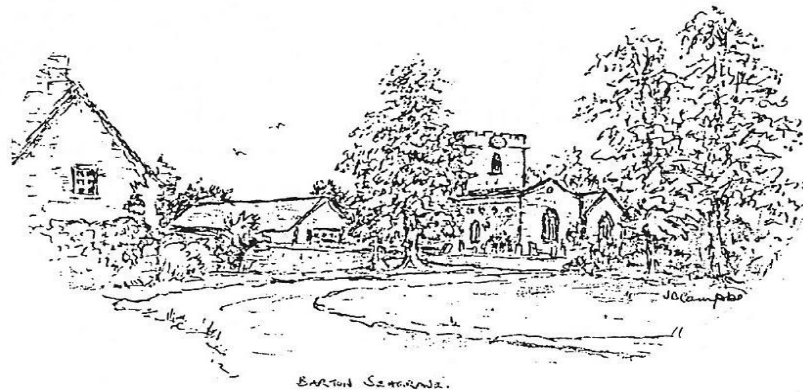


ST BOTOLPH'S CHURCH

BARTON SEAGRAVE

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

(Registered Charity Number 1130426)



PRESENTED TO THE

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

22nd April 2024

St Botolph's Church

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**St. Botolph's Church Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Monday 22nd April 2024**

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Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Monday 22nd April 2024

Vestry Meeting at 7:45pm

Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 8:00pm in church

Opening Prayers and Welcome

Vestry Meeting

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held Monday 22nd May 2023
3. Matters Arising
4. Election of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held 22nd May 2023
2. Matters Arising
3. Election of Parochial Church Councillors
4. Electoral Roll
5. Finance Report
6. Appointment of Independent Examiners
7. Chairman's Report
8. Annual Reports
9. Safeguarding Report
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting

St Botolph's Church

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St Botolph's Church

Minutes of St Botolph's Vestry Meeting held in Church on Monday 22nd May 2023 at 7.45pm

47 Parishioners were in attendance. The meeting was chaired by Revd Mark Lucas.

1 Prayer and Bible Reading 2 Tim 3: 14-17

Rev Lucas reminded us of the history of St Botolph's and how God has blessed the church on this site for nearly 1000 years – but we mustn't be presumptuous. We are all sinners, saved by Almighty God. The moment we think we are something special is beginning of the end. In 1 Cor 15, the church is reminded to hold onto the gospel – to remember and stand firm - this is echoed in this passage in Timothy. Human nature find standing firm in the scriptures difficult – people want to move on but Paul says to Timothy that all scripture is God breathed.

We face a real crisis in the Church of England following the discussions at General Synod on LLF (Living in Love and Faith) despite what is clearly said in the Bible. Numbers in the CofE are plummeting

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from: Lou Adamson, Geoff Curnock, Beryl & Neville Read, Jacqui Ward, Cayti Bilski, Jim & Chris Roughton, Gloria Smith, Jem & Debby Palmer, Sylvia Chuter, Carl & Liz Willis, Lindsey birch , Judith Edwards, Jade Wade, Jude Bland, Diana Griffiths.

3 Approval of Minutes from the Vestry Meeting held on 16th May 2022

A Keach proposed and Phil Birch seconded that the minutes of the last Vestry Meeting be approved as a true record, and they were unanimously approved.

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

5 Election on Church Wardens.

Nominations for the positions of Churchwarden had been received for:

- Peter Jackson, proposed by Heather Knighton and seconded by James Roughton
- Adrian Keach, proposed by Heather Knighton and seconded by James Roughton

Meeting closed at: 20:13

St Botolph's Church

Minutes of St Botolph's Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in Church on Monday 22nd May 2023 at 8.00pm

47 parishioners were in attendance. The meeting was chaired by Revd Mark Lucas.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were the same as for the Vestry Meeting

2. Approval of Minutes from the APCM held on 16th May 2022

Paul Gosling proposed and Asha Silk seconded that the minutes of the last APCM be approved as a true record, and they were unanimously approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

4. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

- Adrian Keach Proposer Peter Jackson Seconder Heather Knighton
- Peter Jackson Proposer Adrian Keach Seconder Heather Knighton
- Kate Curnock Proposer Helen Tilney Seconder Peter Jackson
- Heather Knighton Proposer Helen Tilney Seconder Kate Curnock
- Helen Tilney Proposer Kate Curnock Seconder Heather Knighton
- Julie Lucas Proposer Helen Tilney Seconder Kate Curnock

5. Election of Parochial Church Councillors

- Nick Johnson – Proposer Julie Lucas Seconder - Adrian Keach
- Jane Griffiths Proposer- Helen Tilney Seconder- Paul Gosling
- Pippa Coe Proposer- Julie Lucas Seconder Helen Tilney
- David Scullion Proposer Angela McClatchey Seconder Kirsty Clark
- Carlton Willis Proposer Helen Tilney Seconder Julie Lucas

6. Electoral Roll

It was reported at the 2022 meeting that the electoral stood at 226. There was no update available at the meeting.

7. Finance Report

D. Wright reported the 2022 accounts.

Overall, there was surplus of £37k against the budget that had been set for 2022 – this was due to a legacy and income from Rectory Walk that hadn't been budgeted for.

The General Fund was just under £26k in deficit – this was balanced by money taken from the staffing fund. DW warned that this cannot be sustained in future years.

Planned giving has dropped over the year and was £16K down on expectations. DW also highlighted the additional funding that had been received for Family and Children's Worker some of which had come in as single advanced payments.

The sharp rise in utility costs has created significant pressure on the budget as it has not been possible to anticipate the extent of these at the time the budget was set.

£10000 of unplanned expenditure had been incurred to update the equipment on the sound desk but this had been offset by additional funding.

St Botolph's Church

Total reserves (all accounts) show a healthy position, but a significant proportion are ring fenced. Unrestricted is where most of the running costs come from and this is much tighter.

Income from donors had gone down with a £7000 reduction in standing orders. DW detailed the changes different income sources which were laid in full in the APCM booklet.

The church had maintained its commitment to give 10% of receipts to missions so the total given had gone up slightly following the additional income detailed above.

Daily Running Costs, excluding major repairs, have risen to £700 per day, up from £662 in 2022.

DW is applying for grant that would enable the church to recover the VAT aspect of the money spent on the heating project.

The budget for 2023 is showing a predicted deficit of £37000 against the General Fund. However, the deficit is currently running much higher than predicted and is presenting a significant challenge. DW detailed the main pressures that we are facing and noted that although some bookings are picking up (weddings etc) but lettings are not. Planned giving has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels but has stabilised.

Parish Giving Scheme was introduced. The finance committee are looking at ways to make it easier to give to the church and the Parish Giving Scheme has worked very effectively in other parishes across the country. D.Eades explained how the scheme works and its key advantages. These include:

- a) Enables members of the congregation to have greater control of their giving with a facility to plan for annual increases in the amount they give.
- b) Allows for a more flexible approach to giving including the option to make one off additional gifts.
- c) Enables the PCC to recover VAT each month rather than just twice a year – this will improve the cash flow situation for the church.

