



PARISH OF STANGROUND (BENEFICE OF STANGROUND AND FARCET)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE STANGROUND PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

INCUMBENTS

Reverend Andrew Avery

Reverend Carol Avery (01/01/24 – 10/09/24)

BANK

TSB Bank PLC.

Long Causeway,
Peterborough

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

To be confirmed

In April 2024 Reverend Andrew and Reverend Carol were involved in a road traffic accident which left them unable to fulfil their duties as they would have wished.

Unfortunately, Reverend Carol then discovered that she was really unwell and sadly died in September 2024. Reverend Andrew did not feel able to return to the parish and left in January 2025. This report reflects the terribly sad year that the church had and the enormous challenges that it faced.

The Stanground Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbents, in promoting in the ecclesiastical Parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church of St. John the Baptist in Stanground, the Church of St. Michael and All Angels and the Parish Church Hall.

Members of the PCC either ex-officio or elected by the APCM in accordance with the Church Representation Rules are as follows: -

INCUMBENTS:

Reverend Andrew Avery

Reverend Carol Avery (Reverend Carol sadly passed away on 10th September 2024)

CHURCHWARDENS:

Yana Williams

Ian Cullingford

REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEANERY SYNOD:

Jackie Ashley (PCC Vice Chair): Elected at APCM 27th April 2023 for three years)

Colin Berridge: Appointed at PCC Meeting of 19th May 2022 for three years)

ELECTED MEMBERS:

Pat Diviney (elected in 2022 until 2025)

Tony Igbodudu (elected in 2022 until 2025)

Rebecca Pasqualino (elected in 2022 until 2025)

Esther Charlton (elected in 2022 until 2025)

Jackie Jenkins (elected in 2023 until 2026)

Kelly Cullingford (elected in 2023 until 2026)

Liv-Astrid Cowne Gemmell (elected in 2023 until 2026)

Brenda Jeffery (elected in 2023 until 2026)

Colin Wood (elected in 2024 until 2027)

Ben Powner (elected in 2024 until 2027)

Kate Ferris (elected in 2024 until 2027)

ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER:

Jackie Ashley

DEPUTY CHURCHWARDENS:

Colin Berridge

Jackie Ashley

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER:

Heidi Powner

HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER:

Ian Cullingford CMIOSH

ELECTORAL ROLL:

The electoral roll stood at 96 at the end of the year under review.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

During 2024 the PCC met in January, March, May, October, and December. The APCM was held on the 8th May 2024 in St Michael's Church. The 3-2-1 system that was introduced in 2020, is continuing. This means that we will always have experienced people serving on the PCC, which will provide continuity. The PCC continues to meet bi-monthly where possible.

THE STANDING COMMITTEE

The Standing Committee have met when necessary to discuss church priorities including financial decisions that could not wait until the next meeting of the of the PCC e.g. emergency maintenance, purchase of laptop for new administrator. The standing committee is made up of churchwardens and their deputies.

EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

We had representation on the Deanery Synod with Jackie Ashley and Colin Berridge serving. Synod keeps us abreast of all that is happening in our local area and in the Diocese. The focus of 2024 was working collaboratively across the deanery in nurturing people's gifts, developing children and young people and working towards a culture of generous financial giving.

SAFEGUARDING

There was minimal activity regarding safeguarding in 2024. However, the only safeguarding issued raised was dealt with in conjunction with the Diocese Safeguarding Team.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Work continued to maintain the standards of health and safety in our premises in 2024. Some of the safety related work carried out included:

- Risk assessments reviewed.
- Safety checklists completed.
- Fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and emergency lighting tested.
- Boilers serviced.
- PAT testing carried out.
- 5 yearly testing of the electrical distribution systems in St John's Church and the hall.
- First aid kits checked and replenished.
- New signage displayed.
- Security camera on the front of St Michael's Church.
- Installation of new external lights outside St Michael's Church and in the Mace Road car park.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 2024

The Finance Committee is Pat Diviney, Jackie Ashley, Ian Cullingford

Attendance:

Attendance in 2024 fluctuated in both churches due to the challenging circumstances around Reverend Andrew and Reverend Carol and having a period of time when we had benefice services.

Income:

Overall however, in 2024 giving was generous and exceeded our expected budget. Donations and legacies were also received, and gift aid was claimed where appropriate. The newly formed fundraising team also made considerable contribution to our 2024 income with the running of various events. Mary's Child and the Community Café provided consistent monthly contributions towards the upkeep of the church. We also made some savings by retaining some money we had expected to spend: e.g. clergy expenses, two months of an administrator salary and a budget set aside for ministry development.

Expenditure:

We successfully paid for our Parish Share and a percentage of a deanery shortfall. However, gas and electricity significantly exceeded what we had budgeted for. A combination of rising prices, increased cost and increased use of our facilities were contributing factors. Repairs and maintenance on our aging buildings were costly and will continue to be so. Repairs and maintenance were carried out on all three buildings including blocked drains, lighting repairs, heating problems, intruder alarms upkeep and monitoring of the CCTV equipment. The expenses incurred exceeded the allocated annual budget due to the unpredictable nature of this area. Overall however, the budget ended on a positive note with the income exceeding the expenditure.

