



St Bartholomew's Church
Long Benton

ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE PARISHIONERS

and

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL
CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 21st April 2024
12pm in the Church Hall

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS 2024

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
 2. To read and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2023
 3. Matters arising
 4. Church School Head Teacher's report
 5. Election of Churchwardens
 6. Any other business.
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ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2024

A G E N D A

1. To read the notice convening the meeting
2. Apologies
3. To read and confirm the minutes of meeting held on 23rd April 2023
4. Matters arising
5. Annual reports and Matters arising
6. Announcement of appointment of Churchwardens
7. Election of members to the Parochial Church Council
8. Appointment of Sidespeople
9. Appointment of Auditor(s)
10. Any other business

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS 2023

MINUTES

The meeting was held on 23rd April 2023, and chaired by Fr Ben.

The purposes of the meeting were to receive the Head Teacher's report on the Church School for 2022-2023 and to elect Churchwardens to serve for 2023-2024.

1. The notice convening the meeting, having been displayed in the church porch for the four Sundays preceding the meeting, was taken as read as proposed by Les Hodson and seconded by Pat Halliday.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 24th June 2022, having previously been published on the St Bartholomew's website and hard copies distributed on request were taken as read and accepted by all present as proposed by Les Hodson and seconded by Pat Halliday
3. Matters arising from Item 2 – None
4. Apologies for absence were received from Derek Brown, Brian Ewles, Catherine Ewles, Shiela Haynes, Ailsa Scott and Rosamund Glenn.
5. The Head Teacher, Mr Restall presented his annual report on the Church School for 2022/23.
 - a. Matters arising: Mr Restall responded to the following questions
 - i. How has lock-down during the covid pandemic affected the school? A - Like many other schools we have not yet caught up with the effects on attendance, lateness and behaviour.
 - ii. Will the proposed teachers' strike days affect the school? A – There will be times when teachers will be on strike. The staff will make every effort to ensure the effect on the children's learning is kept to a minimum.
 - iii. Is there a large number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN)? A – Approximately 25% of the children have SEN – extra funding is provided but not enough.
 - iv. Has the school appointed extra staff for SEN? A – Yes, the school has appointed extra staff but this is not always the best answer for the childrens' development.

- b. On behalf of the congregation, Fr Ben thanked Mr Restall for his report and thanked him and his staff for all their work.
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- 6. Election of Churchwardens. Nominations were sought and Les Birkenfield nominated David Cowen for re-election and Norman Shields seconded this. Christina Gravell was nominated for re-election by Colin Thomson and this was seconded by Fred Wilson. There being no other nominations both were appointed to serve as Churchwardens for 2023 to 2024 as proposed by Colin Thomson and seconded by Clair Francis and all were in favour.
 - a. Fr Ben proposed a vote of thanks to David Cowen and Christina Gravell for their services as Wardens for 2022-23 and for all their additional hard work during the interregnum.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 6.25 p.m.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2023

MINUTES

The meeting was held on 23rd April 2023.

The meeting was chaired by Fr Ben.

A list of those present is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

1. To read the notice convening the meeting. The notice convening the meeting, having been displayed in the Church porch for the four Sundays preceding the meeting, was taken as read as proposed by Clare Mears and seconded by Pat Halliday and all were in favour.
2. To read the notice regarding revision of the electoral roll. The notice of revision of the electoral roll, having been displayed in the Church porch in accordance with the relevant requirements, was taken as read as proposed by Clare Mears and seconded by Pat Halliday and all were in favour.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 24th April 2022, having previously been published on the St Bartholomew's website and hard copies distributed on request, were taken as read and approved by all as proposed by Alyson Thomson and seconded by Claire Francis.
4. Matters arising from Item 3 – None
5. Apologies for absence were received from: Derek Brown, Brian Ewles, Catherine Ewles, Sheena Haynes, Ailsa Scott and Rosamund Glenn.
6. Matters Arising from the Annual reports for 2022 – 2023.
7. Reports
 - a) Churchwardens' Report – Christina Gravell and David Cowen - None
 - b) PCC Report - Colin Thomson – None
 - c) Church School Governors Report – Tim Gittins - None
 - d) Baptism Co-ordinator's Report – Chris Gravell - None
 - e) Church Hall Report David Cowan and Chris Gravell – None
 - f) Choir Members' Report – Jess Sproat – None
 - g) Organist and Choir master's Report – Chris Haresnape – None

- h) Pastoral Report – Helen Whitfield – None
- i) Monday Club Report – Maureen Corrigan – None
- j) Mothers’ Union Branch Report – Alyson Thomson – None
- k) Traidcraft Report – Sheena and Jon Haynes – None
- l) Junior Church Report – Jess Sproat and Clare Mears – 29 children attended Junior Church on Easter Day. Clare thanked Louise and Linda for the very successful Children’s Craft Day.
- m) Park View Residential Care Home Visiting Report – Sally Robertson – None
- n) Coffee/Craft Club Report – Anne Luckley – None
- o) St Bart’s Lunch Club Report – Joyce Parry – None
- p) St. Bart’s Dance Club Report – Joyce Parry – None
- q) Safeguarding Report – Helen Whitfield and Sally Robertson – Sally thanked everyone who had completed CRB checks and those who had completed safeguarding training modules.
- r) Fr Ben thanked Helen and Sally Robertson for all their hard work in keeping St Bart’s up to date with safeguarding requirements.
- s) Deanery Synod Report – Jennifer Brown – None
- t) Assistant Priest’s Report – Fr Fraser Charlton – None.
- u) Chris Gravell added Fr Michael Douglas to the list of clergy who had officiated during the interregnum.
- v) Electoral Roll Officer’s Report. Eleanor Jobson reported that:
 - (i) The number on the roll at the time of the APM in 2022 was 165.
The number on the revised roll is now 148.
- w) Treasurer’s Report for 1st January to 31st December 2022 – Anthony and Claire Francis – See the sheet and accounts presented at the meeting. The report included the following: Overall giving in 2022 was £96,761 compared to £91,807 in 2021 while overall expenditure was £99,624 compared to £103,618 in 2021. All bills in 2022 were paid in full. St Bart’s paid £41,000 toward the 2022 Parish Share compared to £60,000 in 2021. The share set for 2023 is £69,927. Matter Arising

from Treasurer's Report: - None Anthony thanked Brian Ewles and Louise Barnfather for their work on the planned giving HMRC refund, the auditors, Naomi and Andy Lowe and Karen Coleman, Jennifer and Norman Shields who count the giving after the 10.00am service. Fr Ben thanked Claire and Anthony for all their work as Hon. Treasurers. Acceptance of the report was proposed by Pat Halliday and seconded by Norman Shields and all were in favour.

- x) Fr. Ben's Report. He outlined four key areas for St Bart's to work on in the next 12 months: Liturgy and music; Discipleship and deepening faith for both young people and adults; Mission and outreach – “we have much to offer”; Welcoming, hospitality and fellowship. Fr Ben thanked the congregation for the warm welcome he had received at St Bart's.
 - y) No other reports were received. Fr Ben thanked all of those who presented reports to the meeting for their dedication and commitment and asked the congregation to continue to support the leaders of the groups, organisations and clubs and the other church officers.
8. Announcement of Appointment of Churchwardens – Fr Ben announced that David Cowen and Christina Gravell had been appointed to serve as Churchwardens for 2023 - 2024.
 9. Elections to the PCC - Colin Thomson announced that the terms of office of Alison Wilson, Tim Gittins and Clare Mears end at the end of this meeting and that up to four new representatives were to be elected to serve for three years.
 10. The following nominations were received:

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
Alison Wilson	Helen Whitfield	Colin Thomson
Tim Gittins	Chris Thomson	Chris Gravell
Clare Mears	Chris Gravell	Colin Thomson
Philip Emmerson	David Cowen	Chris Gravell
 - a) There being no other nominations all four were elected to serve for three years.
 11. Elections to the Deanery Synod – Colin Thomson announced that the terms of office of Les Hodson, Jennifer shields and Jennifer Brown will expire in July and that three new representatives were to be elected to serve for three years.
 12. The following nominations were received:

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
Les Hodson	Norman Shields	Jess Sproat
Jennifer Shields	Fred Wilson	Colin Thomson
Jennifer Brown	Colin Thomson	Helen Whitfield

13. There being no other nominations, all three were elected to serve for three years.
 14. Confirmation of list of Sides Persons - The proposed list of Sides Persons (attached) was confirmed as proposed by Norman Shields and seconded by Colin Thomson and all were in agreement.
 15. Appointment of Auditor. Naomi and Andy Lowe were re-appointed as Auditors as proposed by Tim Gittins and seconded by Fred Wilson and all were in agreement.
 16. Any other business –
 - a) On behalf of the congregation, Fr Ben formally welcomed Fr Mark Oliver to St Bart's.
 - b) Norman Shields requested that paper copies of this annual APCM booklet be made available next year.
 17. Fr Ben thanked Colin Thomson for his work as Honorary Secretary and Anthony and Claire Francis for their work as Honorary Treasurers and Fr Fraser Charlton and Fr Mark Oliver for their service to St Bartholomew's as Assistant Priest and Honorary Assistant Priest.
 18. There being no other items of business, the meeting closed at 6.48 pm.
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ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2024

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

The PCC met five times in 2023 – on 24th January, 24th April, 6th June, 5th September and 14th October, attendance was always very good and everyone contributes well.

The Standing Committee also met five times – on 24th January, 7th March, 24th May, 30th August and 5th October.

Our Treasurers' Report will, no doubt, contain more information on the effect of greatly increased gas and electricity, and other costs on the church's income and, obviously, our finances was one of the major items of business for the PCC. Those of us who have been around St Bart's for a long time will know that it's been ten years since the last request for us all to review our giving and the PCC discussed the need for an appeal to enable St Bart's to do more for our church and wider community.

