

THE BENEFICE OF WITNEY



Year in Review 2023-24

Contents

Team Rector's Report	3
Benefice Strategy	4
Teaching & Spirituality	5
Older People	6
Children & Youth	7
Pastoral Care	7
Buildings & Place	7
Outreach	8
Social & Eco Justice	9
Financial Summary 2023	11
Witney Churchwardens' Report	12
PCC Reports	13
Fabric Reports	14
Church Reports	17
Deanery Synod Report	21
Safeguarding	21

Team Rector's Report

Friends, it has been an immense joy and privilege to serve as your Rector, for approaching 15 years in this wonderful Benefice for the parishes of Minster Lovell and Witney. In my sermon for my interview here, I spoke on the text 'Food glorious food!' and what a time of nourishing and blessing it has been. Not just the Eucharistic food, the bread of angels, which has nourished and supported so much; not just the amazing Food Festival, started by the mighty team from Hailey; but also, the daily crumbs of living and sharing alongside one another.



As I leave to take up my new post at Wells Cathedral, I go knowing that so much has been shared, and I have been formed and blest by countless moments and encounters along the path we have shared. I came here with one child aged 18months, and I leave with two teenagers and a few more grey hairs! Both Sally and I have been so fortunate to walk the path of faith and life with you, and we will be forever grateful.

Each year as I have written for the APCM, I have thanked those who share in the daily round of prayer across the benefice, for this is what sustains our common life and deepens our trust in God. As one of the Church Father's Ignatius of Antioch said in the first century, 'you have all been formed into one choir, to...sing God's song together and praise the father with one voice through Jesus Christ'. As I go to join the singing at Wells, I leave with deep gratitude and sadness as what we will leave behind, but in the joyful expectation that we will one day be reunited along with the celestial choir as we join in the song of the angels.

For all that has been, thanks. For all that will be, yes!

With deep gratitude.

Grace and Peace

Toby Wright
Rector of Witney & Vicar of Minster Lovell



Benefice Strategy

Our vision continues to be that we are Called to be community of Mercy and Kindness. John Donne, when the dean S Paul's, once spoke of God's mercy: 'We begin with that which is elder than our beginning, and shall outlive our end, the mercy of God... the names of first and last derogate from it, for first and last are but rags of time, and God's mercy hath no relation to time, no limitation in time, it is not first nor last, but eternal, everlasting.' Mercy is a key word that indicates God's action towards us, and how we are to encounter one another and the world. Nothing in our witness can be lacking in mercy. As John Chrysostom reminds us, 'Mercy is the Queen of all virtues'.

As we live out this calling, we have worked on a new structure of how the Ministry Team reflect on all that we are called to be and do. To help us with this desire we have come up with the following image:

This shows us that all we do is built upon the desire to grow deeper in God. To help us with



this we have four key pillars of our common life together: the Eucharist and Daily Office, which sustain all that we are. And Inclusivity and Hospitality which shape all that we do. Supported by these four pillars we have 7 key areas of focus for our ministry. This is not meant to capture all that we do, but they are each area which we all share in taking responsibility and are seen as important for us going forwards this year. Please pray

for these areas of our life, and that our vision to be a community of mercy and kindness may flourish.

*God of mercy and kindness
Deliver us from every temptation to act with anything less
Than kindness towards those we encounter,
Speaking the truth in love.
Teach us afresh the way of true mercy
That heaps burning coals through deeds of loving kindness;
For it is your kindness, your mercy,
In which we trust and hope. Amen*

Teaching and Spirituality

This area has developed and grown with a number of new groups. We had the Advent group with Mark Bezerra-Speeks which then formed 2 new discussion groups: Nurturing Faith and Talking Theology. The number of preachers has continued to grow, with a number of people exploring vocational calling now regularly preaching.

We have had two benefice retreats with the Sisters at Wantage with groups of around 12 people. The last one looked at the Sunday Readings for Lent to help us in our journeying.

A regular group to pray for the ministry of Open Doors and the Persecuted Church has been established, led by Rebecca Coatsworth. It has been good to see this grow and to strengthen our links with our local charity.