WORSHIP AND MINISTRY

Throughout a very challenging 2024 our churches have been blessed by being able to offer a Sunday Service every week; albeit for a very small proportion through a Benefice Services. We continued to meet and worship together as a four-church benefice on the fifth Sunday. Benefice services have been well attended and a great opportunity to meet less familiar faces from other Churches.

Services were also held for special occasions including Easter and Christmas.

We were blessed by the continuing ministry of Reverend Kevin Fitzgibbon and a number of visiting clergy who supported us in the absence of Reverend Andrew and Reverend Carol. We were also blessed that Ian Cullingford provided regular word and worship services to enable us to continue meeting in our own churches.

Fortnightly through 2024, we ran an Emmaus Bible Study Course. This was consistently well attended by 9-12 people who shared together teaching and learning about Jesus and our relationship with him.

OCCASSIONAL OFFICES

Throughout 2024, our churches have been central to many families who came to us for baptisms, weddings, and funerals. We conducted 15 Baptisms, 2 Weddings, 16 Funerals and 2 Burial of ashes

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY MISSION

Every endeavour was made to keep the life of our churches vibrant. Heartfelt thanks go to all of those from our churches, from Mary's Child and from the wider community who enable our activities to take place.

Fundraising events took place throughout the year including Easter, Christmas and Patronal festivals. Also Coffee mornings were held on the 1st Saturday of the month in the hall.

St John's Church opened on Saturdays from Easter until October and we have seen many visitors from the community and further afield during those six months

Prayers for our church and for the community are said at St Michael's Church every Tuesday morning by a growing and committed prayer team.

The Reflections Cafe met regularly on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month providing a safe space for people to chat and enjoy each other's company .

The Community Café in St Michael's has become a 'go to' place on a Wednesday for so many people with an average of around 100+ people attending each week. The food and fellowship provided is appreciated by those who attend. The café provided Christmas lunch over two days due to large demand; it was a sell out! Guests were welcomed and provided with an excellent two-course meal with Christmas pudding and crackers. It was a lovely way to end the year with our community. The Saturday Cafe ran on alternate Saturdays through most of 2024, providing a simple menu and a warm place to meet. This was funded by the Peterborough City Council Community Fund.

MARY'S CHILD

Our Partner Charity Mary's Child has continued to be very busy in supporting individuals and families in and around Stanground, Farcet and Fletton and further afield in Peterborough with food, household items and toiletries as well as legal advice and advocacy.

They also provided activities which gave some fun and joy to families and individuals in need at key times in the year like Christmas and access to yoga classes.

Charlie Avery-Walker (Chief Operating Officer) and Heidi Powner (Charity Co-ordinator) worked tirelessly to keep this going in the face of great adversity in losing their founder Reverend Carol. Local Councillors also offer their support and fundraising work. Thanks also goes to all those who have supported the charities work through their generosity of giving (food, finances and time) and the love shown, and through prayers – these all make a difference in bringing the love of God into troubled lives and is a demonstration of Faith in Action.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Our Authorised Lay Ministers (Esther Charlton and Kelly Cullingford) continued to work with our children and young people providing teaching on the Christian faith. Many of these children and young people have taken part in services by reading and leading intercessions. We are very grateful for all that they do.

COMMUNITY GARDEN AND GARDENING CLUB

2024 saw the Gardening Club continue to flourish and provide fresh vegetables for the café and as a welcome addition to food parcels. The club meets regularly on Mondays after school and has been blessed with a number of children, young people and their parents who have enjoyed weeding, planting, potting up and generally being together.

Colin Berridge has taught new skills as well as directed jobs.

Colin, Matthew Woods and others look after the grounds of St Michael's and the hall to keep them looking lovely, grass cutting is a major task!

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Heidi Powner resigned as Administrator in October 2024. The role was taken over by Ian Cullingford and Jackie Ashley.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT ON BUILDINGS

St John the Baptist church

- Church maintenance:
 - A sanitary bin contract commenced with PHS, a bin was placed in the toilet.
 - PAT testing was carried out on all portable appliances.
 - The 3 electrical installations all passed their 5 yearly tests.
 - The lighting in the chancel was replaced.
 - Work was carried out on the security system.
 - In May, the toilet was blocked due to a build-up of baby wipes and other non-flushable items. Investigations revealed the waste drains into a trench arch system installed in 2009. The old toilet had to be broken during the process and has since been replaced, with the blockage cleared. Annual maintenance will now be required, and a small trench has been left open for constructing an inspection chamber.
 - Minor maintenance work, and cleaning has continued throughout the year.

