

**The Parish Church of
St Mary the Blessed Virgin
Burley-in-Wharfedale**



**Annual Report
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended
31st December 2024**

Vicar
Churchwarden

Revd Phil Bishop
Mrs. Val McKenzie

Treasurer
PCC Secretary
Independent Examiner

Mr. John Spencer
Mrs. Lis Merrick
Mr. John McGhee

Bankers

Virgin Money, 1 Westgate, SHIPLEY,
BD18 3DS

Website:

<http://www.burleyparishchurch.org.uk/>

Minutes of the APCM held on Sunday 28th April 2024

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting

One nomination had been received for the election of church warden – Val Mackenzie. She was duly elected without objection and stated that she will continue in the role for one more year. As he had stated at the Vestry Meeting in 2023, John Spencer did not seek re-election, which means Val is the only churchwarden for 2024, and as she intends to step down in 2025, new churchwardens will need to be elected at the next Vestry Meeting. Phil asked the congregation to consider the role and whether they were able to fulfil it.

Minutes of the APCM

Opening Prayers

Phil Bishop chaired the meeting and opened it with prayers.

Present and Apologies

52 members of the Electoral Roll were present. Apologies were received from the following people:

Andrea Ainley

Peter Bennett

Annette Hattersley

Ann Hayward

Kelvin Newberry

Nancy Newberry

Merel Perrett

Fiona Prest

John Spencer

Liz Varghese

Catriona Wilkinson

Ros Wilkinson

Pam Woffindin

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the APCM 2023 were approved unanimously.

Matters Arising

Nothing to report

The Reports:

Electoral Roll

Phil Bishop read from the report provided by the Electoral Roll Officer Annette Hattersley who was unable to attend. The report states that there are currently 171 names on the Roll, 25 of whom are non-residents. There are 2 removals due to death. The next full revision will be in 2025.

PCC Report & Activities of the Parish

A report of church statistics for 2023 was produced by Val Mackenzie and this was briefly discussed during the meeting, most notably the low numbers of children attending all services. Reports were also produced by Mary Brooks who provided an account of activities between January and July 2023, and Phil Bishop who wrote about activities from August to December 2023.

Annual Financial Report

Treasurer John Spencer provided the Treasurer's Report, and Phil noted the loss of around £30,000 which is substantial and unsustainable. A service focussed on our financial position and how to respond was held in February 2024 and further feedback is planned later in 2024.

John invited questions on the report and the accounts.

Joyce Russell raised the point that the APCM reports had been printed single-sided which was a waste of money, particularly in light of the need to make significant savings. She also stated that details of the income from Parish Magazine subscription had not been requested and was not included in the accounts. The total for 2023 was £677. Joyce stated she also had a database from receipts and returns and the amount detailed in the report is incorrect. Val McKenzie explained that if the source of funds is not shown to Jason Atkinson when he banks the cash, it may not have been put in the correct category. Phil stated he would discuss this further with John Spencer to ensure that all amounts were correctly aligned.

Appointment of Independent Examiner

John McGhee was elected unanimously to continue as Independent Examiner for 2024. Phil thanked him for his continued work in this role.

Churchwarden's Report on Fabric

Churchwarden Val Mackenzie provided the Churchwarden's Report on Fabric, and noted the work that has been done in 2023. This included the refurbishment of the church lounge which was needed and is now improved as a result. Roof tiles have been replaced and straightened following the identification of this issue in the Quinquennial report. Other improvements were also made, including the installation of a 'Nest' smart thermostat to control the heating and a repair to a roof leak in the toilet. Val noted that due to costs they were not able address all the recommendations in the Quinquennial report within the timescale suggested by the architect, but she had detailed them in her report so progress could be followed.

Deanery Synod Report

Deanery Synod Representative Frances Robinson provided the Deanery Synod Report. No further comments were added at the meeting.

Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding Officer Dot Armstrong provided the Safeguarding Report. She expressed her thanks to Elaine Marsden and Mary Brooks for their support in the role. Dot stepped down from this role at the meeting, and stated that everything was up to date but two people were now needed to fulfil this role. Phil thanked Dot for all her hard work in the role over the past six years, and acknowledged this with the presentation of a bouquet of flowers.

Election of PCC members

Three members were elected as PCC members following a unanimous vote to approve: Wendy Bishop, Val James, and Yvonne Nyathi. Annette Hattersley was re-elected as a PCC member following a unanimous vote. Two PCC members stepped down from the committee. Becky Berry resigned in December 2023 and Catriona Wilkinson resigned at the APCM.

Accepting the Annual Report

The Annual Report was approved unanimously.

Vicar's Report/Summary

Phil briefly reflected on the transition to his role as vicar of St Mary's. He expressed his gratitude for the support from the PCC and the wider congregation. He then opened the floor for questions.

Any Other Business / Questions

Hilary Walsh asked for clarification on the process for receiving communion as it was becoming confusing for the congregation to know when to go up. Phil stated that he

would be reviewing the process with the PCC, noting that most people are choosing to receive a dipped wafer rather than the chalice.

Helen James added that a clearer message is required around the process of receiving communion, as the congregation is confused and it worked better when two queues were organised at Easter. Phil confirmed that this will be discussed further with the PCC.

Charles Prest asked when the congregation would hear back from the PCC on the Healthy Churches process. Phil stated that the PCC recently had an away day and are meeting again to consolidate discussions. They will report back once the follow-up meeting has taken place.

Joyce Russell explained that the Parish Magazine used to receive regular PCC reports, but that recently the information was being received very close to publication. She noted that previously, reports were briefly reviewed before they were sent for publication. Phil confirmed that PCC reports will continue for the Parish Magazine, but noted that there would be a delay as minutes had to be approved at the next PCC meeting. Phil stated he will review this, with a view to introducing an interim report which could be included in the Parish Magazine.

Jane Schofield Gurung expressed her thanks on behalf of the Western Nepal Disability Trust for the continued support of St Mary's over the past year. She also wanted to draw attention to the 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer resources which are available and can help us to pray for others and our community in the time before Pentecost.

Mark Selby expressed thanks on behalf of the congregation to Phil for all his work over his transition into his role.

Phil invited all members of the congregation to speak to him after the meeting should they wish to do so.

Closing Prayers

Phil closed the meeting with prayers.

Background

The PCC of the Parish Church of St. Mary The Blessed Virgin, Burley in Wharfedale has responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), in accordance with the Church Representation Rules, elects members of the PCC. The following served as members of the PCC from April 2024 to December 2024.