Q: Does holding back the Parish Share impact on the money coming back the other way? E.g rent to Rectory Cottage

A: No – not linked but will be monitored

8. Appointment of Independent Examiners

D Wright proposed that Alan Deans be appointed again as Independent Examiner. This was seconded by R. Samways and unanimously approved.

9. Chairman's Report

Rev. Lucas report had been circulated as part of the APCM booklet. There were no questions.

10. Annual Reports

Helen Tilney - Family and Childrens' Worker - drew the meeting's attention to her report in the booklet that had been circulated in advance. She added that it is estimated that 95% of children in England and Wales never enter a church but that according to some 2017 research 40% of Christian adults became Christians by age 5 and overall 75% of Christians come to faith before they come to adulthood. This therefore demonstrates why the work with families is so important as that is where children spend most of their time.

Rev Andy Clark's report on work with young people was also in the APCM booklet. He read Col 1 and its exhortation to present everyone mature in Christ. The key aim of the work is not about numbers but in seeing children and young people coming to Christ. Success is whether they are still living for Jesus in 20/30 years' time. He thanked those leaders who worked with him in running the various groups, particularly while he had been on sabbatical.

St Botolph's Church

Rev. Clark summarised the work he had completed during his sabbatical which had included some early work looking into what it is like to grow up as a pastor's child.

Rev Clark stated that of the young people currently coming to either LINK or 180 on a regular basis, approximately a third are from church families from St Botolph's, a third from families who attend other churches and a third are not churched.

He went to outline his work at Bishops Stopford.

11. Safeguarding Report

The Parish Safeguarding Officer's report had been circulated before the meeting. There was nothing further to add other than to urge continued vigilance given the impact that safeguarding failures have on the victims and on the ministry of the church.

12. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

A hymn was sung

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 18th May, 2024

St Botolph's Church

1. Rector's Report 2023

The COVID-19 crisis seems a long time ago now, but its effects are still significant. The nation is experiencing a collective PTSD as we come to terms with post COVID life. Superficially things have returned to normal, but there is still, among many, a fear of crowded places and human contact. Being the church God want us to be means both these things. Despite this all our congregations have, by the grace of God, seen growth over the year, and there seems to be a growing interest in spiritual things. May God give us wisdom as we point people to Jesus.

Some highlights of 2023:

- I continue to stream Morning Prayer Monday to Thursday each week. This is a real joy and, I am assured, a blessing to many.
- Virtual meetings are a COVID legacy and are with us to stay. Amongst others our monthly prayer meeting takes place in 'mixed mode' with some at home joining the meeting via technology.
- In our Sunday morning sermons, we began to consider John's Gospel reaching the end of chapter 11 by the end of the year. We will pick this up again in the middle of next year.
- On Sunday evenings we completed our studies in 1 Corinthians. We then considered some passages from Leviticus before commencing a study of Paul's letter to the Galatians.
- Our weekly Thursday morning service continues to be a blessing with in excess of 40 people meeting regularly each week.
- Our financial challenges continue with the related challenge of personnel to fulfil all the ministries we would like.
- It has been an encouragement to see the growing men's ministry and the growth of Promise Land.
- We replaced the church heating with an electric system. Huge thanks to Peter Jackson who, with a team of helpers, drove this through so that would have heating for the winter. The system was planned, money was raised (£100,000) in a matter of weeks, and permissions were sought and granted from the diocese. Thanks also to all involved in digging trenches, drilling holes, and negotiating with utility providers. We had heat for the onset of winter!
- During the year Joe Griffiths was ordained and began serving his title in Corby.
- We continue to pray for Jonathan and Sarah Burrows and their family working in youth ministry in North London.
- We continue to pray for the future 'Hanwood Park' development in the parish, which continues to grow apace. There is an urgent need to think about a church plant on the development.
- I was privileged with Julie to attend the GAFCON IV conference in Kigali, Ruanda (16-23 April). With stirring testimonies and hearty worship, the joy and blessing of being with the GAFCON churches is beyond comparison.
- I continue to serve on the General Synod.

Of course, ministry at St Botolph's is shared and I am hugely grateful to our ministry team. It is a real privilege to work with Andy and Helen in this regard. Andy, as associate minister, assists in many ways above and beyond his responsibilities with the youth. Helen is simply a whirlwind of ideas and enthusiasm constantly making an impact on ministry among children and families.

Every year I mention the team, but my repetition is not to be understood as in any way vain. It really does continue to be an enormous privilege for me to work throughout the year with our outstanding team of preachers: Andy Clark, Robert Bashford, and Martin Adamson. We are truly blessed that God has given us such a gifted and able team, ready and willing to serve, using their God-given gifts, bringing God's word with

St Botolph's Church

seriousness and humility. We have recently run a course for preachers under the able supervision of Wallace Benn. Hopefully this will strengthen the team further.

It is also a real joy to have a team of service leaders who bring us into God's presence with sensitivity and joy. A great strength of the Church of England is its liturgy, much of it crafted over centuries, and even millennia. Used creatively it draws us into God's presence, assures us of His undeserved grace and mercy, reminds us of a timeless truth, and prepares us for the ministry of God's word. It is the skill of the service leader that ties all these threads together.

I want to record a special note of thank to the Wardens this year. This has been, in many ways, a difficult year. Much of the year was dominated by the heating system but also there are other proposals for the church building which, even after a number of years, still fail to gain diocesan approval. They don't have non-approval either, they just sit in limbo on a desk in the diocesan office. The wardens are patient, and provide wise counsel through the issues we face. Paul Gosling has joined the wardens team as a deputy.

A big thank you must also go to those who have served on the PCC and its sub-groups, you are a great group of people without whom we could not operate. In addition to the wardens I am especially thankful to, David (Treasurer), Kate (Pastoral Assistant) and Martin (PCC Secretary) for your tireless service.

Finally, I could not write a report without recording my thanks to Heather who keeps us all under control. She is an angel whose skill and patience seemingly know no bounds! She is ably assisted by Jim who, among other things, ensures the regular production of CFN, keeping it current, fresh and available!

May God continue to bless us as we look forward to another year serving Him. May His name be glorified in all we do and are.

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all.*

2 Corinthians 13:14

Mark Lucas - Rector

2. Kettering Deanery Synod Report 2023

Our mission is to encourage and support the churches of our Deanery to build the Kingdom of God. We do this by: building relationships; sharing resources; and praying for each other.

What is Deanery Synod?

Kettering Deanery is one of 12 geographical areas within the Diocese of Peterborough, containing a number of neighbouring churches.

The Synod comprises the clergy of the Deanery, along with elected lay members from each parish or benefice. The number from each is linked to a church's electoral roll. Lay members were elected in April/May 2023 for a three-year term of office.

Who leads and manages Deanery Synod?

The current officers are:

Rural Dean: Revd Nicki Hobbs (St Andrew Broughton with Cransley with Mawsley)

Assistant Rural Dean: Revd Tom Houston (St Andrew's, Kettering)

Lay Chair: Peter Jackson

Secretary: Steve Atkins

Treasurer: Vacant

These officers are joined by Hazel Goodman and Lyn Ridley to form the Deanery Standing and Pastoral Committee. This group met three times during the year.

What happens at Deanery Synod meetings?

Meetings naturally open with Prayer and Worship. They also briefly consider recurring business items such as: reports from Diocesan and General Synod; Finance, including Parish Share; local pastoral matters.

Each meeting also has a primary focus. In 2023 these were:

March – a presentation from the Gen2 team, focussing on Youth and /children's mission and ministry. This was followed by a question-and-answer session.

May – extended prayer and worship centred on Thy Kingdom Come. We were joined by Revd Canon Steve Benoy (Bishop's Chaplain and Canon Missioner), who was in the middle of his walk around the whole diocese in connection with Thy Kingdom Come.

October – a presentation from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and the Safeguarding Learning Development & Case Worker. This covered all aspects of Safeguarding in the church and featured a question-and-answer session.

Am I able to get involved if not an elected member?

Yes!

Speak to one or more of your church's Deanery Synod representatives about Synod activities.

Many meetings are open to all, so why not ask what topics are planned for 2024 and consider coming along.

Steve Atkins
Kettering Deanery Synod Secretary.

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3. St. Botolph's PCC Annual Report 2023

1 Aim and Purposes

St Botolph's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, Revd Mark Lucas, in promoting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, promoting the mission of the Church, as well as pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical matters in the Parish. The PCC also has the responsibility for the maintenance of the fabric and land of the Church, Church House, Rectory Cottage, and the land upon which stood the old Church Rooms. The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended. The PCC is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission under number 1130426. The Church Representation Rules 2020 (Part 9 Rule M5(1)(b)) require "an annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish generally" to be received by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

2 Objectives, Aims and Achievements

Comments on the Church's objectives, aims and achievements for the year, and plans for the future are set out in the Report of the Churchwardens.

3 Membership

Members are elected by the APCM for a period of three years and can also be co-opted by the PCC. The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules.

During the year, the following served on the PCC:

Chairman	Revd Mark Lucas
Ex-Officio members	
Deanery Synod meers (elected to 2026)	Heather Knighton Kate Curnock Peter Jackson Adrian Keach Julie Lucas Helen Tilney
Churchwardens	Adrian Keach Peter Jackson
Associate Minister	Revd Andy Clark
Other PCC members: (date for re-election in brackets)	
Secretary	Martin Adamson (2024)
Treasurer	David Wright (2024)
	Tim Acland (2025) Pippa Coe (2026) Kate Curnock (2024) - <i>also on deanery synod.</i> Robert Edwards (2025) Paul Gosling (2025) Jane Griffiths (2026) Nick Johnson (2026) Helen Laughton (2025) Helen Tilney (2024) – <i>also on deanery synod.</i> David Scullion (2026) Carlton Willis (2026)
<i>There were four vacancies on the PCC</i>	
Co-opted Members	
	Daniel Eade Rob Cowan

St Botolph's Church

4 Church Attendance

Attendance at the main Sunday services has remained strong with around one hundred adults and more than twenty children at the 10am service. Both Sunday services are live streamed but it is not possible to determine how many people access these services either on the day or at a later time.

The mid-week service continues to be well attended and is greatly appreciated by those who now regard this as their main service of the week.

5 Organisation

The full PCC met on six occasions although much of the work of the PCC is conducted by various task groups and committees, namely:

- Standing Committee
- Business and Finance Task Group
- Fabric Task Group
- Evangelism Task Group (did not meet)
- The Parish Safeguarding Officer is Martin Adamson
- Parish Missions Task Group

6 Risk Management

Health and Safety is the responsibility of the PCC which must review the Safeguarding Policy annually.

- Safety Officer is Robert Edwards.

7 Main Objectives of the Year and Major Topics of Discussion

Every PCC meeting normally includes reports from the Task Groups as well as reports on the Deanery and Diocesan Synod meetings. There are regular staff reports and safeguarding is a standing agenda item. This year a large proportion of PCC time has been dedicated to considering the implications of Prayer for Love and Faith and our response to it. The completion of the church heating project was also a key focus. Other topics included:

- Rules governing the use of church house.
- Planning and review of Christmas services.
- Rev. Lucas upcoming sabbatical
- Adoption of the Safeguarding Policy and Diocesan Safeguarding Audit, training in safeguarding
- Church finance and Parish Giving
- Tower reorganisation

Meetings were chaired by Revd Mark Lucas and commenced with prayer. All items on the agenda were discussed. Every member had the opportunity to express his or her opinion.

8 Financial Report

The accounts for the year to 31st December 2023 are included in the papers assembled together for this Annual Report and reference should be made to the Treasurer's "Financial Review" for an appreciation of the Church's financial position.

9 The Future

The PCC is responsible for all parish finance, its management and control. Fresh ideas regarding the exercise of these duties are always welcome, and decisions are made after prayerful consideration. Anyone aged 16 or over and on the Electoral Roll is eligible to stand for nomination as a PCC member and is encouraged to do so. There will be eight positions available for election at the 2024 APCM.

Signed on behalf of the PCC by Revd. Mark Lucas

4. St. Botolph's Accounts 2023

Registered Charity Number 1130426

St Botolph's Church

Barton Seagrave

Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st December 2023

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F-6	Summary Statement of Funds
F-7	Balance Sheet
F-8	Notes to Financial Statements

St Botolph's Church

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Financial Review Year ended 31st December 2023

The attached Accounts give information required of the Parochial Church Council by law as good stewards of monies received and paid.

The attached Accounts give information required of the Parochial Church Council by law as good stewards of monies received and paid.

The Financial statements are set out in pages F4-F8 of this report.

We have had a challenging year in many ways, as we started the year with a budgeted shortfall of £36,42, which was to be funded from contributions from unrestricted and restricted funds and the general fund was set a net nil balance.

The actual outturn for 2023 showed a surplus of £58,768, broken down by a surplus on restricted funds of £15,249 and a surplus on unrestricted funds of £43,519. There was a deficit on the general fund of £40,953 which it is proposed to be funded by transfers from the staffing and youth funds as has been done in previous years.

Funding for the Family Support Worker continues and is through one off income and regular donations. In year income amounted to £24,233 and expenditure on salaries and expenses of £26,842. The balance on the FSW fund at the end of 2023 was £38,409.

The general fund was budgeted at a nil balance for 2023 but saw a number of pressures during the year. Planned giving was £10k below expectations, gift day budgeted for at £5k didn't take place and income from activities was £11k below budget. Expenditure saw increases in general repairs of £3.7k and general copier and IT costs of £3.8k. Overall the general fund was in deficit by almost £41k and this will be funded by a final transfer from the staffing fund and a contribution from the youth fund.