St Michael and all Angel's church

- Internal groups held in the Church during 2024 include:
 - Community Cafés on most Wednesdays and some Saturdays.
 - Emergency First Aid training course on 29th April
 - Emmaus workshop.
 - Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Sessions
 - Reflections café.
 - Together (mum's support group).
 - Weekly prayer group.
- External groups who hired the Church during 2024:
 - Breathe Yoga
 - Just Pure Stretch
 - Mary's Child Management, Volunteer & Client Meetings
 - PCEA Church
 - Peterborough City Council for the local and general elections
 - Slimming World
 - Stanground Townswomen's Guild
 - Yaxley Deanery Synod

- Church maintenance:
 - 4 sets of floodlights were stolen from the front door and the car park. We were kindly donated new lights which were installed.
 - A sanitary bin contract commenced with PHS, a bin was placed in the toilet.
 - New lighting has been installed on the front of the church.
 - PAT testing was carried out on all portable appliances.
 - Smart electric and gas meters were installed
 - The boiler was serviced
 - Minor maintenance work, decorating, and cleaning has continued throughout the year.

Stanground Parish Church Hall

- The Church Hall has had many external hirers in 2024 including the following groups:
 - 1st Oakdale Rainbows
 - 1st Stanground Brownies
 - Beginners Yoga Classes
 - Breathe Yoga
 - Dayspring Christian Centre
 - Hula Hoop Classes
 - Inner Wellbeing Group
 - PCEA Church
 - Peterborough & District Keep Fit Association
 - Peterborough and District Amateur Radio Club
 - South Nene Women's Institute
 - St Michael's Pre-School
 - Wodens Hearth Viking Group
 - Workshop & Stage Combat Group
 - Plus many ad-hoc bookings including:
- Maintenance work included:
 - A smart gas meter was installed
 - The boiler was serviced
 - The electrical installation passed its 5 yearly test.
 - PAT testing was carried out on all portable appliances.
 - A sanitary bin contract commenced with PHS, a bin was placed in each toilet.
 - In March, St Michael's Pre-School reported blocked hall drains and toilets. Sewage was found coming from a nearby manhole. Dyno-Rod was called out that evening and cleared the blockage. All hall hirers were informed not to flush wipes and to use the bins provided. Signs have been displayed in all toilets.
 - Minor maintenance work, decorating and cleaning has continued throughout the year.

MUSIC

The robed choir continue to sing on a weekly basis at the morning service at St John's and regularly support other services. The choir have also been a welcome addition in benefice services.

John Mullen played the organ at many Sunday services at St John's throughout 2024. John sadly retired at the end of 2024 due to ill health. The organ was tuned in March.

The singers at St Michael's also enhance the musical worship there.

BELLRINGING

2024 was a busy year for our bell-ringers, we rang for a number of services, we visited other towers, people from other towers visited us, we rang quarter peals, we did some maintenance, we learned some new skills and had some fun along the way.

We rang for two weddings at Stanground, which isn't a huge number, but two more than 2023. Finding that the start time of one the weddings had been brought forward by an hour at the last minute led to some hectic phone calls and some excitement we could have lived without - it's a good job someone turned up early and was able to pass the message on to the rest of us!

We were asked to ring for three weddings at Whittlesey, which is always a bit of an adventure. There is no team in Whittlesey and their bells badly need some care and attention, which makes us grateful for what we have at Stanground.

In March we rang the bells at the funeral of Joan Pawlak, whose husband, Ted, was a ringer for many years.

On Easter Monday, David Clarke was kind enough to arrange a tour of some towers near Oundle for us. We went to Achurch, Stoke Doyle and Wadenhoe, which was a very pleasurable way to spend an afternoon.

In April we rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles in memory of Daren Edwards' father, Trevor.

In June we rang the bells to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

In July the team visited Alwalton while I was on holiday in France.

In September we had a visit from a band touring the area. Also in that month, we hosted a meeting of the Huntingdon District of the Ely Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers. Many thanks to Jane & Linda for helping with the obligatory tea and cakes - nobody left hungry!

In October we rang a quarter peal of Grandsire Doubles to celebrate the life & works of Rev. Carol Avery.

In November we rang the bells for the Remembrance Sunday service.

As well as ringing the bells, we have attended to routine maintenance. One of the bells was out of action briefly during May while Lewis and I worked to replace some rusty nuts & bolts, learning some new skills in the process.

I hope that gives people an idea of what we get up to; when I take the trouble to write it all down it seems like a lot's going on!

Most importantly, I'd like to thank the team for their enthusiasm & commitment; coming out for practice on cold, damp evenings in the middle of winter isn't always appealing, but we still do it.

Talking of which, 6:30pm on Thursdays evenings at St John's, if you would like to join us & find out more.

Graham Hill, Tower Captain

CHURCH SCHOOL'S (St John's & St Michael's Schools)

Due to the car accident and sad loss of Reverend Carol, work in our church schools was very limited. Communication was kept open with the schools and they were very understanding of the extreme circumstances we were in.

Jackie Jenkins, Pat Diviney and Jenny Taylor are regular volunteer supporters in St John's School, hearing readers, attending swimming lessons and opening up our church for school visits.

THANK YOU

The PCC wish to thank all those who give of their time, talents, thought and prayer to ensure that Stanground continues to grow and strengthen in its mission to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ.