) and Thursdays (All Saints).

Now, our 'open church' café, 'The Point', which (from 11th March 2025) follows on from the service, provides a welcome opportunity for members of the congregation to meet and share together after Communion. We hope that at least some of our regulars will stay on for the café and be part of the friendship-making and faith-sharing that we want to offer there.

*Nick Wright*

## Children and Youth

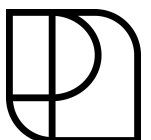
Our ministry with children, young people and their families has continued to grow in the last 12 months. We have augmented our Sunday morning provision for children's groups through the development of the creche area for our very youngest, and with the addition of a shorter session for older children after communion on the second Sunday of the month at the 11am service.

During Sunday services our children's group numbers vary from a handful (4/5) up to 20 at our larger services, and it's a delight to have welcomed many new families in the last year.

We are grateful for such a dedicated volunteer team who are passionate about leading our children in faith. Huge thanks go to: Sandra Thomas, Geraldine Pickett, Claire Hill and Jane Richards for their ministry in this last year.



Our Younite youth group for those in middle and high schools (10-18) is going from strength to strength, with a regular core of around 20 young people gathering each Friday evening. This ministry is in partnership with our friends at Evesham Baptist Church and the Vale Christian Centre. We are seeing real growth in faith among members of Younite whilst also seeing many new faces too. Recently, we've completed the Youth Alpha course, including a day away at the House of the Open Door. Many prayers for and with our youth group have been offered and we continue to have deep, honest discussions around faith each week.



Please pray that the Lord will nurture a lasting faith in the lives of these young people, by His Spirit. In August, we appointed Julie Winstone as our Children and Families worker. Julie set up our creche and developed our Sunday morning team as well as leading a brilliant Christingle service on Christmas Eve. Sadly, the appointment did not work out and we said farewell to Julie in February, though she continues to serve with our Younte leadership team on Fridays. We aim to reappoint to this role in the coming months. Please do commit Julie to your prayers, asking for God's guidance for her next steps, and also for His wisdom and guidance as we seek a new recruit in the months ahead.

*Simon Hill*

## **Administration**

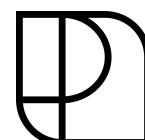
As we reflect on the past year at St Peter's Bengeworth, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone who is part of our church family. Your support, kindness, and willingness to serve make St Peter's the warm and welcoming place that it is. I especially want to thank all of the volunteers who give their time and energy so generously, the staff team for their dedication, and specifically Rev Andy for his ongoing support and empathetic leadership. I am also deeply grateful to Mike, Curate of St Peter's, for his sense of humour and encouragement, and to our church warden, Steve Bramley, for his invaluable practical support.

Over the past year, I have focused on expanding my administrative skills and enhancing the way I support the church through both print and digital media. This has included work on major seasonal events such as Easter and Christmas, as well as preparations for new initiatives like The Point Cafe. I have also worked on improving accessibility and information on the church website, making it easier to apply for baptisms and weddings through additional information and online forms. These improvements aim to streamline processes and provide clearer communication for those looking to engage with church services and events.

While this year has presented some challenges, I am so grateful to be part of such a special community. One of the highlights for me has been the expansion of our staff team and the introduction of weekly staff meetings, which have significantly improved planning and communication. Seeing the church continue to grow and develop is a real joy, and I look forward with excitement to all that is to come.

Thank you all for your ongoing support and for making St Peter's such a wonderful place to serve.

*Kimberley Gunn*  
(Ministries Coordinator)





## Church House

Church House is a wonderful asset for us as a church and presents many opportunities to make connections with, and serve our neighbours, and to share the good news of Jesus.

It continues to be well used with a steady stream of inquiries and occasional bookings coming in along with a few new regular users. Our attention is now turning to how we can update and improve the hall for the next generation and to improve the image and increase the



profile of the hall in the town in the hope that it can better serve our community. Part of this has been a recent vote at PCC and in the committee to rename Church House 'St Peter's Community Hall'. This will be reflected in changing outdoor signage and in our publicity materials. The reason for the change is to more explicitly link the hall to the church whilst also emphasising that the hall is for wide community use.

We are still in need of a chair for the committee and ideally a minute taker so if you have a passion for supporting and building links with our community, please have a conversation with Andy.

*Andy Smith (Acting Chair)*

## Care Home Ministry

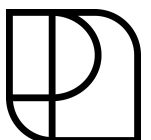
It has been good to visit Cavendish Park Care Home for worship throughout the year. We have always been made most welcome and have become quite close to residents and staff. Our worship has usually followed the Church year and the seasons, with a short talk, hymns and prayers. We have used "Open the Book", on some occasions, as used in schools, trying out our acting abilities; and residents have joined in with the actions, if asked. We have also had a songs of praise with well known hymns where those who take part have been asked to volunteer their favourite hymns.

After this we follow with a quiet service of Holy Communion for all who wish to partake. Thank you to the Reverend Nick Wright for his guidance and to the volunteer helpers, a group of about twelve people ready to help where needed..