NAME	ROLE	TERM OF OFFICE
Rev Phil Bishop	Vicar	From July 2023
Valerie McKenzie	Church Warden	Annual Appointment
John Spencer	Treasurer	
Sally McGhee	Elected Member	Elected until 2026 AGM
Frances Robinson	Deanery Synod	Elected until 2026 AGM
Mary Brooks	Elected Member	Elected until 2026 AGM
Lis Merrick	Elected Member	Elected until 2026 AGM
Susan Collins	Elected Member	Elected until 2025 AGM. Willing to stand for re election
Liz Varghese	Elected Member	Resigned Aug 2024
Paul Rimmington	Elected Member	Elected until 2025 AGM. Willing to stand for re election
Janita Dibb	Elected Member	Elected until 2026 AGM
Karen Selby	Elected Member	Elected until 2026 AGM
Annette Hattersley	Elected Member	Elected until 2027 AGM.
Val James	Elected Member	Elected until 2027 AGM
Yvonne Nyathi	Elected Member	Elected until 2027 AGM
Wendy Bishop	Elected Member	Elected until 2027 AGM

Standing Committee

Rev. Phil Bishop (Vicar),

Val McKenzie (Warden),

John Spencer (Treasurer),

Lis Merrick (PCC Secretary),

Mary Brooks (Lay Reader),

Susan Collins.

Officers of the PCC

Vice Chair	Church Warden
Treasurer	John Spencer
Secretary	Lis Merrick
Minutes Secretary	Ella Holdsworth
Electoral Roll Officer	Annette Hattersley
Disability & Vulnerable People Rep	Jane Schofield Gurung
Safeguarding Rep	Richard Holdsworth

Electoral Roll

Following the Full Revision of the Electoral Roll, there are currently 105 names on the Roll, 17 of whom are non-residents. The next Full Revision should take place in 2031.

The Church of England states that the Roll must be published showing every name, but no other personal data.

ANNETTE HATTERSLEY, ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

Church Statistics 2024

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Baptisms	6	11	17	12	0	19	13	17	14	27
Weddings	1 + 1 blessing + 1 renewal of vows	1	5	2	3	4	2	11	6 plus 2 blessings	4
Funerals	18 15 in church	15 8 in church	17 15 in church	12 10 in church	18 12 in church	29 18 in church	20 12 in church	19 12 in church	16 11 in church	23 14 in church
Confirmations	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	10
Easter Day Communicants	107	96	110	54	0	170	167	204	207	171
Christmas Day Communicants	64	58	46	69	53	124	133	209	179	91
Normal Sunday Attendance – Adults	61	69	56	N/A	N/A	97	106	112	107	101
Normal Sunday Attendance – Under 16	3	5	11	N/A	N/A	14	15	22	20	28

Baptisms, Weddings and funerals

The baptism numbers were 5 less than those in 2023. We had 1 more wedding than last year and 3 more funerals than last year.

Easter Day and Christmas Day

There were 107 communicants on Easter Day in 2024, 11 more than in 2023. On Christmas Day 2024 we had 6 more communicants (64) than in 2023.

Adults

The total average of adults coming to Sunday services during 2024 was 61. A reduction of 8 on 2023.

The 8.00am Communion services were fairly consistent with an average of 12 adults, a reduction of 1 since 2023. The lowest number recorded at a service was 6 and the highest 21.

The average attendance for the 10.00am Communion services was 49. This is a reduction of 20 on 2023 numbers. The adult attendances varied between 32 and 75.

The highest number of adults at a Connect Together service was 63 at Harvest Festival. The lowest was 32 in July. The average number of adults who came to the Connect Together services was 45.

The average attendance at Service of the Word was 46 adults. The highest number of adults at a Service of the Word in 2024 was 55 and the lowest was 32.

The average was calculated using the number of adults who attended the 8.00am and 10.00am services, including Holy Communion, Connect Together and Service of the Word.

Children

At the 10.00am Holy Communion services there was an average of 3 children during 2024. The lowest was 1 and the highest 8. This average excluded the Christingles services.

The Connect Together services had an average of 6 children. The highest numbers were 8 children on each of Mother's Day and Harvest Festival. The lowest was 2 children.

I have taken into account the five Connect services that are in the Register, even though Connect services no longer meet on a Saturday in the Parish Centre. The average number of children at each service was 4, numbers of children in attendance, ranged between 2 and 8.

The average number of children at all Sunday services during 2024 was 3. This is a reduction of 2 on the 2023 average.

The average was calculated taking into account the numbers of children at the 10.00am Holy Communion, Connect Together and the Service of the Word.

It is disappointing that the reduced numbers of children coming to our services does not reflect the hard work put in by the 11 adult volunteers who facilitate and provide activities for our children.

Thank you, to you all, for your generosity of time and for your gift of creativity.

VAL MCKENZIE, CHURCH WARDEN

The Reports

Vicar's Report 2024

This is my second APCM here and while, as we enter 2025, we clearly face some significant challenges with our finances and, as the full impact of Covid is revealed in the drop in numbers in our new Electoral Roll, it is always a good opportunity to look back and draw encouragement from how God has been at work in our worship and ministry at St Mary's and in the community here in Burley and Wharfedale.

Healthy Church Process: At the beginning of 2024, 53 of us took time over a couple of sessions to reflect on how St Mary's aligns with the 7 Marks of a Healthy Church, characteristics that are typical of growing churches, the idea being that if a church is healthy, then God can bring growth. Our hope is that as a church we will grow in maturity in our discipleship, in our love for one another, in serving, in our concern for justice, and in numbers. It was clear from our analysis that we need to invest more time in seeking God and his leading, and there were questions raised about how willing we are to face the challenges change and growth will bring.

Our PCC Away Day at Bolton Abbey in February allowed us to begin to put together an action plan based on these outcomes, which was followed by another PCC "Vision Morning" in May. As a result, we focussed our response on prayer as part of our preparation for change. We introduced Evening Prayer for the PCC on Zoom and Midday Midweek prayer in church, both on a Wednesday. These were in addition to Morning Prayer on Zoom on a Monday – and I must mention how this was faithfully led by Revd Canon Chris Hayward right up until just before he died in November. He was a wonderful servant of this church and the wider church, and is greatly missed.