The other agenda items at the PCC meetings, as well as the normal report from the Treasurers, the Church School Report, the Deanery Synod Report, Youth Work Report, Churches Together Report and Safeguarding Report, have included:

- Safeguarding and achieving diocesan requirements.
- Bubble church.
- Admission of children to First Communion.
- Church School Governance.
- Building Fund.
- Church repairs and repairs to the Curate's House.
- Churchyard upkeep.
- Use of Church Hall.
- Re-starting of the Basement Project and use of the basement.
- Maintenance of the Church's Website and use of social media.
- National Parish Giving Scheme.
- The forthcoming Quinquennial Inspection of the building and grounds.

Another, more recent, small but interesting item for discussion was the need for St Bart's to have a letter box. Why? you ask. Well, what we want is a bin (and a recycle bin of course) but you can't have a bin unless you have a post code (which we don't) and you can't have a post code if you don't have a letter box (which we don't either) - so we need a letter box and we're going to have one.

The PCC owes a huge debt of gratitude to Fr Ben, Fr Fraser, Fr Mark, Louise and our Wardens for their tireless work in keeping "the show on the road" – they do a marvellous job.

Colin Thomson

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

The past year has been a busy one for us all, especially Fr Ben. During his first year we, as churchwardens know he has worked hard and is doing a fantastic job getting know the church and church family on a professional and personal level.

Our numbers are increase week by week, Sunday 17 March we had seventy-five communicants and eighteen youngsters in our Junior Church. The 8am Sunday and Wednesday 10am Eucharist services numbers are increasing each week. We are starting to see a weekly increase to be nearing the 100+ attendance.

Bishop Mark told us, that Ben was a “doer” and we have discovered that this is certainly a true description of our new vicar. He has introduced us to different part of the Sunday service which we previously had not taken part it, and the responses have been very favorable. Fr Ben has set up and will continue to set up groups which will help our church to flourish.

We would like to thank Fr Ben for all he has done so far and know he will continue to lead is in our spiritual journey into the future. We also thank everyone for the continuing support, we could not do what we do without it. Thanks to Fr Fraser and Fr Mark for all their hard work and efforts they have become valued members of the clergy team. Anthony and Claire, our treasurers, Jen and Norman our cashiers.

Thanks to Jennifer Brown, Philip and Louise our servers, flower group for providing excellent displays of flower, church cleaning team, sidespeople, Chris Haresnape organist and choir master, and our choir for leading us in our musical worship each Sunday and to all those who we haven't mentioned a very big thank you for all you do.

We know that there are some people who take a while to except change, this is a normal procedure for them. However, we have change to grow, standing still is not an option. In the words of the great songwriter Bob Dylan, “Don't stand in the doorways, don't block up the halls for the times they are a changing.”

Once again, we look forward to another positive year, in our worship and spiritual journey with the help and support of Fr Ben, and the clergy team.

David Cowen Chris Gravell,
CHURCHWARDENS

FABRIC REPORT(S)

Fabric

Buildings Group meets as and when required, usually 4-5 weeks

Membership (if applicable)

- Father Ben, Colin Thomson, Graham Garnham, David Cowen

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- Responsible for Church buildings, Basement, Grounds, Church hall, Balroy Court and Garden of Remembrance

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- In the main Church and hall we are looking at heating and lighting systems, plumbing and any flooring issues.
- Heating in the Hall especially has been an issue, but has been investigated.

Key plans for 2024

- Meet to discuss any problems that need attention and employing appropriate trades people to correct these. We would also ask that anyone who notices problems with the fabric to report to one of the members of the group
- Quinquennial Inspection to take place in April 2024

Completed by David Cowen

Working Party

Usual meeting times and day: 10.00 - 12.00 Fridays Working, followed by coffee & chat in the church hall (Party!)

Membership

- We are now have two regular Friday attenders; plus a member who takes meter readings, checks fire alarms and digs holes for interments
- More members are much needed, especially in the autumn and spring busy times; time & day of meeting could be varied to suit new members
- A non-church member provides invaluable support in looking after the bees

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- To keep tidy and presentable the Garden of Remembrance and grounds south of the church, including looking after the roses, grass cutting and collecting leaves
- To undertake any other tasks as requested: e.g. erect the Christmas tree, general property maintenance, and observations on potential damage or risks
- To look after the bees, including the extraction of honey for bottling and sale as a contribution to church funds

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- Basic maintenance – rose beds, grass cutting, and some leaves removed
- A spring time Grounds Day, with the air cadets and some church members, was a great success
- Sadly, we lost two colonies of bees during 2023, and have only one active hive over-wintering into 2024.

Key plans for 2024

- Two similar Grounds Days on fine days in autumn would make a massive contribution to clearing leaves from the Garden of Remembrance
- Attract more active members to the Working Party
- Keep our existing bee colony going and productive, and add two more colonies to provide honey from 2025 (approved by PCC in March); and recruit/train more bee keepers.
- Council to survey, lop and make safe older trees at risk of dropping large branches that pose a significant danger to people using the church yard.