Whilst we are showing a surplus for 2023 of £58,768 this was against a forecast deficit for 2023 of £36,421. This was an in-year variance of £95,189 and was due to extra income of £82.4k as a result of the Heating fund but we also saw a net reduction in planned giving of £25.6k. As mentioned income from activities was also lower but due to higher interest rates our overall income from investments increased by £7.3k and other general income rose by £11.9k. There was also less than anticipated expenditure of £12.7k, this was mainly due to the deferral of planned repair and maintenance costs into next financial year and will be funded from various restricted and unrestricted funds. There was however an increase in general expenditure which will have to be carefully monitored in the coming year.

In previous years the staffing fund was used to contribute towards the cost of the Associate Minister that had been paid through the Parish Share, However from now we will have to also seek an extra contribution from the youth fund. All this means is that extra care will be needed to ensure the general fund remains in balance for 2024.

The designated and unrestricted funds outturn was a surplus of £84,472 in the main as a result of the Heating appeal and we also saw a surplus on the restricted funds of £15,249. In general, this was due to planned building works not taking place in year.

Overall, for 2023 the level of unrestricted and general funds stands at £193,286 up from £149,767 and the restricted funds stand at £130,269 up from £115,020 in 2022.

St Botolph's Church

In reviewing the accounts, other points come to note:

- Planned giving reduced to £134,579 (2022 £147,809) a reduction on last year's actuals of £13,230, FSW planned giving was £24,325 this was down on last year as this didn't include one off donations as in 2022.
- The Heating appeal in 2023 raised over £100k (inc. almost £16k of gift aid recovery)
- The income from Weddings and Funerals and lettings was well below budgeted at only £4.8k against a budget of £15k, but as a result expenditure was also lower at £6k less than budgeted.
- General expenses were also high this year but £3.8k was from funds other than the general fund and we also saw the implementation of debit cards for the church staff.
- Major repairs and maintenance to the Church and Church properties in 2023 was £43,908 (2022 £17,819). There are some repairs that remain outstanding and will be re programmed into 2024. Spend on general maintenance was £3,176.
- Giving to Missions from the general and unrestricted funds was £20,990.

At the end of 2023:

- General Fund before transfers stands at a deficit of £40,953 for 2023 and the
- Staffing Fund is now showing a balance of £7,200. (2022: £nil)

The year ahead will bring with it continuing financial challenges, the actual general fund deficit in 2023, will be funded from a transfer from the staffing fund and a contribution from the youth fund. In 2024 we can't continue to rely on the General fund being bailed out, therefore it is vital that the budget for 2024 is set as a balanced budget against the general fund and costs allocated to the correct fund. We will have to continue to apply tighter financial management in the hope that we will be able to bring the Church general fund finances into balance for 2024 and relying less on transferring funds to correct any deficit at the year end. This will require strong financial stewardship, but at the same time ensuring that resources gifted are used in a way that will bring glory to God.

It is a constant challenge to be wise stewards of the resources we have and to be bold in the cause of the Gospel. Through the continued development of new homes in our Parish we have opportunities as never before to reach out to our surrounding community.

We pray that God will provide the resources, human and financial in the years ahead.

"Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed." Proverbs 11:24-25

May we bring Glory to God in all we do, day by day, week by week.

David Wright (Treasurer)
February 2024

St Botolph's Church

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees (PCC) of St. Botolph's Church, Barton Seagrave

Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees

Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees

This report on the Financial Statements of St Botolph's Church for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 1 to 7, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and section 43 of the Charities act 1993.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As the members of the PCC, you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and section 43 (2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43 (7)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 edition, issued by the Finance Division of the Archbishop's council. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act: and

- to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations

have not been met: or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Alan Deans
Kettering
Northants

Date:

St Botolph's Church

Statement of Financial Affairs (Income)

Year Ended 31st December 2023

	Actuals 2022	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total 2023	Provisional Budget for 2024		
					Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Incoming Resources							
Receipts from donors							
Planned Giving (Bankers Orders)	141,592	21,920	111,523	133,442	22,100	112,700	134,800
Planned Giving (FWO)	1,066	0	1,137	1,137	0	2,000	2,000
Other Planned Giving (Tax Efficient)	5,151	0	0	0	0	0	0
Planned Giving (Non Gift-Aid)	0	49	5,869	5,918	50	5,200	5,250
Collections at Services	3,868	0	3,814	3,814	0	4,000	4,000
Non-Recurring/ Non Gift-Aided Income	1,291	105	470	575	50	1,000	1,050
Non-Recurring/ Gift Aided	2,195	313	0	313	300	200	500
Gift Day	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	5,000
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	39,532	4,015	50,325	54,341	5,300	34,800	40,100
	194,695	26,402	173,138	199,540	27,800	164,900	192,700
Other voluntary receipts							
Legacies	30,545	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warkton Contribution	0	0	-656	-656	0	1,000	1,000
Donations and Appeals	0	117	47,306	47,423	0	1,000	1,000
Income - Rectory Walk	16,200	0	3,080	3,080	0	3,500	3,500
	46,745	117	49,730	49,848	0	5,500	5,500
Activities in furtherance of the councils objects							
Fees for weddings & funerals	14,568	0	4,886	4,886	0	7,500	7,500
Coffee Monies	191	0	100	100	0	290	290
Bookstall sales	10	0	0	0	0	100	100
Ch hall lettings PCC objects	1,001	0	2,501	2,501	0	2,500	2,500
	15,770	-	7,487	7,487	0	10,390	10,390
Income from investments							
Bank & building soc interest	787	0	9,039	9,039	0	5,000	5,000
Rent Church House Flats	10,599	0	10,864	10,864	0	11,407	11,407
Rectory Cottage	14,400	14,400	14,400	14,400	14,400	3,000	17,400
	25,786	14,400	19,903	34,303	14,400	19,407	33,807
Other receipts							
Other Funds Generated	8,590	0	14,420	14,420	0	9,000	9,000
Parish Weekend	0	0	30	30	0	750	750
Holiday Club - income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Events and Activities Income	3,073	0	3,477	3,477	0	3,000	3,000
Family Support Worker	0	2,655	0	2,655	0	0	0
900+	16,810	0	0	0	0	0	0
Misc Income	14,327	1,111	44,567	45,678	3,500	9,300	12,800
	42,799	3,766	62,495	66,260	3,500	22,050	25,550
Total Income	325,797	44,685	312,753	357,438	45,700	222,247	267,947