We had a meeting about Personal Discipleship Plans with the diocese and this is an area that could be further developed going forwards.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care continues to be offered to many across the benefice, with many of the Ministry Team undertaking regular visits each week. Home Communion and Communion by Extension are offered by a wide number of people, both lay and ordained to ensure the sacramental ministry is available to as many as possible. New members of our churches are recorded to increase our communications using the HubSpot platform.

The Prayer Shawl ministry continues to be highly active, and they are very involved in supporting people within the Benefice. Prayer shawls are regularly blessed at the Sunday Services and then taken to people. Many have spoken about how important this ministry has been to them.

Many pastoral visits happen around the pastoral offices and are warmly welcomed.

Pastoral care is an area for the new members of the Ministry Team to develop and reestablish how we conduct this across the benefice and to ensure we coordinate it better during the vacancy.



Older People



Our Friends completed their initial training last year and on 17th March this year we welcomed Dave Pizzey as a new licensed Anna Chaplain! This greatly increases our capacity to offer 1-1 visits. We continue to offer Home Communion (by extension) and also, through our regular services in Care Homes, including special Easter and Christmas Services. On a monthly basis, this listening and accompanying ministry directly touches the lives of at least 100 people, including their loved ones and carers.

Recently we collaborated with the National Team in North Oxford and Bicester. We continue to share ideas with other stakeholders in Witney Town when the opportunity arises.

Last year, one local care home requested a blessing throughout the building, which we were able to arrange, with joy for all involved. We are increasingly receiving Care Home requests to visit residents going through an anxious time. We would love to offer more visits to older people who are no longer able to attend their church in the benefice and would love new team members to join us in 2024. Could this be you? Do you have an hour or two to spare? One of our team says: It's an immense pleasure and privilege to spend time with such wonderful people and learn from their experience. I cannot recommend it highly enough!

Children & Youth

The re-opening of our buildings and employing of our Schools Chaplain and Youth Lead Laverne Williams, gave rise to the reintroduction of some of our much-loved activities including Tiddlers group at Hailey, Messy Mass at Holy Trinity, Witney Feast school's activities in St Mary's, and Young Disciples (for youth aged 11-18 years) who continue to meet every week.



New initiatives are thriving and include but not limited to:

- *Christian Union at Henry Box:* An amazing group of pupils aged 11 to 17 years meet every week and celebrate their faith. The group is open to everyone, and we currently have an atheist and agnostic who attend every week and get involved. Pupil and adult led, the group continues to grow every week.
- *Junior Church:* (5 – 11 years) and Tots church meet every Sunday morning at St Mary's for their own faith time. We learn, we have fun activities, we share, we sing and dance, but most importantly, we learn about God who loves us.
- *Global Majority Heritage Group:* – This group takes place in Henry Box and was born out of a broken community. This is a safe space for pupils from an African, Caribbean, Asian and majority heritage to share, grow and work together to ensure that school is a safe diverse space that celebrates everyone.
- *Space Makers:* a resource developed by the Diocese of Oxford, accessible to pupils of all faiths and world views, where five practices are used to help pupils be more contemplative.
- *Hot Chocolate:* A free hot chocolate and biscuit service on the Green every week, for pupils exiting Henry Box for the day. A great way to build relationship and connection with the Youth team and the church.
- *Fun day at Minster Lovell:* A fun day for the whole community. Last year, 70+ children and their families attended to take part in the festivities.
- *Asylum Seeker Friend (Children and Youth):* Within the new community there were over 60 children and teenagers. Every child and young person was gifted a wrapped Christmas present.

Outreach

Iranian Friends: Since their arrival at the hotel in Witney, we have welcomed asylum seekers into our churches. Initial outreach was in the form of providing clothing and refreshment. Friendships were soon forged, and we shared a splendid Maundy Thursday supper hosted by our Iranian friends. There was an opportunity to experience an Iranian



New Year (Nowruz). Hêmin writes: We have a very ancient and beautiful festival that we celebrate every year on March 21. This celebration is made up of two main ceremonies, one is the consecration ceremony of the fire, which is accompanied by dancing and joy, and the church could not hold the consecration ceremony of the fire for us due to legal restrictions, but the ceremony of setting a special table (Haftsin) together with a very luxurious dinner with Iranian food was arranged in the church. After the dinner, all the Iranians celebrated the New Year (Nowruz) with joy and happiness with the traditional dance of the Iranian nations inside the church. In general, it was a very beautiful and memorable night that we all remember fondly. In addition, the English guests also participated in this celebration, and they also had a good time.