Completed by Graham Garnham & John Miller

CHURCH GROUP & ACTIVITY REPORTS

St Bartholomew's Primary School (Governors' Report)

Foundation Governors attending Church: Fr Benjamin (Ex Officio); Richard Stubbs (Chair); Tim Gittins (Vice Chair); Claire Francis (Chair of Finance Committee) Chris Thomson; Louise Barnfather; Sally Robertson

Ethos linked to the life of St Bart's

- Our aim is to provide outstanding education, underpinned by distinctively Christian values, developing our pupils academically, morally and spiritually, within and as part of the wider community.

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- SIAMS Inspection October 2023: The inspection findings indicate that St. Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school. 'The school's Christian vision is well-embedded and underpins relationships throughout the whole school community. It inspires both pupils and adults to consider how they can serve and support themselves as well as others.'
- OFSTED Inspection November 2023: St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School (Aided) continues to be a good school. A number of areas were close to outstanding, 'The school's curriculum is ambitious, well-structured and of good quality.'
- Both reports can be found through links on the School website.
- A number of Dance, Sport and performing arts competitions have been entered & one or drawn praise.

Key plans for 2024

- To work on the areas for improvement, whilst maintaining the high standards, identified in the recent inspections.
- To continue to ameliorate the damaging effect of the Pandemic on levels of attainment and behaviour.
- To ensure proper resourcing for disadvantaged & SEN pupils
- To recover from the devastating cost of energy price increases.

Completed by Tim Gittins

St Bartholomew's Junior Church

Usual meeting dates and times – Sunday morning, during 10am Eucharist

Membership (if applicable)

- Children aged 5-14

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- To mirror the Sunday Eucharist in a child friendly and understandable manner. This involves song, talk and reflection on the gospel, games, crafts and puzzles.
- To educate children on the Gospel and the wider Church community.

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- Numbers attending continue to expand. Attendees are enthusiastic and growing in their confidence and faith. For example, reporting what has been learnt back to the congregation at the end of the morning service.
- Supported by a regular team of leaders and helpers.
- There has also been good uptake with related events for children including craft days and outing to Newcastle cathedral.
- Some individuals have shown interest and participated in preparation for their first holy communion.

Key plans for 2024

- Continue to promote attendance including older siblings in families attending bubble church.
- Further expand numbers of leaders and helpers to support current rota and may be to enable some splitting of the team into smaller more similarly aged groups for certain activities.
- Repeat Christmas and Easter craft days. These have also been successful at encouraging new individuals and families into the church setting.

Completed by Clare Mears

Choir & Music

Usual meeting dates and times : Fridays 17:30-19:00 [& Sundays 9:40-11:15]

Membership (if applicable)

- Chris, Colin, Frances, Anne, Ben, Jennifer, Jenny, Alison, Jen, Pat, Fred, Arthur.

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- Lead and support singing in worship.
- Enhance the liturgy with appropriate solo/ensemble works for choir and/or instrument(s) in the form of preludes, interludes, hymns, psalms, anthems and voluntaries.
- Rehearse and introduce new material deemed suitable for the above.
- Recruitment of new members.

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- Recruitment has seen the return of some members who had taken a break some years ago.
- New hymns, psalms, anthems, sung acclamations and amens have been rehearsed and introduced.
- Responsorial psalms are sung on a weekly basis following a trial period in Lent 2022.
- Choir has a short rehearsal before Sunday Eucharists and Principal Feast Days. This gives us all an extra edge when it comes to the service.
- There have been two organ recitals. More have been requested.

Key plans for 2024

- Continue with the above objectives.
- Arrange further organ recitals.
- Develop ensemble with particular attention to chanting.
- Introduce new and varied settings for use with the changing liturgical seasons.

Completed by : Chris Haresnape

Fairtrade Stall

Usual meeting dates and times - Second Sunday of the month after 10am service

Membership (if applicable)

- Sheena Hanes
- Jon Hanes

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- To promote fair and ethical purchasing from the stall
- To encourage the purchase of such products elsewhere

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- To continue to provide a stall following Traidcraft going into administration early in 2023
- Sixteen stalls were held, with sales of £1087.

Key plans for 2024

- To continue to provide a monthly stall as long as it is possible to source fairly traded items
- To endeavour to find new stockists of fairtrade and ethically sourced goods

Completed by Sheena Hanes

Social Media

This past year we have increased our social media output, reaching not only our devoted congregation but also into the wider community. We have introduced Instagram and continued with our Facebook page but with more regular posting and updating. We can reach out to local groups on these platforms too which is great when advertising our most popular gatherings. Bubble church is a great example of that, which has proved so popular with new people coming along to see what it's all about.

Our newsletter which is sent out to anyone who has joined the email list is proving to be very popular and it's a great opportunity to let everyone know all the latest news, big or small.

We still have plenty ideas to keep our social media platforms exciting and fresh and continuing to grow in popularity.

We are happy with how our number of followers have increased and how much more people are interacting with us and our posts. It's always great to be close to the community whether it's in person or online.

Completed by Amy Thorpe

Bubble Church

Usual meeting dates and times – Monthly on a Sunday morning at 9am

Membership (if applicable)

- Children aged between 0 – 7 years, accompanied by their parents / carers
- Team of volunteers (adults and youngsters)

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- Monthly Service for families (churched and un-churched) with children up to the age of 7 years.