St Botolph's Church

Statement of Financial Affairs (Expenditure) Year Ended 31st December 2023

	Actuals 2022	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total 2023	Provisional Budget for 2024		
					Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Fund raisers - expenses	0			0	-	-	-
Missions	26,385	-	10	21,000	2,050	21,000	23,050
Activities relating to the work of the Church							
Honoraria and Bursary	860	-	800	800	-	900	900
Staff Expenses	6,804	-	6,781	6,781	-	7,000	7,000
Youth and Children's work	29,623	26,842	3,549	30,390	28,450	3,500	31,950
Outreach Expenses	255	-	551	551	-	800	800
Womens Evangelism	0	-	241	241	-	-	-
Upkeep of services	284	-	479	479	-	500	500
Audio, Powerpoint & Music	6,671	-	670	670	-	1,200	1,200
Church House Running Costs	13,030	-	11,284	11,284	-	14,598	14,598
Fees for Weddings & Funerals	6,595	-	2,941	2,941	-	3,500	3,500
Bookstall purchases	0	-	137	137	-	150	150
Parish weekend expenditure	0	-	-	0	-	500	500
	64,123	26,842	27,432	54,274	28,450	32,648	61,098
Church management and administration							
Office Salaries	14,305	-	16,696	16,696	-	17,843	17,843
Church Running Costs	11,955	313	9,829	10,142	-	7,900	7,900
Office and Admin Costs	15,693	1,344	13,480	14,823	400	13,084	13,484
Council Tax Flat 1	0			0	-	-	-
Property Repairs	17,819	947	42,961	43,908	53,700	21,000	74,700
	59,772	2,604	82,965	85,569	54,100	59,827	113,927
Parish share	137,836	-	137,836	137,836	12,284	125,552	137,836
Total Payments	288,115	29,436	269,233	298,669	96,884	239,027	335,911
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	37,682	15,249	43,520	58,768 -	51,184 -	16,780 -	67,964
Total Funds Brought Forward	227,104	115,020	149,766	264,786	130,269	193,286	323,554
Total Funds Carried Forward	£ 264,786	£ 130,269	£ 193,286	£ 323,554	£ 79,085	£ 176,506	£ 255,591

St Botolph's Church

Funds Movement Summary

Year Ended 31st December 2023

		Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried Forward
<u>Restricted Funds</u>					
Apprentice	Apprentice Fund	4,000			4,000
Pensions	Pension Fund	-132			-132
Bell	Bells and Belfry Fund	-101	182		81
Choir fees	Choir Fees Fund	110			110
St Bots Tots	St Bots Tots Fund	1,461	1,091	384	2,167
Organ	Organ Fund	126			126
Family Support Worker	FSW Fund	41,018	24,233	26,842	38,409
Childrens Resources	Childrens Fund	5,000			5,000
Property Chapel	Chapel Fund	10,000		313	9,687
Potters	Potters Place Fund	785			785
Share	Shareplan Fund	520	1,989	-10	2,519
CSS	Sound System	-1,636			-1,636
Rectory	Rectory Cottage Fund	12,260	7,200	947	18,513
Propres	Property (restricted) fund	40,649	2,790		43,439
Staff	Staffing Fund	0	7,200		7,200
Welfare	Fellowship Fund	960		960	0
		115,020	44,685	29,436	130,269
<u>Designated and Unrestricted Funds</u>					
General	General fund	0	186,638	227,591	-40,953
Soup and Sandwich Lunch	Pilgrims Fund	1,090	904	548	1,445
Prophold	Property Holding Fund	73,134			73,134
East Legacy	Property Holding Fund	30,545			30,545
Heating	Heating Fund	0	100,389	29,263	71,126
Womens Ministry	Womens Ministry Fund	0	1,845	1,623	222
Coffeeshop	Coffee Shop Fund	339	671	350	660
RectWDes	Rectory Walk Designated Fund	33,059	3,080	10,852	25,287
Sarajevo	Sarajevo Fund	1,059			1,059
Wolf	Michael Wolf Legacy Fund	-216	10,068	-993	10,845
Youth	Youth and Children's Projects	10,756	9,159		19,914
		149,767	312,753	269,233	193,286
Total Funds		264,787	357,438	298,669	323,555

St Botolph's Church

Balance Sheet

Year Ended 31st December 2023

		Year	Year
		31/12/2022	31/12/2023
<u>Fixed assets</u>			
Fixed assets	Church House / Rectory Cottage	135,000	135,000
Fixed assets	Buildings depreciation	- 62,760	- 62,760
Fixed assets	Fixtures and Fittings	-	50,088
Fixed assets	Fixtures and Fittings Depreciation	-	- 10,018
Fixed assets	Equipment	-	2,010
Fixed assets	Equipment Depreciation	-	- 670
		<u>£ 72,240</u>	<u>£ 113,650</u>
<u>Current assets</u>			
	Bank Current Acc.	64,463	33,673
	Bank Deposit Acc.	48,684	140,535
	Internal Orgs Bank Acs	1,312	2,320
	Central Board of Finance	100,000	100,000
	Cash in hand	-	0
	Accounts Receivable	3,136	2,231
		<u>£ 217,594</u>	<u>£ 278,759</u>
<u>Liabilities</u>			
	Agency Collections	14,758	17,607
	Accounts Payable	10,289	51,247
		<u>£ 25,048</u>	<u>£ 68,854</u>
<u>Net Assets</u>		<u>£ 264,787</u>	<u>£ 323,555</u>
<u>Held in Funds as Follows:</u>			
<u>Restricted Funds</u>			
	Apprentice Fund	4,000	4,000
	Pension Fund	- 132	- 132
	Bells and Belfry Fund	- 101	81
	Choir Fees Fund	110	110
	Make and Play Fund	1,461	2,167
	FSW Fund	41,018	38,409
	Childrens Fund	5,000	5,000
	Chapel Fund	10,000	9,687
	Organ Fund	126	126
	Potters Place Fund	785	785
	Shareplan Fund	520	2,519
	Sound System	- 1,636	- 1,636
	Property (restricted) fund	35,399	43,439
	Rectory Cottage Fund	17,510	18,513
	Staffing Fund	-	7,200
	Fellowship Fund	960	-
		<u>£ 115,020</u>	<u>£ 130,269</u>
<u>Designated and Unrestricted Funds</u>			
	General fund	0	-40,953
	Soup and Sandwich Lunch	1,090	1,445
	Property Holding Fund	73,134	73,134
	East Legacy	30,545	30,545
	Heating Fund	0	71,126
	Womens Ministry Fund	0	222
	Coffee Shop Fund	339	660
	Rectory Walk Designated Fund	33,059	25,287
	Sarajevo Fund	1,059	1,059
	Michael Wolf Legacy Fund	-216	10,845
	Youth and Children's Projects	10,756	19,914
		<u>£ 149,767</u>	<u>£ 193,286</u>
Total Funds		<u>£ 264,787</u>	<u>£ 323,555</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council and signed on it's behalf by Revd. Mark Lucas (PCC Chairman)

Notes to the Financial Statements Year ended 31st December 2023

1. Accounting Policies

- a) The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 together with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, using the accruals basis.
- b) Unrestricted Funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restriction regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC.
- c) Restricted Funds represent funds of the PCC which can only be used for specific purposes.
- d) Income Tax recoverable under Gift Aid is not recognised until received.
- e) The Freehold Property in use by the Church is based on a historical valuation less depreciation.