Another outcome from the Healthy Church process was that we wanted to grow our confidence in sharing our faith stories. Our Lent Course, "Talking Jesus", encouraged us to pray for 5 people we know and to share our own stories as part of Jesus' story.

A further way into prayer was through our participation in the "Thy Kingdom Come" initiative in the 10 days before Pentecost Sunday, when we were encouraged to deepen our commitment to pray, with a creative prayer display at the back of church and prayer walks onto the moor and around the village, and an evening celebration service in "upper room" at the Parish Centre.

Small group discipleship frequently underpins the life of a growing church. In April, we began to explore how small groups could be a more effective channel for our mission and discipleship. With the members of the Tuesday evening group deciding to close, we held back on this initiative. Later in 2024, a new group exploring the

message and themes of Luke's Gospel started. A Thursday group and a Book Group continue to meet. I'm sure we will revisit small groups and their aims, but if you would like to be part of a small group, do ask.

Churches Together in Burley (CTiB): we continue to enjoy a good relationship with the other three churches in Burley. CTiB meetings were held 3 times during the year, and we met as leaders every couple of months. Thus far, we plan to keep things on an informal, relational basis, without tying ourselves to a formal constitution. Activities during the year included:

- A congregation swap for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
- "Talking Jesus" Lent Course
- Holy Week Services: Maundy Thursday Communion, Good Friday Act of Witness, Hour before the Cross, Reflections on the Stations of the Cross, and an Easter Vigil.
- We explored options for supporting some sort of food distribution in Burley which led to the formation of "Meals Matters", particularly aimed at providing food to those in need during the school summer holidays. (In October, at our Harvest Service we collected contributions for the "Meals Matters" food initiative.)
- Praise in the Park kicked off the first Sunday of the Burley Festival, with an environmental focus with the theme of Jesus calming the storm.
- Light Party – an alternative to Halloween which was well attended by parents and children.
- Advent Carol Service – with additional singers supporting our St Mary's Singers.

In November, alongside Revd Tim Perkins from the Methodist Church, I led an ecumenical Remembrance Sunday Service at the War Memorial which was well supported by our churches, uniformed groups and wider village community. I also led a short service of remembrance at 11am on 11/11/24.

Pastoral and bereavement care: we have met several times to discuss how we improve our provision of pastoral and bereavement support. Much is done on an informal, friendship basis, but we have been trying to ensure that those who need support are included. Our Annual Memorial Service was held in July, and a "Christmas without a loved one" service in the run up to Christmas, both of which were appreciated by those who attended.

Christmas: Our Advent, Christmas Carol Service and Christmas Day Family Communion Services were joyful occasions. It was evident that, under Andrew's skilled direction, the St. Mary's Singers are growing in confidence as they led our singing and treated us with some uplifting pieces such as Andrew Carter's: "A Maiden Most Gentle!".

The musical contribution of the band was a highlight of our very well attended Christingle Services, along with the congregational participation in the telling of the Nativity Story with "Hallelujah's" and "Wah! Wah! Wah's"!

Our Christmas Eve "Midnight" Communion Service was held jointly at the Methodist Church and worked well. The plan is that we will host it in 2025.

Children and Youth: One particular area of challenge this year has been our provision for Children and Youth. Sadly, due to a change of circumstances for the leaders, the youth group stopped meeting – I would like to thank Becky and Sam for all they have contributed over the years they served as leaders.

In July, we decided to "pause" our monthly Saturday afternoon Connect Services in the Parish Centre. We did have some excellent services, including in June, "The Ark Floats to Burley", inspired by Gareth. However, while we connected with a couple of baptism families, we generally experienced very low attendances. We therefore decided to invest our energies into offering a consistent weekly provision for children in our 10am Sunday morning services. The Connect Team now provide activities in the lounge most Sundays, so families can attend knowing there will be something provided for their children, rather than having to consider which Sunday of the month it is.

Since the summer, we have also organised some one-off events for children and families such as the Light Party, Christmas Praise in the Queens Hall, and inviting the school choirs to our Connect Services – for example, the Christmas Toy Service where we collected a tremendous number of toys, some for distribution locally, while many went to Refugee Action in Bradford.

Community & Wider Involvement: As a church, we continue to support a wide range of charities, community groups and events. For example, I and others from the church attended several Community Leaders Meetings during the year. I spoke at the Hockney Group once and twice at the Men's Shed. We provide a monthly Communion service in Burley Hall, and, I, Janet Squire and Ann Holmes are trustees of the Burley Relief in Need Charity. In November, we hosted the Pinsuti Chamber Choir, seeking to raise funds for the Burley-Téréli Friendship Trust and the Organ Fund. We also welcomed David and Sue Airy from Compassion International who shared with us some wonderful stories of the impact of child sponsorship.

Curate: I was approached by Bishop Toby earlier in the year about the possibility of receiving a curate at St Mary's, and we are now looking forward to welcoming Zoe Smith in the summer as our curate, along with her family. She came to introduce herself to us in November. Her ordination will be at Wakefield Cathedral at 11am on Saturday 28th June 2025.

In concluding, I would like to convey my thanks to all of you for your support and encouragement over the last year. A church relies on many different parts to all play their part, from leading services to making the tea, as so many of you serve faithfully in the Church and the Parish Centre, as evidenced further in the diverse sections of this report.

I would like to give special mentions to:

- Jo, our Parish Administrator, who tendered her resignation at the end of 2024 because she is relocating to the coast after 2½ years with us, for her hard work, kindness and commitment through that time.
- And finally, Val McKenzie, as she comes to the end of her 3 years tenure as warden, for the enthusiasm and dedication she has brought to the role. She has been an incredible support to me and has ensured the smooth running of so much that goes on at St Mary's. Thank you, Val.

REVD PHIL BISHOP

Church Warden's Report on the fabric of the Church

During the Q&A session of the APCM 2023, Hilary Walsh enquired why the shelves beneath the Memorials had not been replaced, following the reordering of the church. These have now been located, cleaned, waxed and reinstated to allow floral arrangements to be displayed.

Cameras

Following safety and security issues at local churches in Ilkley and surrounding areas, a meeting was arranged for representatives from churches within our Deanery, South Craven and Wharfedale, to meet at All Saints in Ilkley. Officers from the police and Fire Brigade were present. The benefits of cameras within and outside churches were discussed, and were strongly suggested, as the best way to deter such behaviour. The police advised reporting any incident, no matter how small. This was for their 'intelligence' purposes.