Swedish Link: Four of us had the opportunity to travel to Sweden in September, in order to visit our link parish of Voxtorp, in the Växjö Diocese. We had a hugely interesting three days, enjoying hospitality from our Swedish friends and visiting the various churches within the parish, along with a school in Växjö with an emphasis on music and the arts and providing education for those who have struggled in the main school system. We also visited Växjö Cathedral, the delightful Nydala Abbey and Jönköping, thanks to Hugh's generosity as our tour guide!

Sally Wright



Social & Eco Justice

We are a Benefice committed to protecting the environment and spreading the message about climate change and what can be done about it. The Benefice Environment Group is drawn from all churches, and acts as a coordinator for eco activity across the Benefice. The Group arranges activities for Great Big Green Week and Creationtide services, and oversees the A Rocha Eco Awards scheme for the churches. We also support Witney Eco Forum, an inclusive environmental group which meets monthly to hear speakers from different climate interest groups, and to encourage those who attend to work towards mitigating climate change and helping to achieve Net Zero. WEF meets in St Mary's monthly and is open to all.



Over the past year our charitable giving has included:

- Witney Hardship Fund
- Witney Food Bank
- 30 hampers of Christmas food for local families
- Salvation Army
- Red Cross Libyan Floods and Moroccan Earthquake appeals
- Witney Besom
- The Gatehouse, Oxford
- Work with refugee
- UN Humanitarian Aid Relief Fund for Gaza
- The Children's Society
- War Child
- Macmillan Cancer Support
- BBC Children in Need

The Benefice is proud to support the work of three local charities based in Witney:



A Christian charity that provides a bridge between those who want to give and those in need.



Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust

HART (UK) provides aid and advocacy for persecuted peoples generally overlooked by other aid and media organisations



Witney based, Open Doors supports Christians who risk their lives to follow Jesus providing emergency relief and helping persecuted believers stand strong

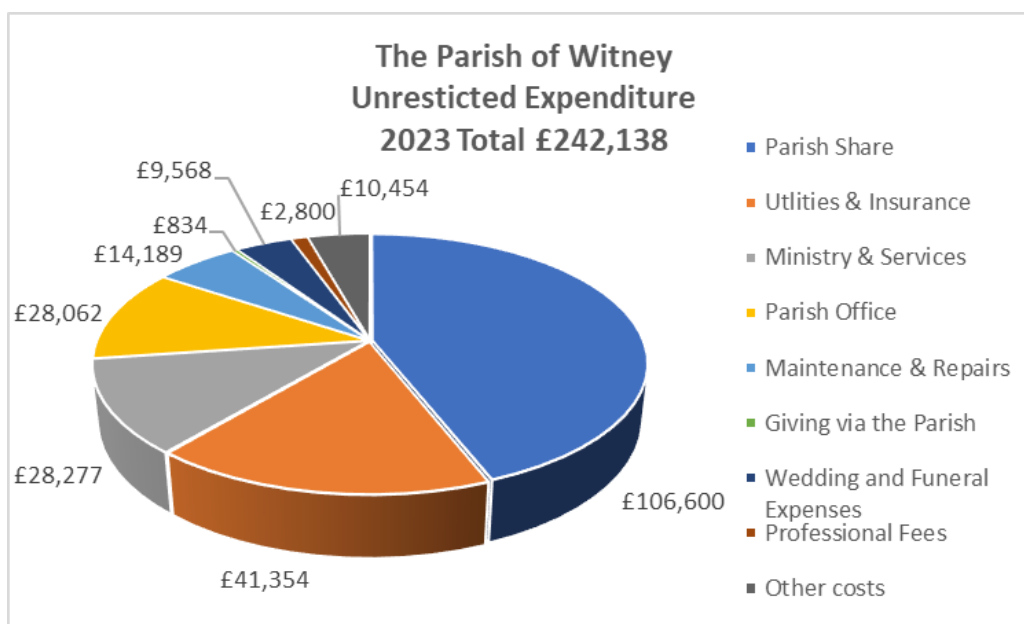
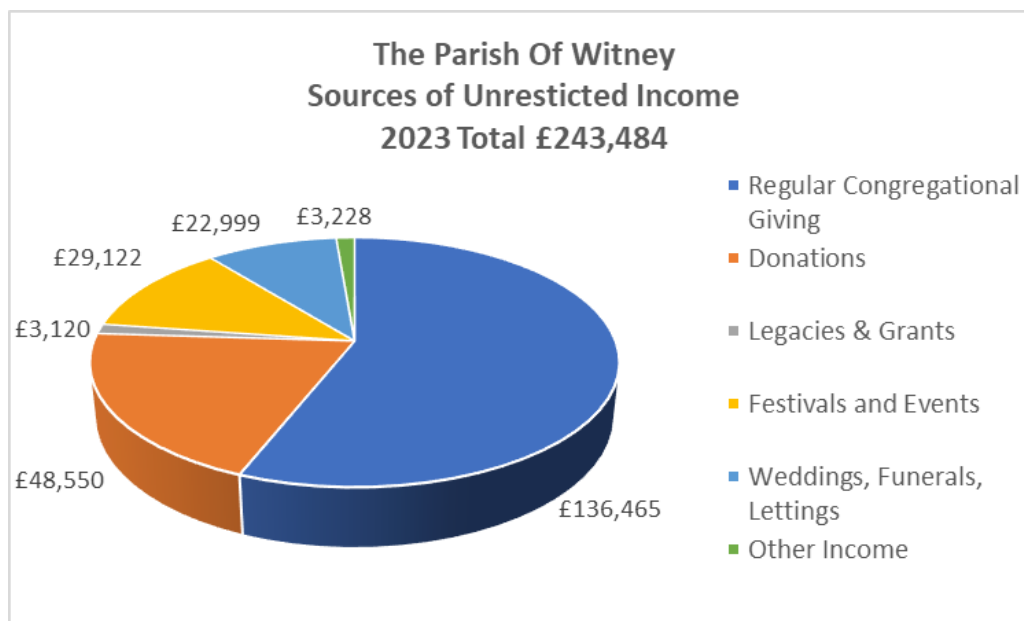
Other charities supported by the benefice include [Christian Aid](#), [USPG](#), [African Children's Fund](#), [The Fire Fighters' Charity](#) & [Combat Stress](#).