2. Fixed Assets comprise 2 Freehold properties:

- Church House
- Rectory Cottage.

The Book value of these properties does not reflect current market value.
The Property Holding Fund finances both properties.

During the year assets were purchased and they are being depreciated using the Straight Line Basis – an asset is depreciated at a percentage of the original value. The asset will be depreciated by the same amount each year.

Fixtures and Equipment depreciated at 20% - £10,018 for 2023
Equipment depreciated at 33% - £670 for 2023

3. Employees

- (a) The average number of employees in the year was 3 (2023: 3)
- (b) The total remuneration of employees amounted to **£45,643** (2022: £40,881).

4. Independent Examiner

The Independent Examiner, Mr. Alan Deans, received no fees for his services, but a donation is given to a The Railway Children fund of £100.

5. Parish Share	2023	2022
Full amount paid:	£137,836	£137,836

Of the amount allocated for the Parish Share in 2023 £42,302 is currently ringfenced.

6. Honoraria:

The Treasurer, Mr David Wright received **£500**. (2023 £500)
The Musical Director, Mt Graham Tilney received **£300** (2023: £300)

5. Churchwardens' & Fabric Report 2023

4.1 Warden's Report

As wardens we are blessed in having a church building worth attending, not just for its history and architecture but as a venue where the word of God is preached and taught faithfully and in full accordance with the guidance given in the holy scriptures. As wardens we are blessed in having a Rector who knows and loves the Lord Jesus and who longs that everyone who comes to our services should learn more about the great sacrifice made 2000 years ago so that we, recognising our sinful nature can be forgiven if we sincerely ask for God's forgiveness and put our faith and trust in His Son and try to live lives in accordance with the words we read in the Gospels. We are also blessed in having a Church Council (the PCC) which is unanimous in its support of our leaders, Mark, Andy and Helen and the stand all three take for the truth of the gospel. Sadly there are few parishes in the country whose overall leadership team hold unanimously to the truth in which we believe.

As wardens we are encouraged as we see the numbers attending our services growing across all of our services – albeit slowly, but nevertheless it is a growth picture rather than the one of the declining numbers evident in so many churches. Why cannot so many bishops see that growth is taking place where the word of God is preached faithfully? Why does our secular society not recognise that the general decline in standards countrywide is, in part, due to society adopting a non Christian lifestyle? Please challenge us if you disagree with these comments.

We recognise that many of the newcomers to our church probably come from a non Church of England background and may wonder what authority a warden has or what they do. Although elected by the church family, we are working as officers on behalf of the Diocese to assist the Rector in the smooth running of the church, and to act as an independent link between the Laity and the Clergy. We have to maintain order in the church and churchyard at all times and especially during services. We are also legally responsible for all the property and moveable goods belonging to the parish church. The role is extremely varied but generally involves management, maintenance and mission in accordance with the Churchwardens Measure 2001 and the Canons of the Church of England. Please speak to us if you would like to learn more.

The majority of our responsibilities centre around management and maintenance, so we need to be financially aware and capable in our dealings with the diocese over works, either repairs or improvements, to the church building. Wardens have, traditionally here in Barton, also taken the lead in dealing with the planning authority in respect of repairs or improvements to Church House and Rectory Cottage, both listed buildings which adds to the level of scrutiny, and hence difficulty in securing any necessary permissions. More of this in the following Fabric Report.

As wardens we are blessed in having many members of the fellowship who aid us in our roles. The sidespersons undertake a vital role in our services in welcoming, directing to seating, and counting those who come. Fabric Task Group members help as we plan improvement and maintenance work, and here we must mention the invaluable work undertaken by Tim Acland who, over the course of 2023 and largely unaided has saved the PCC a considerable sum with the work he has done himself rather than employing outside firms to undertake necessary works. We would also give thanks those who have helped Tim when the job required more than one man. Sheila Matthews has headed up a garden maintenance team who diligently keep the Church House front and rear gardens in good order whatever the weather. Then there are those who clean brasses and surfaces, Hoover, prepare and serve, set up tables, etc. We continue to embrace technical advances and thank those who handle the PA, audio, video, and live stream equipment. We still encounter glitches but overall our projection in church and on-line is gradually becoming more reliable, so we give thanks to those who volunteer to run the equipment.

We are blessed with having such totally committed staff members, all of whom go the extra mile, and no one more so than our Administrator, Heather who does her best to accommodate the needs of so many and always has a cheery welcoming smile for all. Thank you, Heather for all that you do!

Our services continue to be varied in style and delivery - from the quiet 8.30am communion service; the enthusiastic, sometimes noisy 10.00am morning prayer; the smaller but much appreciated 6.30pm evening prayer or communion service; and the traditional 11.00am Thursday morning prayer much loved by an older congregation.

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Music and song play an important role in our services and we wish to thank the musicians and singers who lead us so professionally week after week. We are so blessed in having such a vibrant musical input to our services which is greatly appreciated.

One major addition to our service patterns is to offer communion at the 10.00am service on a quarterly basis, hitherto considered impractical due to logistical constraints. However, we still need to identify a way of administering the bread and wine in a far more timely fashion than has been the case to date.

We have continued to offer other services – e.g. Carols on the Green, the Easter Sunrise service, two identical Carol services, and the Christingle service – by far the most attended service of the year!

Mark continues to offer the on-line 8.00am Morning Prayer service Monday – Thursday and we give thanks to him for his commitment in continuing this ministry.

We hope that our continuing desire is to see souls won for Christ and, whilst all Christians have a responsibility to bring non believers to faith, the main teaching is led by Mark and Andy who, week by week preach and teach the word faithfully. Andy also leads our teenagers whilst Helen heads up the work with the most junior members of our fellowship. The biblical knowledge, love for their Lord, and the leadership qualities of all three is second to none. They are wonderfully supported by the many who give their time in preparation and delivery of the gospel message according to the age group they are leading. We are grateful and thank all those who respond to God's call to teach our young folk.

We are going through an increasingly difficult time in the Church of England. Our Rector Mark has been diligent in appraising our PCC and whole fellowship of the non biblical direction the vast majority of our bishops and backed by approximately half of the country's clerical ministers are currently advocating – i.e. to accept practices that God's word tells us is sinful, particularly in the area of same sex attraction. The General Synod meetings in 2023 agreed that, at present, same sex marriages in church will not be allowed, but prayers can be offered in services from December 2023 following a same sex civil marriage ceremony. We should all be praying for the bishops to repent and to remember that at ordination they, and all clerics swore to abide by the requirements of the 39 Articles – the defining statements of doctrines and practices of the Church of England. As we write the whole issue appears to be at an impasse but it is worth mentioning that this matter is probably the most serious issue to affect the C of E since the reformation 500 years ago!! May we continue to worship our Lord in the face of an increasingly hostile society and to those professing the Christian faith. May God bless us all.

One final point. I was first elected warden in 1993 and in two stints have now served for 25 years. My wife will be delighted to read that I am bowing to her pressure and standing down at this forthcoming APCM. I have been privileged to serve with three exceptional Rectors who have all been steadfast in preaching the true gospel. Although retiring as warden, I intend to carry on serving in this church, as I have throughout my adult life, and hopefully will continue to do so for many more years. My thanks go to all who have inspired me, stood by me, and helped me grow in the Christian faith as I've tried to fulfil the duties required of me. Thank you all, and God bless.

Adrian Keach

4.2 Fabric Report

The frustrations mentioned in last year's report were not as great in 2023 although still evident early in 2024. But we'll start with the good news.

You may recall that attendance at services in church throughout late autumn and winter 2023 was a challenge due to a lack of heating – indeed we purchased blankets for those particularly affected by the cold! The ancient gas boiler that had served for countless years had developed a split in its metal jacket that was irreparable and, following research, we had taken the decision to trial the installation of a chandelier with infra red heating elements in the side chapel, having been granted diocesan approval. This took place early in the year and was deemed favourable by those who commented on its suitability in our church environment. Hence we applied to the diocesan advisory committee (DAC) for a Faculty to install a further six chandeliers which were deemed sufficient to heat the rest of the building. The electricity loading was such that we also needed to upgrade the

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electricity supply from single to three phase. Amazingly the DAC approved our proposal and our fellowship should forever be thankful to my fellow warden, Peter, for the countless hours he put in outlining the reasons for such a radical solution to our heating problem and in preparing and submitting Statements of Significance and Needs, and satisfactorily answering the many questions posed. No doubt the decision by the Church of England for all parishes to become net carbon zero by 2023 aided our application. However, in early March 2023 our greatest concern was how to fund the purchase and installation of the chandeliers, the Electricity upgrade, and the probable costs associated with additional background heating to counter any condensation problems that may occur. We appealed to everyone on the Electoral Role for pledges, setting a target of £100,000 to cover all costs. Within six weeks, together with a return of VAT, and Gift Aid added to sums given willingly, the target had been reached – surely a testament to the power of prayer as the Lord touched the hearts and pockets of so many.

In June, just hours before the chandelier installers came to church, the necessary Faculty was in hand and so work could progress, a far smoother process than was the upgrade to the electrical supply which took from early August until late October to fully achieve. However, on the 5th November the heaters were switched on and, by the end of the year the few technical difficulties had been overcome and we can now hope for many years of comfort at our services whatever the weather outside. Praise the Lord.

Good news also in that the repairs to the dormer windows at the top of Church House were completed satisfactorily.

However, our desire to make the side chapel a more comfortable and useful area in the church has been fraught with delays in securing permission to do what is planned – i.e. to level the floor before carpeting it and installing a glass screen with glazed doors across the entrance arch, making it a comfortable area for small meetings at any time. We thought the DAC had given its approval last April but currently the Chancellor, who has to sign off the Faculty for the work, is asking the DAC why he shouldn't refuse permission.

What else? The Warden's report mentions work done in house – i.e. that requiring largely unskilled labour and we have a long list of work still needing to be undertaken, mainly under Tim Acland's expert guidance. Please speak to Tim if you have time to spare, particularly if you're skilled with a paintbrush, or good at cleaning gutters, or grouting paving slabs, or making good the rainwater channel near the main door to the church etc.

We have also had the Fellowship Room shutters stripped and they need oiling and replacing – another self help job.

We also maintain Andy's home, Rectory Cottage, and Tim has spent many hours tiling, repairing, painting and generally ensuring the building offers comfortable accommodation.

As a group we are very grateful to any who offer their help whenever we hold a working party. What we ask is that all who use, particularly Church House, should remember that it is an old building that needs a lot of TLC. So please, always treat it with respect!!

Churchwardens
Peter Jackson and Adrian Keach

6. Children's & Youth Ministry 2023

**St Bots Children's & Youth Ministry aims to be Good News for Children and Young people
(in Barton Seagrave & beyond)**

He [Jesus] is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

The New International Version. (Col 1:28–29).

In Partnership with Parents & Carers - We want...

- to help children and young people:
 - come to know and love Jesus as Saviour & Lord
 - grow to maturity in their faith
 - become active, serving members of the church
- to equip children and young people to:
 - be lifelong followers of Jesus
 - effectively share their faith with their friends and family
 - live 'in the world' but not be 'of the world'
- in all these things to work in partnership with parents and carers
- the children's and youth ministry groups to be the highlight of the young people's week



School years 7-9)

The name 'eighty' comes from Mark 1:15 which is the first thing Jesus says in Marks Gospel. He calls us to repentance which can be described as 'doing a 180'. 1eighty is a lovely group of young people who meet on Sunday mornings during the 10am service and on Thursday evenings.



(School years 10-13)

Link meets each Wednesday evening during term time. There is a great mix of young people from different schools, churches and backgrounds who enjoy meeting together each week.

We want our young people to have a great time and look forward to coming along and see how relevant the Bible is to today's culture and to come to know Jesus personally as we dig into it together.

One of the things which research says really helps young people to keep going in their faith is being involved in the wider church and being regular on Sundays. We think this is really important and the whole church family has a part to play in this. So we are actively trying to encourage our young people to come along on Sundays. As part of this we have started bringing 1eighty into a 'normal' service for the duration a couple of times a term.

Over this last year we have thought about... How God knows us, and we can know God, the people Jesus met in Luke's gospel. We looked at the book of Exodus and considered how God's people were to live in response to being saved by God. We also delved into Jesus' 'I Am' sayings in John's gospel to discover more about Jesus' identity.

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Other highlights of the year were guest speakers visiting from TEN mission organization and The True Freedom Trust, Opportunities to ask Big Questions, the annual 'LINK weekend Away' a trip to Lazer Maze and the traditional end of term Slip and Slide and BBQ.

We also had two great Christmas evangelistic events. About 40 young people (many of which were visitors) enjoyed the 'LINK Christmas Meal'. 1eighly enjoyed loads of Christmas challenges and a big pile of Pizza!

We need to give thanks to God for the good number of young people we are able to engage with at both LINK and 1eighly. We must not underestimate how challenging it is for teenagers to try and live faithfully for Jesus in today's culture.

Schools

Given the current direction of travel in our culture and in the Church of England, opportunities for gospel work in schools are really important to take where they are available.

Andy has continued to have chance to support Bishop Stopford School over this last year with assemblies and School communions. Andy continues to build relationships with staff and students. He has been able to support the Chaplain (Victoria Hutchinson) and some of the senior staff.

It is enormously encouraging to see the student led Christian Union growing with up to 50 young people attending some weeks! This is quite extraordinary!

Andy has also continued to work on a new initiative in Bishop Stopford to support the relatively large number of young people whose parents are church pastors.


Please give thanks to God and pray for this ministry and all opportunities we have in schools it really is amazing and unusual to have so many openings.

Andy Clark

7. Families and Children's Worker Report 2023

I continue to thank God for the opportunities that I have had over the past 12 months to serve Him at St Botolph's and St Edmunds and I am grateful to everyone who has made this possible through financial support, encouragement, practical help and especially prayer.

Regular activities continued this year as well as a few new initiatives including the return of a summer Holiday Club for 5 to 10 year olds which was a real highlight.

 As planned, we introduced a booking system for the St Bot's Tots baby and toddler group a few months ago. This became necessary as the numbers of parents and grandparents bringing their children along had reached potentially unmanageable numbers. We now have an absolute maximum of 30 children each week, which has made it easier to plan and manage. I am extremely grateful to the dedicated team that make the sessions so enjoyable for everyone – it really couldn't happen without them. I would especially like to thank Jean, who has continued to provide the craft for the little ones each week despite being unable to come along due to ongoing treatment. We are all very grateful for her dedication and faithfulness!

At the time of writing I am planning to introduce a second St Bot's Tots session in order to accommodate more children – please pray for this.

Several of the families at St Bot's Tots are church families, however, we have seen some families come to Sunday services after attending St Bot's Tots. We pray this will continue and more families will come to services.

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Who Let the Dads Out? Sessions have continued this year on the second Saturday of each month. This is for male carers and their young children. These sessions have become more popular over the last few months and we regularly see around a dozen or more children and their dads. As these sessions grow, it would be great to have one or two more men from the church family to help out; do get in touch if you're interested!



The Refresh Bible study group for mums of young children continues to meet on Monday mornings. Rosie, Angela, Rachel, Joanna and I take turns to lead the studies. This is a great time for fellowship and support as well as Bible study and prayer. We have had some new ladies join us this year and one who has returned having had another baby. It is a joy to see the children too and again we must thank the creche ladies who do an amazing job looking after them. A huge 'thank-you' to Cynthia, Jane and Lindsay!

Promise Land sessions continue during the 10am Sunday service. We introduced another group this year as we have quite a few younger children who were outgrowing Beginners. We regularly have between 20 – 26 children in Promise Land each week plus several in Beginners (under 3 year olds). We are now using the Mustard Seeds training material which is very good. I am very grateful to the leaders who always tailor the sessions to the children we have. The sessions are very Bible-focused and it never ceases to encourage me and the team that our children are learning God's truth from God's Word!

I try to give a taster of what the children are learning each week in a short slot during the 10am service so that everyone in the congregation can keep up to date with what the children are being taught.

I have enjoyed getting to know the children and families who attend St Edmund's church at Warkton. I lead their Sunday School once a month which is a very real encouragement to me. Huge thanks to Emma and the team at Warkton who faithfully lead the Sunday School week by week.

We put on a 'Light Party' for 25 children in Church House on 31st October which was a great way to celebrate Jesus as the Light of the World.

I have continued to develop links with local primary schools this year. I regularly go into Barton Primary school to take their assemblies (both Infants and Juniors); Andy and I also regularly attend Hayfield Cross and St Mary's Primary in Kettering to lead their collective worship (assemblies). Christmas and Easter times are particularly busy with extra visits to schools (e.g. Christingle at Barton School) and visits to church by school classes (including Millbrook). Another highlight is a visit to church by several childminders who want the children to hear the real meaning of Christmas. This is an absolute joy as the very little children enjoy an interactive retelling of the Nativity. Kingsley school also brought a small group of children to church – again a very real privilege to interact with them and tell them why Christians meet together in church.

I am keeping in touch with other Families' workers around our area and meet up with some at training events in January and March. It's good to have others to bounce ideas off and who I can pray with and for.

I completed the Diocese' Children's Ministry Certificate training course along with Nicola Farrier and Jane Griffiths.

Please do ask me if you would like to know more about anything I've mentioned or not mentioned!

This year I would particularly appreciate your prayers in the following areas:

- Encouraging parents to read the bible regularly with their children.
- The summer holiday club – Heroes' Academy!
- Developing relationships with local schools.
- That I would nurture my own walk with God.

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name goes all the glory for your unfailing love and faithfulness.

Psalm 115:1

Helen Tilney
Families and Children's Worker

8. Safeguarding Report 2023

We continue to prioritise safeguarding across all aspects of our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Mental health and well-being concerns for the children and young people in our care continue to be a challenge for our leaders and we must continue to pray about this important issue.

We continue to expect all those work with children and vulnerable adults to keep their DBS checks up-to-date – these currently need to be renewed every three years.

Training also needs to be renewed every three years and I am grateful to all those who have completed courses and sent copies of certificates to me. Training courses can be accessed via the Diocese of Peterborough website - Diocese of Peterborough | Safeguarding Training Modules (peterborough-diocese.org.uk). All church officers (anyone appointed to a specific role within the church, including all of those involved in work with children and young people) are also now required to complete training on Domestic Abuse Awareness which can be accessed by the same link. Please don't wait to be asked and do let me know the details of any training that you complete. We continue to work with the Diocese Safeguarding team and thank them for their ongoing support and guidance. Angie Barber is the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor and any member of the church can contact the safeguarding team directly; contact details are available on the Diocese of Peterborough website.

Please continue to pray for the safety of our children, young people and vulnerable adults. Please also pray for those local services, beyond the church, who are trying to support children and young people who are at risk – many agencies continue to be overwhelmed by the number of referrals they are receiving. The increase in demand since the pandemic has been extraordinary and we need these agencies to be effective if we are to fully protect those in our care.

Martin Adamson.
Parish Safeguarding Officer

9. Home Bible Study Groups 2023

There are 10 evening Home Groups meeting twice a month, plus one weekly morning Home Group for ladies. Some groups are larger than others, but a significant number of the St Botolph's membership are Home Group members.

During the first part of 2023, Home Groups have tackled Revelation chapters 1 – 5 and 21 – 22. Many members have commented how relevant the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 are to the current situation in the Church of England.

After the summer break, Home Groups tackled Paul's Second Letter to Timothy with its refreshing and challenging focus on guarding and passing on the gospel.

Thanks, as always, to fellow Home Group leaders for preparing and leading studies, and to those who make their homes available for meetings.

Robert Bashford

10. Flower Arranging Report 2023

As always I would like to begin with a huge thank you all those willing volunteers who provide lovely flowers each week for church and those who join us on the special events of Easter, Harvest and Christmas and this last year for a wedding for a church family. Those who support us by providing foliage need a mention too.

Anyone who is interested in joining us would be made very welcome, experience is not required, only a little enthusiasm to have a go. Please look out for notices in CFN or the Church WhatsApp group for requests and times when we will be decorating the church.

Contact Chris Roughton on 07804013990 for any more information.