Following discussions at PCC meetings including the pros and cons of having cameras in our church, a majority vote was taken to install two cameras. One in the main porch and another in the vestry corridor. These cameras are to be switched off before services start and are engaged at the end of services after the congregation has left the building.

Following incidents by youths in church during the Summer, it has since been voted by the PCC, to install a camera at the back of church to provide evidence of any future incidents within the body of the church. This would be reviewed and if necessary. provided to the police.

Clock and bells

The clock needed two visits from the church clock engineer from BMDC, free of charge. These have been rectified, and the clock is working well.

At the end of June, the bells stopped working. On inspection there were a few issues and a part had to be replaced, rewiring had to take place and another part had to be taken away for repair. These will incur charges as they are not covered by BMDC. As I write this in February 2025, everything is ready to be reinstated. An electrician who let us down at the beginning of February is having to be rescheduled.

Organ

I reported in the May 2023 edition of the Church Magazine that a clean and very essential repairs would cost £9000. The organ has not been working properly for at least two years and remains in a very poor condition. Andrew has said that every week there is another note that doesn't work. To have all the necessary work done to get the organ back in working order would cost in the region of £50000 plus VAT. Such a level of expenditure would seem to be a poor use of our resources.

Therefore, other options are being considered that will allow us to have some form of instrument to facilitate music in church.

Phil intends to raise this issue at the APCM April 2025.

Visitation from the Archdeacon

This took place in church on Tuesday 30th April 2024. Those present were Phil Bishop (Vicar), John Spencer (Treasurer), Val McKenzie (Church Warden), Dot Armstrong (Safeguarding Officer), Jo Moseley (Parish Administrator), Andy Jolley (Archdeacon) and Bill Braviner (the new Archdeacon of Halifax).

They were inspecting all the church's records to ensure that they were being maintained and updated. We were provided with leaflets and checklists to help us to collate the necessary documents. These included a check on the Fabric, Finances, and Mission and Growth of the church.

Overall, we did very well. Andy sent us his report. A copy of his covering letter is attached as an Appendix. There were a few items that needed to be added to or completed. This work has been done.

Boundary wall and roof above the vestry

The wall on the North side of the churchyard needs repointing. There is water ingress behind the pulpit due to a repair needed on the vestry roof. The church

architect has been out to look at these two areas. John Spencer is currently in communication with the architect to arrange for quotes for the work to be done.

This is my final Fabric Report as Church Warden, as I finish my three years in this position. It has been a huge privilege to serve you all. The knowledge and information that I have gathered over this time has been fascinating, engaging and intriguing. But, most importantly, my faith has grown enormously over the three years. I'd like to thank Alastair Kirk for giving me this opportunity to serve you and God, to John Spencer and Val James for supporting and encouraging me, to Susan Collins for sharing her knowledge, her wise words and her friendship, to Margaret Young, my friend and teacher in all things that relate to the Bible. Last but by no means least, to Phil who with his patience, organisational skills and discretion has been a wonderful mentor and friend. Thank you all for your kind words and support.

Should any of you consider becoming a Church Warden, pray about it and you will be given the answer. Though time-consuming, the rewards are numerous and diverse.

God bless.

VAL MCKENZIE, CHURCH WARDEN

PCC Secretary's Report

The Parochial Church Council shares the leadership of St. Mary's Church with the clergy. As well as the day to day receiving and sending of information and emails from the Diocese and members of the Parish, it has a legal responsibility for the financial affairs of the Parish and the maintaining of its assets, which are St. Mary's Church buildings and the Parish Centre.

The PCC is made up of the Vicar, a Church Warden, a Lay Reader and members elected from the electoral roll who worship at St. Mary's Church.

We held 7 PCC Meetings during 2024, which were held in the Parish Centre, except for the May 2024 meeting, held in church.

In 2024 some of the agenda items we discussed included Church fabric, finances, worship and services, the Parish Centre, Safeguarding and Church security.

We held a PCC Away Day at Bolton Abbey in February and a PCC "Vision Morning" in May 2024. The PCC introduced Evening Prayer for the PCC on Zoom on a Wednesday evening following this last event.

LIS MERRICK, PCC SECRETARY

Treasurer's Report 2024

This is my fourth Treasurer's Report to the APCM, the report has again been put together again with the help of Duncan Watts, who has assisted with some of the more technical aspects of the accounting profession. We must also thank our examiner John McGhee who has stepped in to provide the necessary independence to these accounts and to Sally for allowing him.

The day-to-day operation of the Church has generated a substantial loss of around £19,000. However, due to the Friends of St Mary's fund, and other income from the Deposit accounts the loss was reduced to around £14,000. This was in line with the budget for the year. It is a serious financial loss, and these losses cannot be carried on indefinitely. We did however pay our parish share in full as agreed with the PCC. This is by far our greatest expense, and I know from conversations with the diocese how grateful they are that we continue to pay this. The parish share is as stated around £90,000 and although this looks substantial it is artificially held at a lower amount as the diocese does a recalculation to ensure the share is not being greater than around 80 % of the church's turnover.

The overall balance sheet that includes the church and the Parish Centre has reduced by around £22,000. Unless there is a substantial increase in giving or a reduction of expenditure the losses incurred by the church and the Parish Centre will continue.

In 2024 there was a sharp decrease in the expenditure on the Church in respect to maintenance, however we anticipate this will increase this year due to issues with the wall overlooking the new garden and repairs to the church roof above the vestry.

A budget was agreed by the PCC in November 2024, this anticipated a loss of £30,000.00, this was agreed by the PCC. However, since then due to the resignation of the Parish Administrator the losses will reduce as the PCC has agreed not to advertise the post. Depending on the workload increase on Phil and others it may be that this needs to be reconsidered. Therefore, at the time of this report the budget agreed by the PCC will remain.

Can I thank all the people who help me with the finances of the Church, to Val McKenzie for the envelopes, for Jason Atkinson for dealing with the collections, petty cash and transferring this to the bank and to Karen Selby for taking on the role of Parish Centre treasurer.

Can I also finally thank everyone who contributes to the ongoing finances of the Church, either through individual donations or the Central giving Scheme.

JOHN SPENCER, TREASURER

Deanery Synod

The South Craven and Wharfedale Deanery is a group of 12 churches in the north of the Bradford Diocese. Parishes are spread from Lothersdale and Cowling, in the west, to Menston, in the east. Deanery Synod meetings take place 3 times a year both on Zoom, in the winter, and in person. Deanery Synod meetings are an opportunity for initiatives in the diocese to be shared on a local level as well as for Churches to support each other and share ideas.