It has not been possible to visit The Hawthorns Care Home on a regular basis during the year due to ill health and changes of 'Events co-ordinator'. Jane Richards led two acts of worship throughout the year but a Christmas carol service had to be cancelled because of illness. With a new co-ordinator, Jane is hoping to arrange an Easter service to take the joy of the risen Lord to residents. It has not been possible to arrange a visit to Austen Court Care Home this year so we hope that in the future we will have contact with them.

Let us give thanks and pray for all our care homes here in Evesham for all residents and staff, for the love they give and share together.

*Sally Ashton*



## **Schools Ministry**

This year we have seen considerable improvements in our links with our two local C of E primary schools. Much of this is due to Mike's involvement as a governor at Bengeworth Academy. Mike regularly leads acts of collective worship at the school whilst generally helping to ensure the Christian ethos remains at the heart of the school.

In addition to this, I've continued to support St Richards through governance and leading assemblies several times each term.

It is our hope that we can appoint the right person to lead children's work at St Peter's, build on the links we already have, and capitalise on the excellent relationships that have been fostered in recent years.

*Andy Smith*

## **Life Groups**

We are deeply indebted to our Life Group leaders at St. Peter's for offering a space of both pastoral support and ongoing formation to members of our Church community. As I said prior to Christmas, Life Groups are the real engine room of a Church. They're the closest thing we have to the Early Church in Acts 2, where Christians gather regularly to share life, study God's word, break bread (or biscuits) together and pray.

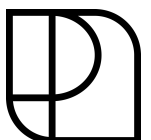
We currently have just over 20 people spread across 3 Life Groups, and I know for many it is one of the most important parts of their life as they try to walk out their Christian faith. The groups have been covering a variety of material, including courses or study guides; or they have been engaging with questions based on Sunday's services (provided the Curate manages to send it out...).

We're deeply thankful for David and Hannah Casey as well as Peter and Julie Rowell for continuing to lead their groups with such diligence and care. We said a special thanks to Margaret Darby in the Autumn for all that she, and of course John before his sad passing, brought to their Life group – and commissioned Simon and Sue Browning to take over leading the group moving forward. We thank them for their willingness to serve in this way.

Whilst we have a good number of people in groups, we wish to see more served in this way. This requires, firstly, potential new Life Group leaders to emerge, and secondly, people to pluck up the courage to take the plunge to join. We do still have some space in our current Life Groups, but need to increase our capacity.

So do pray that both of these things emerge, and if you might begin feeling a prompting towards this yourself, do get in touch with me or with Andy.

*Mike Edwards*



## Churchwarden's Report

A busy twelve months from a Churchwarden's perspective meeting the demands of the usual and sometimes unusual life within the church environment. We have been pleased to host services for many organizations including Street Pastors, Prayer Compass and the Royal British Legion. We are also pleased to open our doors for the local schools to enjoy services and award ceremonies, and enjoyed hosting the Rotom charity and the Abaana choir from Uganda.

We do have a lively, welcoming, and growing community here at St. Peter's which I pray will continue well into the future. The opening of 'The Point' drop-in cafe also now allows us to further branch out into the community and open our doors to those perhaps less familiar with a church environment.

On the health and safety front, we are now free from pigeon droppings in the bell tower which has allowed the repair to the clock to be carried out. We did experience some damage to a tree in the churchyard during the storms of the Winter (we lost quite a heavy branch!) but fortunately there were no injuries or damage to the memorials. Our fire extinguishers have once again been checked and certified.

Unfortunately we are still being troubled by occasional dog fouling within the church grounds, we continue to monitor this situation in the hope of bringing the perpetrator to account (the owner not the dog!) As this is both a health hazard and a nuisance.

Clearly from the initial findings of the quinquennial report regarding the condition of the church spire there will be some extraordinary challenges ahead which I am sure, with God's help, we will meet and overcome.

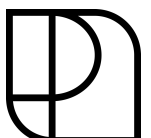
*Steve Bramley*

## Buildings and Fabric

**Bostock room/extension:** Since the last APCM the roof of the men's toilet has required further attention with the roofing company responsible for the original work returning on three occasions to carry out residual repairs. This work seems to have eventually fixed the areas affected, however some cosmetic work on the interior will still be required. We also had an issue with water ingress in one further spot of the Bostock room which has now been addressed by an alternative company having identified the root cause; a damaged leaded gully, which has now been replaced.

**Spire:** Since the last report on the condition of the spire, we have appointed a new quinquennial architect who has experience to bring to the table. The previous idea of netting the spire is being reconsidered as a matter of some urgency under the advice of our new architect who carried out a full quinquennial (5 yearly) report on the church in January of this year.

**Clock:** The saga of the church clock continued into this year as we awaited the various companies involved in maintenance and pest control to do what was required. You may have noticed the clock is now, at last, in good working order once again and we are



thankful to Patsy (and Greg) Chick who carry out the weekly winding to ensure the residents of Evesham are always on time...

**Main church:** There are many challenges when dealing with a building in excess of 153 years of age, not the least of these being the roof which has been prone to minor damage due to weather and some age-related problems. The good news is that the roof has had some necessary minor repairs to prevent further water ingress.

*Steve Bramley*