Buildings & Place

Please see the text accompanying the reports of each church, set out in the Fabric Report section.



The Parish of Witney Financial Summary 2023



- The income for the year ended 31st December 2023 totalled £319,194, with total expenditure of £412,882. These totals include Restricted and Unrestricted Funds.
- Unrestricted income totalled £243,484, while costs amounted to £242,138, resulting in an operating surplus of £1,346.
- This result reflects the continued generosity of our congregations both in terms of regular giving and also in response to an appeal for one off donations to enable the Parish to meet its operating budget. This is the fourth year that such an appeal has had to be launched.
- 2023 income benefited from a number of highly successful festivals and events. Income from weddings and (sadly) funerals increased substantially.

- Our operating costs increased by 6.6% despite inflation running as high as 10%, and a substantial increase in our energy costs, as a result of the ending of a favourable three-year fixed rate for the supply of gas and electricity in January 2023.
- A deficit of £95,034 in restricted funds primarily reflects expenditure on the new altar and the repairs to the roof at Holy Trinity.

Jeremy Lasman, Witney PCC Treasurer

Witney Churchwardens' Report

As reported in other sections in this review, the last year has been another one of growth and deepening of so many ministries across the Parish. We are enormously grateful for all the many volunteers who give of their time and talents in so many different ways; contributing to our worship, cleaning and maintaining our buildings, ensuring that they are beautifully presented to all who visit or make use of them, running or contributing to the many groups that take place each week in the parish, and volunteering as part of the teams that organise the festivals and events that help us serve our community.

We must also thank Toby and Sally for their inspirational leadership, love and support, which has made it so exciting (and demanding!) to serve in the Parish of Witney, as a place of acceptance and exploration, wherever you are in your journey of faith. We will miss them, and Caspar and Felicity, hugely, but wish them every blessing as they move to Wells.

Kate Banks & Jeremy Lasman, Witney Churchwardens



PCC Reports

Witney PCC Report

Since the last APCM in March 2023 the PCC has held four full meetings and additional joint meetings.

In the last 12 months:

The PCC has received regular reports from our Safeguarding Officer, and monitors risk assessments for church buildings and activities

Faculty applications were submitted for work to stone crosses and guttering at Holy Trinity and Hailey, and a bike rack outside St Mary's.

The PCC has monitored the financial position of the parish and each DCC, agreed the budget and supported a Parish appeal.

The Privileged Access Policy; DCC Terms of Reference; Health & Safety Policy; and Safeguarding policy have been reviewed. The Marriage Policy has been updated to reflect changes in EU status. The Data Protection Policy has been updated to include the new Diocesan Privacy Notice.

A new Churchyard Regulations & Burial Policy, and Finance Policy & Governance have been approved.

The Revd Canon David Tyler, Archdeacon, reviewed the work that had taken place since his report last year and wrote: The PCC is one of the most effective and professional that I have met. You have a clear vision, and you do a great job of seeking to discern what God is doing, and of joining in.

Kate Lockwood, Witney PCC Secretary



Minster Lovell PCC Report

The PCC meets every two months. Matters discussed – other than the Treasurer’s report and the Chairman’s report – include:

- Ongoing development of the Crawley Aisle – installing kitchen and cloakroom facilities
- The future of St Kenelm’s Hall in the upper village
- Community outreach and establishment of good relationship with school
- Parish profile and appointing new Vicar via Witney Benefice
- Church fundraising through events
- Maintenance of churchyard and discussion on improving parking

Judith Warwick, Minster Lovell PCC Secretary

Fabric Reports

St Mary’s Fabric Report

Compared to 2022, the last year has been relatively quiet in terms of enhancements to the fabric of St Mary’s. The most significant change was the consecration of our new altar last September, carved from the wood reclaimed from the cedar of Lebanon tree that had to be felled in the churchyard pre Covid. The new altar, which forms part of the dais, adds considerably to the beauty of the building.

Work was progressed on the design of new exterior doors for both the North porch and the Winchester Room and also an interior porch for the West door. These new doors will not only improve the aesthetics of the building, but also its accessibility.

Fortunately, no emergency repairs were required to the building; our regular programme of servicing and maintenance continued as normal.

Jeremy Lasman, Churchwarden



Holy Trinity Fabric Report

After delays for bat surveys in the summer, the work on the new north roof started at the beginning of October. Wet weather has not helped progress and the work is now scheduled to finish in April.

After the reviewing of trees in the churchyard, the Town Council removed 2 small conifers and a laburnum. The grass in the churchyard is being cut less frequently and more spring flowers are appearing.

All the usual servicing has been carried out and repairs to the heaters and boiler have been completed. Because the organ needed protection during the work on the roof, the tuning was delayed.

Dair Henderson & Charlotte Tremain, Deputy Wardens



Hailey Fabric Report

Fabric: 2022 saw the chancel cross falling off, and then a further piece broke away. The area around the base of the outside of the chancel was made safe and cordoned off for many months. We are now at the stage where Ecclesiastical have agreed to cover the replacement under our insurance, minus the excess. The DAC have agreed the schedule of work. The contractor is confirmed and so is the stonemason they are using. The DAC have stipulated the stone and fixative needs to be signed off by the QI Architect, so we are now at this point of the process. He has been contacted and we are now waiting for the contractor to send the materials the architect has asked to see.

A member of the congregation tripped and fell on a proud piece of the concrete slab making up part of the church path. The path has been repaired, as have two other parts of the church pathway that were potential trip hazards. The member who fell is fine.

The guttering on the north aisle is still a live project but at an earlier stage. The DAC have rejected the earlier proposals, one contractor has put forward the closest to what the DAC are asking for. The QI architect was suggested to be involved with this too and he will make a detailed work specification for us to submit to the DAC also under list B. The downside is that this will now cost substantially more, and charitable grants will need to be applied for, but we are not ready with sufficient details about the work or cost, to reach out for that funding yet. It is likely to be this year. The stained-glass windows in the church have all been repaired.

Churchyard: 2023 was a difficult time for the management of the churchyard but the volunteers once again were invaluable in maintaining it. The domination of the grass and how one manages it was always front and central, and a combination of volunteers and one commercial contractor cut managed to keep the levels neat and tidy, while we all enjoyed the summer blossom especially the pyramidal orchids and maiden's bed straws once again. We had no formal biodiversity visit this year, but we held a day when a number of residents and their families came on a lovely sunny day to identify as many plant species as our phone apps could find.