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- Services have been well attended with an average congregation of 34
- The service has attracted new families and young people have stepped forward to take an active role in services

Key plans for 2024

- Promote discipleship and signpost to other activities
- Introduce a Bubble Church Bible Study Group.

Completed by Fr Mark Oliver

Church Hall

The Church Hall continues to be a hive of activity with bookings continuing to grow over the last twelve months. As well as our usual hall users we have had a number of new events being held, including a polling station, craft days for the local children and numerous birthday parties.

Unfortunately, the Friday lunch club has recently closed, due to a fall in attendance, however our hall still opens weekly for Rainbows, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Two dance classes, The Monday Club, The Craft club, Toddlers, Mother's Union and Choir practice. There are also tentative plans to open an Art group.

The hall has also been used this year for many Church social activities, which will hopefully continue and keep growing.

Our cleaner, Gary, continues to keep the hall clean and tidy on a weekly basis, which we are extremely grateful for.

Completed by Louise Barnfather

St Bartholomew's Mothers' Union Branch Joint Report

Usual meeting dates and times – 3rd Tuesdays every month at 1.30pm in Church Hall

Membership

- Committee – Alyson Thomson, Sheena Haynes, Sally Robertson, Ailsa Scott, Jennie Tapster.
- Other members – Christine Abrahams, Frances Atkinson, Pat Black, Jennifer Brown, Maureen Carrick, Anna-Lisa Gardiner, Rosamund Glenn, Fiona Gray, Barbara Hall, Mary Kay, Carol Kerr, Mollie Phillips, Rachel Taylor, Joan Weldon, Viv Wilson.
- Indoor Member – Margaret Armstrong.

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- Worldwide: To maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service. To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children. To help those whose family life has met with adversity and to promote and support married life.
- In our Branch: To promote fellowship for our members and the church congregation. To raise funds for charities and good causes in this country and around the world and to stand up against injustice.

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- Jenifer Brown led us in a time of meditation and prayer – very much appreciated by all members
- We invited Fr Ben to our meeting in April. It was lovely having him with us, we getting to know him a little better and he getting to know us.
- 3 members attended the MU Annual Retreat at Shepherds Dene. Our worship was led by our Diocesan Chaplain Rev. Anne Marr and her husband.
- Our fundraising events this year were: March – Soup & Sandwich lunch following Sunday morning Eucharist. In July on a Saturday afternoon, we hosted an Afternoon Tea in the church hall. Christmas Gift Bags for the Peoples Kitchen. Thanks to the congregation for all their support and generous donations which enables our branch to support projects at home and around the world.
- RISE UP – NO MORE 1 in 3 Walk of Witness from church to Forest Hall Shops where we held 3 minutes silence in support of Action Against Gender Abuse.
- A new project for us this year was to take “Comfort Bags” to be given to all parents of children at the very start of their education at St. Bartholomew's Church School. Feedback was positive and is something we shall be doing again in September.
- Hosted and led MU Central and East Deanery Advent Service at our Church in December.

Key plans for 2024

- Continue with our fundraising activities as in previous years and respond to new requests for help as they arise (if we can).
- Increase our membership.
- Continue to share our fellowship with our members and the congregation.

Completed by Alyson Thomson

Park View Music Group

Usual meeting dates and times Third Monday of the month at 10.30am

Membership (if applicable)

- Five plus residents
- Sally Robertson, Helen Whitfield, Jennifer Brown, Shiela Everard, Trish Clark

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- To provide contact between St Barts and **all** residents of Park View Care Home.
- To provide a simple ministry to the residents through the use of music.
- To use traditional hymns to help residents recall past memories.

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- Continuing the ministry.
- Declining numbers since Covid meant that the group was under threat of closure, however numbers have started to increase again.

Key plans for 2024

- To continue to minister to the residents of Park View
- To encourage staff at Park View to bring residents to the group.
- Due to operational limits at Park View staff do not always have the time to bring residents to the meeting. Unfortunately, due to security and safeguarding measures within the home we are not able to assist in this task. Also, despite various attempts to publicise the group many staff are still unaware of the group. This is a shame as those residents who attend do get a lot from it.

Completed by Sally Robertson

Altar Servers

This last year for servers has been challenging. We have sadly lost a server but thankfully have gained Louise who has been a massive help, and Ewan and Aidan serve at Festivals. Graham and John serve at 8am, and Colin serves at the Wednesday 10am. Ideally four servers are needed for a Sung Eucharist, so we would love to recruit more servers to our team, and it would be good to share the load generally. The more on the rota, the less arduous the task! All ages and experience welcome!

Completed by Philip Emmerson

Craft Club

Usual meeting dates and times: Thursdays 1pm – 3.30pm

Membership (if applicable)

- Roughly 10 each week, including: Anne, Viv, Sally, Libby, Margaret, Carol, Barbara, June, Sheila, Francis, Louise, Pauline, and Ann.

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- To undertake any craft you wish to while chatting and enjoying good company. Occasionally we have cake.
- Crafts include, Knitting, Sewing, Crochet, Drawing, Painting.