The first Deanery Synod meeting of 2025 was held in January on Zoom. The topic for discussion was Bradford 2025 – City of Culture. Revd Ned Lunn, the Canon for Intercultural Mission and the Arts at Bradford Cathedral, spoke about what the Diocese have planned and how the Deanery could get involved.

In June, we met in person at St Thomas' Church, Sutton in Craven, to listen to a talk from Geoff Park the Chief Finance Officer for the Diocese. He shared information about the financial position that the Diocese is in and what they have done over the last few years to cover the deficit they are facing. He also talked about Parish Share and the amount paid by each Deanery in the Diocese. There was then the opportunity for people to ask questions.

The final meeting of the year was held in St Peter's Church, Addingham. The discussion was focused on 'Good News' stories from around the Deanery. Each church shared things that were working well for them in terms of worship and outreach.

FRANCES ROBINSON, DEANERY SYNOD REPRESENTATIVE

Parish Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding remains a key focus in the Church of England as I take on the role of Safeguarding Officer for St Mary's. I completed the statutory training required to take up this role in December 2024 and will be conducting safeguarding training for all volunteers and PCC members in May 2025. All those working with children and vulnerable adults continue to require a DBS check, but the Church of England no longer uses the 'update' service. This means that all DBS certificates will manually have to be checked to ensure that they are renewed every three years, and additional work is needed to ensure that valid certificates are held by everyone who requires one.

Mary Brooks, Phil Bishop, and I have been meeting regularly to discuss broader safeguarding issues within the Church of England and their potential impact on St Mary's. The Parish Dashboard has been completed and was presented at the March PCC meeting, allowing the committee to assess progress and identify any gaps.

The annual Church of England Confidentiality Declaration Forms, which are completed by all DBS applicants, are a way of ensuring that any changes to an individual's circumstances are reported to St Mary's. These are to be completed annually and I will be distributing them after the APCM. Safeguarding posters within the church buildings have been updated to include +9 new diocesan and parish safeguarding contacts.

I wish to thank the previous Safeguarding Officer Dot Armstrong for her assistance during my transition into this role, and to Phil and Mary for their ongoing support. My aim is to continue the work to ensure that St. Mary's remains a safe environment for all and I look forward to working with everyone connected with the Church to achieve this.

RICHARD HOLDSWORTH, PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Parish Centre

Staff

The Parish Centre Manager has been fully supported by staff and volunteers, Carol is working on updating policies, and ensuring the Centre is running smoothly on a day-to-day basis as well as generating business opportunities for the Centre. Given the economic climate today and other businesses who are also looking to generate income have become extremely competitive in the village when it comes to people looking for venues.

Our Parish Administrator, Jo Moseley, due to personal circumstances, has now left the role in January 2025, she will be sorely missed by all in the Centre.

Pearl, one of the office volunteers had gone beyond and above in her role as administrator getting to grips with the new booking system (Hallmaster). She works hard to ensure that all the bookings run smoothly and to promote the Centre, putting information about what the Centre does on the Community Trust Website, alongside the booking system, whereby potential clients can access the booking system to see what dates and rooms are available for bookings. Pearl also ensures that there are posters placed in strategic places within the village showcasing what is happening in the Centre.

During the 2024 Summer Festival, Pearl organised a Pop-Up Café, for the people of Burley, so they had somewhere to go for food and drinks at a reasonable price, it was a huge success, with people visiting all day and lots of positive feedback. Pearl will be doing the same for the 2025 Summer Festival, so a big thanks for all her hard work.

Joyce Russell, Linda Nelson, Chris Nelson, Pam Sowman, David Sowman and Steven, have clocked up many years of volunteering. Without their continuous support, the Centre would not have been able to operate as it does. Greg Learmonth has left the Centre, for a position at the Queens Hall, so thank you to Greg for all his hard work. Also, an enormous thank you to all the volunteers who have contributed to the Centre.

Steven and Pearl have also undertaken many extra hours as volunteer caretakers, ensuring that the building is open for parties, events etc. This includes setting up rooms for clients using the Centre. All this hard work generates positive feedback from clients using the Centre.

Activities During 2024

Church Groups:

- Connect on Saturday
- Mother's Union
- Ladies Group
- Youth Group
- Facing Outward – Tea & Cake Coffee Mornings
- Tiny Tadpoles (no longer runs due to low numbers)
- Cuppa Cake & Company
- Open Door – (a community outreach project)
- Golden Sing & Smile

Fee Paying Groups

- Tom Clegg – Ukelele Group - Jepson Room
- Tuesday Morning Ravers – Music Group – Stephen Lockwood
- Voile Ballet – Jepson Room
- Ilkley U3A – Runs three groups' Crafts, Spanish, German
- Well Baby Clinic – Garden Room
- Hockney Group Social Support for the Blind and Partially Sighted – Peter Halliwell
- Memory Tree – Susan Collins
- Bee Keeping Course – Sophie Pringle Van Berckel
- Wharfedale Family Links – Vikki Wood
- Leap into Languages – Sutcliffe Room – Anna Blakemore
- Just Bee Children's Events – Nicola Edwards
- National Childbirth Trust
- Yoga Class – Emma Leaf
- Home Instead – Emma Abbiss
- Wharfe Valley Links – Vikki Wood

The above are regular users of the Centre.

Overview

For the Parish Centre to become solvent and bring in income which makes the Centre viable, there needs to be an overhaul of how it moves forward to meet the needs of the 21st Century.

CAROL O'CONNOR, PARISH CENTRE MANAGER

Connect Together

On the first Sunday of the month, rather than a traditional liturgical service, we have an informal service, which is family friendly and more accessible for all ages. It is a multi-generational interactive service with a relaxed atmosphere. During worship there are opportunities for discussion, crafting and singing. Recently choirs from both Burley Woodhead and Burley Oaks schools have sung for us. These have been particularly joyful occasions. We have held services in the Queen's Hall on Mothering Sunday and a couple of weeks before Christmas and these have been well received by all ages.

Until the summer CONNECT (on a Saturday afternoon) continued but sadly because attendance was gradually falling it did not restart after the holidays.