Volunteer work parties also helped with the raking and removal of grass clippings, as well as more enjoyable tasks such as planting hundreds of bulbs, bluebells, snakes head fritillary and daffodils. A mixed wild hedge whips bundles were planted to supplement the existing hedges.

This year we hope to be employing a new contractor to mow the churchyard in accordance with e Caring for God's Acre advice about managing different heights of grasses.

Robin Carr



Friends of Hailey Church Report

The Friends of Hailey Church is a charity dedicated to supporting the non-fabric needs of St John's Church in Hailey. Close contact is kept with the Hailey DCC committee to ensure that, where possible, the Friends can grant sums of money to help cover expenditure, in both normal running costs and some additional one-off activities borne by the DCC. The Friends raised their own funds in 2023 by hosting the Wood Green School Swing Band for a concert and by generous donations from members.

Sadly, our Secretary Jennie Krumins passed away during the year. The chairman stepped down at the 2023 AGM. The Friends will continue our support of Hailey DCC in 2024.

John Haskell

Curbridge Fabric Report

The fabric remains in quite good condition. We have undertaken all necessary repairs and maintenance ourselves at no cost to the parish.

We are fortunate in having a reliable and competent gardener to care for the churchyard at reasonable cost.

Ian Galletley, Deputy Warden

Minster Lovell Fabric Report

Ongoing discussion regarding development of kitchen/cloakroom in the Crawley Aisle

Discussion regarding repair of Chancel roof

General clearing of gutters and drainpipes and maintenance in porch to prevent pigeons nesting inside

Churchyard maintenance – gardening etc

Judith Warwick, Minster Lovell PCC Secretary

Church Reports

St Mary's Church Report

The year has seen many adult asylum seekers presenting themselves at St Mary's for baptism, some of whom have gone on to play a vital role in our church services. For some months St Mary's held English language classes after the Sunday Eucharist, and the Gospel is still read in Farsi as well as English. Numbers of attendees from the asylum hotel are now decreasing, however, as the Home Office moves the asylum seekers on.

Our ministry of hospitality has picked up again after the enforced Covid gap, in particular hosting the Festival of Food and Drink, Witney Beer Festival, and the Oktoberfest. In the pre-Christmas period, we welcomed large numbers of people through our doors not only for our scheduled services, but also for the BBC Radio Oxford Carol Service, the Mayor's Carol Service, and for our relaxed and very popular Carol Sing Along.



Other events at St Mary's reaching out to the wider community include monthly meetings of the Witney Eco Forum and a variety of fundraising social events each month; both are proving very successful.

It is not without sadness that we received Toby's announcement that he and his family will be leaving our Parish in April, for him to take up the post of Dean of Wells Cathedral. Huge congratulations, Toby!

Melody Helm & Maurizio Fantato, Deputy wardens

Holy Trinity Church Report

The main focus this year has been re-slating the north roof for which fundraising has continued.

In April we had a Brass Band and Tea Afternoon and in June Juliet Curry launched her new book about Woodgreen and gave guided talks. Plants, produce and other items were sold, and refreshments served. Two coffee mornings held in November and February were both successful and attracted members of the local community.

The Charities and Outreach Committee raised money for Sobell House with their barbecue in July. The sponsored Ride and Stride in aid of Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust was very successful; 50% of monies raised come back to Holy Trinity. 30 Christmas hampers were provided for Witney Community Primary School, and we filled 105 shoe boxes for children in

Romania. The proceeds of the Pancake and Quiz evening went to Besom. After their appeal, Gatehouse was pleased to receive generous donations of clothing.

The Craft Club has held occasional meetings and Witney Community Church used our facilities for 'Holiday at Home' events every Thursday in the summer holidays.

We have had 6 Messy Mass services during the year and carols were sung carols in the neighbourhood in December. The service of Nine Lessons and Carols was well attended and enjoyed.

Thank you to all those who help in many ways to keep the church in order and running smoothly.

We remember those who have died: Catherine Giles, Lily Hearn, Mervyn Rees, Michael Lawrence, Ann Jarvis and Ray Evans. May they rest in peace.

Dair Henderson and Charlotte Tremain, Deputy Wardens

Hailey Church Report

The Great Big Green Week was not held this year due to a combination of conflicting and competing events. However, this year 8th-16th June might well see another staging of this important environmental awareness week.

It was pleasing to receive the silver Eco Church award in 2023.

'Tiddlers' runs once a week on a Monday morning and continues to be a tremendous success. The church building resounds to the singing and storytelling. It is so uplifting it's worth a visit, even if you are not small.

The War memorial grave and the Stone Grave both received special attention and new gravel chips (Cornish Spar). Both looked resplendent in time for Armistice Day.

Lights of Remembrance was a special moment for many people once again, attracting those from out of the church and some from Witney to have a quiet reflective moment.

The nativity scene did not have its 'development' this year due to the builder being incapacitated. In its place there was a dramatic alternative. A tent with the Nativity scene in and around the tent. Coming as it did in the wake of the atrocities in Israel and Palestine, to see the Holy Family as they would have been, refugees in a foreign land was very poignant.

The new pew prayer cards have arrived and are on display and available for all to take. Many sets have already been gratefully received. The short texts printed serve as a focus for prayer and meditation.

The Red Falls had become increasingly threadbare and almost unusable. A member of the benefice offered to restore them as she was an expert in this sort of ecclesiastical material repair. The finished results were spectacular and were on show for all to see, and a large wedding party used the church for the service and insisted the falls stay in place, such was their beauty.

Crafts and Carols was repeated and was a big success, 30-40 people enjoyed the opportunity to spend time in creative activities, singing familiar and well-loved carols and eating with friends. What's there not to like?

The St John's Facebook page has been a great success with it acting as both a mechanism to advertise what is happening and also for grandstanding things like the videos of volunteers working on the churchyard and the wonderful red falls. A great asset.

After COVID we were uncertain what would happen to our congregation but to our delight it has continued to grow slowly from both in the village and further afield. Bodes well for 2024.

Robin Carr

Curbridge Church Report

The small yet faithful worshipping congregation at St John's continues much as before. We meet every Sunday for either communion or morning prayer in a traditional form. The average attendance is seven for these services. The churchyard remains open, has eight remaining burial plots and ample space for cremated remains. Attendances for funerals and baptisms are high, but very few weddings have been held in recent years. The most recent Christmas carol service was very well attended. The Children's Society has been our chosen charity.

Ian Galletley, Deputy Warden

Minster Lovell Church Report



Events since APCM:

- Concert of medieval music
- Bingo evening at St Kenelm's Hall
- Carols with Burford School Brass Ensemble
- Flowers in church and teas during Coronation weekend

Judith Warwick, Churchwarden, Minster Lovell

Deanery Synod report

Meetings were held on 17 July and 23 November 2023 and 5 March 2024

In July new members were welcomed and some appointments made. We discussed Psalm 27 – Dwelling in the Word.

In November it was decided to give a 2% rebate to each parish for their 2024 share to the Deanery. Help will also be given to parishes needing to install Wi-Fi and to provide card readers for donations.

Hannah Ling, Diocesan Social Justice Advisor ,gave a presentation and talk on poverty, inequality and loneliness.

In March Yvonne Morris, Discipleship Enabler & Diocesan Children's and Family Ministry Adviser, gave us a presentation. She talked about the new vision for the church – becoming a church which is younger and more diverse and engaging all parts of families.

The national vision is to double the number of active young disciples by 2030.

We have vacancies for a lay chair, lay vice-chair and a lay representative on the General Synod.

Sue Hodges, Deanery Synod Member

Safeguarding

Over the last year the parish has continued to develop and review its safeguarding policies and practices for both in person and online events, for adults and children.

Training has been held in person and online for those who need it. The Diocese encourages anyone who wants to, to undertake basic level training. This - along with foundation and domestic abuse training - is compulsory for PCC/DCC members, children's workers, pastoral visitors, and other roles.

We use the Parish Dashboard system to record much of this work and have gained level 3 (the highest level). We are looking at using the new the new Safeguarding dashboard as well to record training.

Concerns have continued to be reported and dealt with, asking the help of the Diocesan team when needed.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

Alison Spicer, Parish Safeguarding Officer

**Called to be a community
of mercy and kindness**