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- Provided knitted and sewn hearts for the Freeman hospital heart department.
- Provided knitted and sewn strawberries for a project at the Cathedral.
- Went out for Christmas Lunch

Key plans for 2024

- To continue to meet and share good company
- To expand our crafting experiences

Completed by Anne Luckley

Crèche

The creche has a regular attendance of nine children, several of whom are old enough to attend Junior Church, but prefer an unstructured play space, especially when they have younger siblings. Other children attend during holidays, family visits and in preparation for baptisms and weddings.

The goal of the sessions are to provide a safe and welcoming place for children to play, while their parent(s) attend church, or more often, parents stay with their children until communion. Usually care is provided in a dedicated side room. If children are left, parents are always called for any toileting issues and close comfort.

Fiona Gray generally sets up the provision. Other DBS certificated helpers are Val Shearer, Linda Barnfather and Clair O'Regan. Provision is always made in conjunction with a second Helper who are people who are well known to us, and we have details for - Keith Willis, Alison Dimambro, Fern Pratt.

Completed by Fiona Gray

St Bartholomew's Flower Fellowship

Usual meeting dates and times: Various – Easter / Christmas / Harvest

Membership (if applicable)

- Pat Black, Pat Halliday, Rosemary Cuthbertson, Ann Luckley, Alyson Thomson
- Roz Glen, Ann Jenkins, Ann Garnham

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- To enhance the beauty of the Church throughout the year.

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- Provided and arranged fresh flowers in Church on a regular basis.
- Provided and arranged 'Years Mind' flowers when required.
- Provided and arranged Wedding flowers when requested.
- Decorated Church at Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

Key plans for 2024

- As above
- Provide 'Mothering Sunday' posies

Completed by Pat Black

Baptism Report

Usual meeting dates and times Every 3rd Sunday of the Month

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- To Baptise and welcome people into the admission of the Church of England
- To start their Christian Journey through life

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- We had 14 baptisms of babies and toddlers over the last 12 months. Fr Ben with the help of Fr Fraser and Fr Mark officiated. Everyone is invited to attend church at least one Sunday before the baptism service and receives a home visit from the clergy.
- They are invited to attend our regular service and Bubble Church on a regular basis.
- All children receive a baptism certificate and their first Children's Bible.

Key plans for 2024

- To welcome everyone who wants to be baptised into the Anglican faith.
- To encourage the baptism families to attend church/Bubble Church on a regular basis.

Completed by Chris Gravell

Pastoral Report

St Bartholomew's prides itself on the care it provides for its members across the age range. 2023 saw 28 children baptised and each will receive a baptism card on the anniversary of their baptism. It is really heartening to see the number of children attending regularly thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Creche, Junior Church and the new monthly Bubble Club leaders and helpers. Linda Barnfather and her team run very successful Lent and Easter craft sessions. We are delighted to welcome new families and some "old".

We continue to visit the sick, elderly and housebound in their homes, care homes and hospital. Many members also keep in touch by visiting or phoning. We would appreciate being informed when people are ill or in hospital. Six people distribute monthly Home Communion to our elderly and housebound. We do need drivers as there are people who would love to come to church even if it was only once a month.

Thanks to Sally, we continue to visit Parkview Care Home once a month and the group of regular residents who attend really enjoy singing the hymns. Once a month, on a Sunday afternoon, Fr Mark conducts a short service at Evergreen Care Home. I'm sure both Sally and Mark would welcome additional members of St Barts to join them.

Congratulations to Gladys Rackham and Mollie Summerell who recently achieved their 100th birthdays.

Sadly we lost several loyal members, Margaret Coldbeck, Bill Atkinson, Michael Topping, Hazel Duncan and more recently, Lily Callender (102) and Alan Wilson..

Thank you to all who contributed items for the Harvest Festival, to Dave and Jackie and Colin and Alyson for distributing it to the Bay Food Bank and People's Kitchen.

So many of our members have been welcoming regulars, newcomers, church sitters breakfast hostesses etc and we are so grateful to Ann Luckley for the endless cups of tea/coffee she provides for so many groups.

In 2024 we hope to develop the work we are doing and encourage more members to use their skills for the benefit of the church.

Completed by Helen Whitfield

Evergreens Care Home Service

Usual meeting dates and times – Last Sunday in the Month

Membership (if applicable)

- Residents of Evergreens Care Home
-

Group Objectives or Role of the group in the life of St Bart's

- Monthly Praise Service for residents their families and staff

Key Achievements and Activity in 2023

- Services have been well attended and appear to be valued.
- The management have also asked that room visits are carried out for residents who are unable to attend the service.
- All people who would like to take part are catered for.
- Residents have asked for favourite hymns to be included.

Key plans for 2024

- Continue with monthly services.

Completed by Mark Oliver

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

The Newcastle East Deanery Synod met four times in 2023.

The February Synod was held on 9th February at St. Oswald's, Walkergate for the first time since the previous Vicar rejected involvement with the Diocesan Leadership. In 'Rounds of the Parishes' each church was asked to say one thing that encouraged them and one thing to pray for.

Our encouragement was the announcement that our new Vicar, Father Benjamin Jarvis was to be installed on the 20th of February. Also the ATC recently had a very successful service.

Prayers were asked for Father Benjamin as he takes over after an 18 month vacancy and for people to return following the Covid epidemic. Our new Bishop Helen-Ann was installed on the 22nd of April.

Deanery Planning

The Diocese gave each Deanery the task of producing a Deanery Plan by June.

An Open Meeting had been held in November 2022 and a copy of the suggestions written on tablecloths at that meeting was circulated.

We divided into Groups to discuss 3 questions: What was our opinion of the Development process so far? Our hopes and vision for the Deanery. How do we share our resources when the number of Stipends is reduced? How do we use our Readers and Lay Ministers more? What is God calling us to do?

Deanery Finances:

Spread sheets were shared. There would be a meeting of Treasurers soon and we still need a Deanery Treasurer. Tributes were paid to Margaret Coldbeck who was a Representative for St. Bartholomew's for many years had died and her funeral would be on the 23rd of February at St. Bartholomew's.

The May Synod was held on 22nd May at Christ Church, Walker.

A Lay meeting and Training with Nicola Denya was postponed.

The Illustrated Deanery Development update with slides was presented by Revd Phil Medley.

The task was to prepare a plan for stipendiary clergy and lay development across the Deanery,, which provides mutual support across the Deanery. The slides are available for us to view.

The July Synod was held on the 19th July at St. Bartholomew's.

Revd. Phil Medley was ill and sent apologies.

Louisa Fox had volunteered to Chair the meeting and opened it with prayers. She welcomed us to the 1st meeting of the new Synod for 2023-2026.

There was an election for the Lay Chairperson, Deanery Secretary and Deanery Finance Officer, chaired by Matthew King. Louisa Fox was elected as the Lay Chairperson but the Offices of Deanery Secretary and Finance Officer remained vacant. Louisa resumed chairing the meeting and Revd. Robert Fox was co-opted on to the Deanery Synod. A Report from the Diocesan Synod of 15th of July was given by Revd. Helen Gill. The theme: 'Growing Church, Bringing Hope' has been updated with; 'Seeking, Sharing, Sending'. The Presidential Address by Bishop Helen-Ann is

available on the Diocesan Website. There are also Reports on 'Racial Justice, the Environment, Deanery Planning and Finance. The Environmental Report encouraged all Parishes to obtain the Bronze Level for Eco Church. Deanery development plans had been submitted and the Archdeacons would look for emerging themes and provide feedback. Generosity Week was the 24th September – 1st October. All Parishes should have received the booklet 'Pathways to Generosity'. The September Diocesan Synod would look at Finance in more detail.

The November Synod was held on the 20th of November at St. Francis, High Heaton.

A copy of the Parish Share showing payment made until the end of October was distributed.

Parishes had been asked by the Diocese to indicate their offer for the next 3 years.

Our Deanery is showing a downward trend and the overall budget consultation for the Diocese is not looking good. General comments: Revd. Peter Dodds was impressed by the honesty of the Parishes. It was hard to encourage Parishes to pay the Share when they are in vacancy.

There was a Deanery Development update. The Report from General Synod by Robert Lawrance is available and would be attached to the minutes of this meeting. There was a positive update of 'Rounds and News from the Parishes' as we approached Christmas and the New Year.

Completed by Jennifer Brown

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The team, Fr Ben, Sally, Helen and Christina meets every 2 - 3 months.

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and elderly and creating a protective, supportive environment where all people are able to worship in safety.

Key achievements:

Dashboard is the way of helping keep track of safeguarding in church and keeps us up to date with local and National requirements. We are currently on a 91% completion (80% is the minimum). We have signed up to a Safeguarding Hub which is fully integrated with Dashboard. It is a suite of tools which helps us recruit safely.

The notice board is regularly up dated

Safeguarding is on every PCC agenda and reported on at AGM

DBS checks have been completed, lists of group activities and their leaders and all policies have been approved by the PCC.

There have been a limited number of courses this year as many people completed the necessary requirements last year. The following courses were completed by:

Foundation - Louise Barnfather and Philip Emmerson

Leadership - Christina Gravell

Modern slavery - Helen Whitfield.

Plans for 2024

To continue to monitor safeguarding using Dashboard and the Hub.

We are indebted to Sally for all the hours of work she puts in in keeping records up to date, her IT skills are invaluable.

Completed by Helen Whitfield

TREASURERS' REPORT

During 2023 there was a combined increase of around £6,200 in planned giving and cash collections at services. There were variations across income headings compared to 2022 leading to an increase of just over £2,000 in Total Income.

During 2023 we have promoted the Parish Giving Scheme as a convenient and efficient method of giving and this has encouraged givers to sign up. As of April 2024 we currently have 33 people who give by this method. Please do consider signing up to this scheme if you currently do not give in this way. The introduction of the contactless donation point at the back of church has also had a positive impact on donations from visitors to the church and those who may not attend regularly.

We were grateful to receive a donation of £3,800 from the Addison Potter Masonic Lodge which was kindly donated for the benefit of the church redevelopment fund which is used to maintain the fabric of our church building.

Church Hall letting income has increased by around £1,500 in 2023 compared to 2022. Both the church hall and the basement offer excellent facilities and the PCC recognise the opportunity to generate funds for the church through the promotion of hiring these spaces for use by the community, local groups and individuals. Our hall is available for hire for personal functions as well as group events so we welcome enquiries to the Parish Office about availability.

One of the biggest challenges for the church in terms of expenditure are the running expenses. The impact of the increase in gas and electricity charges over the last 18 months has been significant. Church running costs increased by over £9,000 in 2023. Necessary steps were taken to reduce energy usage which did help to try and mitigate the energy costs rise. We source our energy deal through the Church of England energy basket so we do benefit from better energy price deals than if we were to source this independently.

In 2023 we were able to make a total parish share payment to the Diocese of £43,000. This compares to £41,000 in 2022 and £60,000 in 2021. In October 2023 the PCC agreed a 3 year budget plan and it was agreed that our 2024 parish share payment pledge was £45,000. We are currently on track to achieve this.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported us in our role as Treasurers. Everything to do with the financial affairs of the church is a team effort. We would like to thank all those who play their part in the financial affairs of the church, particularly the team of counters on a Sunday and Norman and Jen for the subsequent banking. Also thanks to Brian Ewles for completing the Gift Aid records during 2023 and submitting the Gift Aid claim. We would also like to thank Fr Ben, our Church Wardens Chris and David, Colin Thomson and also Louise in the office for their assistance in allowing us to carry out the Treasurer role. Finally, thanks to Naomi and Andy Lowe who have undertaken the role of Independent Examiner of the Church accounts.

Completed by: Anthony & Claire Francis

ACCOUNTS ISSUED SEPARATELY.

VICAR'S REPORT

The past year has been really encouraging for me, and I hope for the life of St Bart's overall.

Early on, we implemented Fr Fraser's "Hour for God", which helped me to understand where the energy lies in the life of the church. The results of that exercise were more helpful than most people might imagine; understanding the interests and passions of the worshipping community has helped us to approach new things with confidence. At the heart of this is the belief that a healthy church is one in which many hands, minds, and prayers make things work.

Liturgy means "work of the people", and the worship of our church is the core of what we all do. We have increased the number of readers, added new servers to the team, added to the choir, and seen an increase in the number of people in our congregation each week. Thanks to Fr Fraser, Fr Mark and Jennifer Brown, we have been able most Sundays to have a Deacon at the Sung Eucharist—or at least a different preacher and president—adding to that sense of shared participation and responsibility. We have embraced more music at the Sung Eucharist, singing those elements which are traditionally sung, including the Collect. We have also (re)introduced the responsorial Psalm as part of our Sunday lectionary. This might seem like just another thing to throw into the mix, but rather saying and singing the Psalm helps us to worship more fully. We have made more of our liturgies more generally, worshipping more "fully" in terms of maximising on the provisions in the Church of England material. Examples of this include the liturgies for Pentecost, and Candlemas. Procession, music, drama, sight, smell, all help to heighten our worship. In all of this I am grateful to the everyone involved in the provision of our worship. Ensuring our worship is celebrated as fully as possible will only attract more to it, and in 2024/5 we should be hoping for this.

They say that tradition is "keeping the flame alive, not worshipping the ashes", and ensuring our worship continues into the future is hugely important. Young people bring so much to our worship. The Junior Church goes from strength to strength; the Crèche allows parents with young children to come to church without any worry; and Bubble Church is helping us to reach families which have no experience of traditional worship.

The Admission of Children to Communion is a significant achievement at St Bart's, not just for the children involved, but for us all. We should always be offering people the next rung of the ladder in their spiritual journey. For 2024/5 I hope we can continue to create worship which is truly all-age, ensuring consistent and good-quality inclusion of young and old alike.

Shared participation and responsibility has spilled over into other areas of church life. With the creation of a 'Buildings & Grounds Group', and 'Pastoral & Safeguarding Group', we can work to make sure that nothing gets forgotten about, and that these important areas are futureproofed.

The Basement has been an area of challenge over the past year. The charity "The Basement Project" is independent of the church, and so as Vicar I have had no authority to operate as that charity. But things are moving forward. In 2024/5 I am expecting that the membership of the

charity trustees will be renewed, and we can once again use our space for the good for which it was intended.

Looking outwards into our community goes hand in hand with welcoming the community in. We continue to be a friendly and welcoming church, and we are increasing our output on social media, and making more use of our website. I hope that we can build on our good foundations to make the most of what the Diocese calls “seeking, sharing, and sending”, looking outwards, welcoming in, and equipping to go out.

After a year, I still believe that Liturgy and music; Discipleship and deepening faith for both young people and adults; Mission and outreach – “we have much to offer”; and Welcoming, hospitality and fellowship remain the principal areas to focus on. I believe that together we have made real waves in each of these areas, and my hope and prayer is that with God’s help we will go from strength to strength in our shared ministry here, and be a place which is tangibly full of energy, love, and holiness.

Fr Ben

April 2024