MARY BROOKS, LAY READER

St Mary's Singers and music in Church

The St Mary's Singers have continued to provide a hugely appreciated lead to singing at the 10am services in Church. Rather than being an 'interim' choir, they are now essentially the St Mary's church choir. Since I took over full time in the summer of 2024 I have continued to rehearse with the choir on Thursdays and we are building up a repertoire of our own anthems and arrangements of hymns which contribute to worship. This is done mostly during the distribution of communion in Sunday services, but we also sing special pieces at significant services within the Church's year (Advent, Christmas, Easter etc).

We continue to be open for new members. No audition or requirements are necessary - just a willingness to sing and help with leading music in Church worship. It is hoped we can build up our membership over the coming year and expand our contribution further in more meaningful ways within the life of the Church.

I would like to thank Edward Scott who has hugely assisted with organ playing in Church over the last few years.

The organ is now in need of significant maintenance and is becoming unreliable. This will need increasing attention over the coming months. A number of options have been put to the PCC and work is ongoing in this regard.

My sincere thanks to all the Singers and those who contribute to the musical life of St Mary's.

ANDREW RADLEY, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Morning Prayer

On a Monday morning a small group meet on Zoom for morning prayer. It is a good start to the working week. After prayer finishes there is usually a short session of conversation and laughter. It is open for anyone to join us it is not an exclusive group.

Meeting ID 939 8630 5135 Password Prayer

MICK SMITH

Open Door

2024 began well for Open Door with the return to its original 'home', the room now named the Sutcliffe Room. However, it turned out to be a hard year for the loyal and experienced volunteers, the team that make sure the project remains a safe and welcoming warm space in the village in spite of the competition nowadays available. Throughout the year OD had ten volunteers and four stand-ins.

From the outset it became clear that there were many negatives within the room that challenged the volunteers in their work. The first volunteer meeting towards the end of January records a list of problems that they were faced with when on duty; refrigerator unusable, special tap risk hazard for some, acoustics in room, no cupboard space to keep games, jigsaws etc or lockable cupboard to store OD income and OD files, or cupboard space to put large table away and missing pavement sign board (since found). Not being allowed to hang the paintings belonging to Open Door on the wall could not be understood as they might bring about some warmth and help the acoustics in the room.

The next meeting concentrated on discussion about the project and actions required to fulfil its mission. A Steering Group was set up to further progress matters, as a small group would be more able to find time to do this. They had six meetings during the rest of the year which included emailing notes to the whole team of volunteers.

In May, Open Door was faced with another change. They were moved back into the Garden Room when their Monday and Tuesday sessions were hired out to a private company for at least six months. The main issue here for volunteers was having to lift the heavy tables and to set up the room at the beginning and end of each session and still no appropriate storage space. Also, access to the pavement sign and moving refreshments about caused disruption.

At one of those meetings having our usual stall at the Burley Summer Festival was organised, and while the stall did not attract much attention the poster sign-posting a café in the Garden Room was a success!

Throughout the year Open Door's relationship with Burley Oaks School continued, and had our visitors meet up with pupils; to celebrate World Book Day, planting summer flowers in June, having a Conker Contest in November and a wonderful Festive Christmas Carol Afternoon, singing and making decorations to take home.

At another Steering Group meeting Goldies was set to re-open again in October, led by Vivien Wrigglesworth and proved to have made a good start with 19 attendees at the first sing-a-long.

In addition, towards the end of the year, by joining a new on-line group associated with a Place of Welcome, Open Door obtained resources to assist volunteers provide activities and conversation suggestions to use, all for free!

On the whole regular visitors to OD continued to attend with several new faces appearing. Overall, a rough average at each session was about seven with one visitor turning up being rare and 14 on a good day. The coffee morning once a month on a Monday is always well-attended.

However, Open Door volunteers are once again facing an uncertain start about where they will be based during 2025. While they and the visitors have enjoyed the space and light in the Garden Room, they have had little opportunity to enjoy the armchairs that came with the refurbishment to replace the old 'care home' ones. In spite of all the difficulties Open Door will move with positivity of surviving into its 29th year!

JOYCE RUSSELL

Schools

There are three primary schools in the parish, and we continue to maintain a good relationship with all three.

Burley Oaks has good connections with the Methodist Church and their youth worker, Fiona. However, they have also visited the Parish Centre for intergeneration

Open Door sessions, and members of the church organised and participated in events at school: a Conker Fight and a Christmas Celebration Event. As I mentioned elsewhere, their school choir supported our Toy Service.

Ghyll Royd invited me to speak at their Easter and Christingle assemblies in school with the pupils joining in enthusiastically, and we welcomed the whole school into church for their joyful Christmas Carol Service.

Burley and Woodhead Church of England school is understandably where we have most involvement. 4 members of the governing board attend St Mary's Church: Revd Phil, Mark Selby, Mary Brooks and Patrick Dalzell and are all actively involved in the school.

2024 was a year when the new head teacher began to bring a fresh look and ideas to the implementation of the school's vision of "Many parts one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12), including the introduction of two school dog mentors, Florrie and Winnie, who the children love!

In February, the school was assessed by Ofsted as "Outstanding", reflecting the hard work and engagement of the staff, pupils, governors and parents in the life of the school, and how well those many parts work together to support the holistic development and well-being of all the children. This is accompanied by the children's academic success being well above the national average.

The collective worship in school develops the children's understanding and application of the Christian values of thankfulness, compassion, trust, forgiveness, generosity and service, and of the major Christian festivals and seasons. Usually I (or sometimes Mary or Denis) lead an act of collective worship on a Thursday morning. This followed by a class discussion around a "Big Question" which can be anything from bringing a Christian perspective to a philosophical question to, on one occasion during interfaith week, a live link to another school to answer their questions about the Christian faith while they answered the B&W children's questions about Islam.

Collective worship services in church over the last year have included Easter, End of School Year, and Christmas. These services are designed and led by the Worship Wonderers with the support of Mr Wilkinson.

Children from the School Council have also attended Thursday morning services, on one occasion to encourage us to buy Fair Trade, selling us rice as part of their "90kg Challenge", and on another, to share their learning about Advent. The Reception Class were also welcomed and shown round the church by Mary when they made a special visit.

During the year Reflection Spaces were introduced, one for each class. These provide a small display and reflection activity to further encourage the children's spiritual growth.

Finally, I enjoyed joining Year 6 for their Leavers Service at Bradford Cathedral with John Froude leading the worship and teaching us some new action songs. St Mary's provided the leavers with a Bible and a booklet called "Moving On" which is designed to help them into the transition to secondary school, as they left with our prayers for God's blessing upon them.

REVD PHIL BISHOP

Sudan

Our overseas diocesan link is with Sudan and while international attention has largely been focused on the Middle East and Ukraine, the civil war in Sudan continues. The UN has characterised the conflict as the "world's largest hunger crisis". The conflict has severely affected civilians in Sudan. Since the outbreak of war in April 2023, fighting has been widespread throughout Sudan, much of Sudan's capital, Khartoum, now reportedly "lies in rubble" and other cities have been besieged or destroyed.

Reports about the number of deaths since the outbreak of war vary but the New York Times recently reported that the conflict has already killed 150,000.

More than 10 million people have been displaced, some have fled internally while others have fled to neighbouring countries; Chad, Egypt, South Sudan, Libya, Uganda and Ethiopia. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) says without a resolution to the crisis, hundreds of thousands more people will be compelled to flee.

The country is facing extreme shortages of food, water, medicine and fuel. More than 7.4 million Sudanese children do not have access to safe drinking water and nearly 2 million are in urgent need of lifesaving vaccines. More than 25.6 million people are facing acute food insecurity.

Nearly three-quarters of hospitals and health facilities are out of service. Diseases, including cholera, measles and malaria, are spreading at a time when two-thirds of the population lack access to health care.

The conflict has also deprived millions of Sudanese children of an education - 19 million children in Sudan are out of school.

Heartbreaking messages come from the people of Sudan "We are so exhausted. We need help. We want to feel there are still people in the world who care about us, the people of Sudan." In spite of overwhelming obstacles, people cling tenaciously to

their faith. The desire to serve God is strong though circumstances make it hard. Gabriel said, "Let us not let the mercy of Jesus Christ be destroyed because of the difficulties we are in. Let it not be destroyed in our life because of the selfishness."

The church under the faithful leadership of Archbishop Ezekial continues to thrive in Sudan, their faith is very strong. Below is a short extract from a video interview with Archbishop Ezekial recorded for Leeds diocese:

'I thank God for all of you. We are alive up to this time. There is no sign of getting peace soon... but we know that God is able to bring peace in His own time. It is a difficult time and families are scattered, even my own - we are in three different locations but we are ok - but there are some that even do not know where their families are living.

[On the food aid funded by churches in the Leeds Diocese]

'This food has made such difference, a great impact because without food many people would have died. And because of what you sent it really helped support us. Children are playing and learning because they have something in their stomachs. We thank God for you.

In the country people are dying because of war, of hunger and of sickness so we really want to thank you for your help and support that you continue to give.

Pray that peace comes and war stops. We think of the post-war situation, the church has lost everything. We want to reconstruct and we'd like Leeds to journey with us.

[how can Leeds help?]

Please pray that war stops and peace starts.

Please continue to support us with basic food.

We don't know when the war will stop, when peace will come, but we know it will. When it comes, we will need to reconstruct churches, schools, houses and equipment.

Thank you to all those who keep praying for Sudan, its people, and its church. And many thanks to all who continue to give to support relief work done by the Church in Sudan.

MARY BROOKS, LAY READER

The Burley-Tereli Friendship Trust

It is over 25 years since we first developed this link with Tereli in Mali and it remains as strong as ever. As a record of the wonderful people we have met and the projects which have been achieved through the link, Mirella Moxon, chair of the Trust, has written a lively account of this friendship and the amazing Dogon people and culture at the heart of its success. Books are available from us @ £10.

2024 saw the success of 3 major projects in Mali:

1. A soap-making project was planned in Tereli to provide employment. It seemed a very appropriate project and we sent financial instalments as they built premises for the production, and bought supplies and safety equipment.
2. An increasing number of vulnerable families in Tereli were without the means to buy essential medicines. We were able to fund these needs through the Kenepharma business run by Tenuous who comes from Tereli.
3. Joliba is a larger charity working in Mali. We supported 2 of their projects which were match funded (thus doubling the gift) One was for tree planting in an area needing rejuvenating, another was for vital well building in the Dogon area.

We know these initiatives take place in spite of increased insecurity in Mali. A recent attack saw the destruction of a village not too far from Tereli. The changes in the climate are also causing increasing hardship through rising temperatures and desertification. The work ethic and enthusiasm of the people never cease to amaze us.

Our funding comes from a variety of sources and we are so grateful to every donor. Our annual calendar and hand-made Christmas cards still raise well over £1,000 even though calendars are not as popular as they were. We are very grateful for the donation from St Mary's PCC mission giving and from other sources including Coffee and Cake. Trustee Chris Inglehearn bravely volunteered to run the Ilkley half marathon again. His efforts, and those of his friends raised another valuable sum through sponsorship. During the Burley Festival, the Ladies Please choir 'sang for Tereli'. We were delighted to have a full audience and a wonderful boost to our funds. The Pinsuti Chamber Choir concert at St Mary's also raised some funding for us. A generous donation was also received from the funeral of Bruce Speed.

Throughout the year BTFT raises awareness of the link and its achievements at Burley village events and through invitations to give talks. Do ask if you would like to know more.

Finally, our thanks go to everyone who regularly gives to BTFT as well as for every individual gift. These funds keep the link viable and even small sums go surprisingly

far in a country in such need. Thank you to everyone for your support and generosity.

JANET SQUIRE, MARY WOOD AND THE BTFT TRUSTEES

Katiyo School

This Year we have had built three new Classrooms for the Early Years Children. The Children will start to use these very shortly. Once again, the Bookmark Project was very successful raising £15,000 for the school. We have had a successful coffee morning at the Parish Centre raising Over £200 on the day with another £150 raised later. We will now have a raffle with the prizes donated by people who gave us unwanted Christmas Presents. We visited the school in July 2024 and we had a wonderful with the pupils putting on a concert for our behalf.

We have continued our fundraising for Katiyo Primary School in Zimbabwe, through selling biscuits at church, raffles, coffee mornings and our Bookmark Project bookmark auction which is held in May each year. The 3 nursery classrooms we are building at the school are almost finished and we were lucky enough to visit the school this summer to see them for ourselves as well as deliver textbooks, toys and a school laptop to the staff and students. We were warmly welcomed and it was lovely to catch up with everyone and see progress for ourselves. Our next goal is to buy a shipping container and have it converted into a school library as most of the children don't have any access to books at home.

To help with fundraising or make a donation email slhattersley@gmail.com

Thank you to everyone at St Mary's for their continued support.

ANNETTE AND SHARON HATTERSLEY AND EVERYONE AT 1ST BURLEY BROWNIES

Western Nepal Disability Trust (WNDD) Report

WNDD was registered as a UK charity in 2008, and we are grateful for our long association with St Mary's, which is significant in our ongoing support of different disability projects in Nepal. The involvement of the St Marys community is through prayer and moral support; donations via the PCC and coffee mornings, and from individual donors; and support of fundraising events -all contribute towards our continued donations to two partner projects in the last year.

Along with other donor organisations, we have contributed towards the final year of a Community Disability Outreach project which has provided practical support, treatment and equipment to disabled people and carers in very rural and isolated communities. Self-help and advocacy groups have been established, and people

enabled with vocational and employment opportunities, and disabled children attending school. Local government organisations and services have been trained to be more inclusive, which in turn improves the future opportunities for disabled people and their carers. We have now been asked to jointly fund a similar project which is starting in a different geographical location.

This year we have also 100% funded a third tailoring training to be completed and organised by the Light of Pokhara (LOP) organisation. This vocational training was given to 15 women who are disabled or who care for a family member with disabilities. We are just waiting for the latest update from LOP on how the women are using their skills since doing the training.

On behalf of the partner projects and communities, and our Trustees, we thank St Mary's PCC and congregation for your ongoing support and contributions towards our work.

JANE SCHOFIELD GURUNG, FOR WNDT TRUSTEES

Christian Aid

We are an ecumenical group and, at present, represent 3 of the 4 churches. We try to raise awareness of Christian Aid, though we feel limited in what we can achieve now. We have been sorry to lose Christine Clark from the committee this year and thank her for her active involvement in Christian Aid. She and Richard have now moved to Knaresborough and we wish them well as they settle in their new home near family.

Our year started with the planning of Lent Lunches. We offered two soup lunches and are very grateful to the volunteers who help make soup and contribute to the day. In 2024 we raised £350. Thank you so much.

In Christian Aid week during May we held our usual coffee morning at the Methodist Church. Gift envelopes were available in the churches and for anyone who wished to use them. We are aware that many people use cards for payment and we encourage people to give online and to Gift Aid where possible. The sums we record can never give a full picture of the generosity of our congregations. The total for the both fundraising events was £653.96.

Finally, there is an opportunity at St Mary's to give to Christian Aid at Christmas when greetings are sent from and to the congregation using the boards put up in church. £174.35 was sent to the Christian Aid appeal for refugees fleeing Sudan.

Thank you so much to everyone who supported Christian Aid in 2024. Your generosity helps to save lives. The charity supports partners in the poorest parts of

the world working to improve the quality of the lives of people in their locality. However small, every gift is valuable and valued. Thank you.

JANET SQUIRE, MARY WOOD AND THE CHRISTIAN AID COMMITTEE.

Burley Cares, St. Mary's bereavement care group.

Bereavement care now comes into the remit of the Pastoral Group. Sally and I have taken reduced roles in bereavement care for personal reasons, but we are still here to listen to/support anyone who asks for help. The Parish Office will refer anyone who rings and I know there is support within St Mary's. Please don't be afraid to speak to either of us. We also have Cruse booklets 'After the death of someone very close' which are available. Just ask.

In July we held our annual Memorial Service. All were welcomed including those who had experienced loss within the last 3 years. Almost 50 people attended. Phil and Mary offered a short, quiet service with a chance to light a candle and add a message to the Tree of Remembrance in memory of those who had died. Refreshments were offered afterwards.

In December Phil offered a similar service. We are aware that Christmas is such a difficult season for those going through grief. It was a lovely service and clearly met a need. The Tree of Remembrance was decorated with the names of 40 loved ones who would not be there to share Christmas with family and friends.

JANET AND SALLY.

Book Group

The book group has continued to meet every 6 to 8 weeks and it has been good to welcome new members this year. We have read a variety of books which have stimulated discussion and at times challenged our faith. We have recently been reading books from Alister McGrath's series 'Christian Belief for Everyone'.

MARGARET YOUNG

House Group

We have continued to meet fortnightly on a Thursday afternoon and it's been good to welcome new members. I note from last years' report we were studying John's Gospel. We are still studying it!

MARGARET YOUNG

Mothers' Union

There hasn't been so much change this year. As a group we have worked well in undertaking specific tasks and have supported each other at a personal level.

We have continued to pray for our linked branches overseas and their particular needs, and in this country have collected clothing and toiletries for the refuge. Jenny Kimber introduced us to the Bradford Dulas, who help single mums who need virtually everything for their newborn babies. We have sent to them as well.

Our fundraising this year has gone to the M.U. Summer of Hope Appeal later in the year when the government scheme to double up on charity giving comes into force. This year we have asked for our contribution to go to the M.U. Literacy schemes.

We welcome visitors to our meetings. You do not have to be a mother or even female to join in with what we do. It would be good to see you!

PAM SOWMAN

Cuppa, Cake & Company

This is a monthly social event for elderly people who may be lonely and who have little opportunity to leave their homes.

Volunteers

We have a pool of 3 regular volunteers (including myself), plus 2 who may be able to help in an emergency. We organise the event, prepare the room and serve tea and cakes. We make efforts to know everyone's name and to ensure there is a warm welcoming atmosphere. We engage the attendees in conversation and pay particular attention to those who may need extra support to socialise.

Attendance

Attendance throughout the year has again been good.

Reduced on last year. We have unfortunately lost quite a number of people who have passed away or who are now in a Care Home or no longer able to attend. Though we have continued to gain some new members throughout the year as well. We have around 27 people, though not all attend each time. Average attendance is around 18 – 22 people.

The Ilkley Community Transport bus (which is a charity) continues to be used to bring those people who otherwise could not attend, which is generally around 8 – 11 people. This is an excellent service.

Entertainment

We continue to invite a professional entertainer, usually a singer or a group to most events. The audience greatly enjoy this. We also try to find free sources of entertainment, in order to eke out the financial resources available.

Finances

The total costs for 2024 were £1,040.

This comprises, cakes, tea/coffee, transport and entertainment.

We managed to raise £816.00 during the year, via a Grant from Burley Parish Council and through a café event at the Parish Centre.

This leaves a balance of £1,297.46 to carry forward into 2025, which is just sufficient to get us through 2025.

We do need to look towards further ways to secure funds for continuation beyond December 2025.

The above funds sit within the general Parish Centre account.

PEARL JOLLY

Ladies Group

Ladies Group continued to meet during 2024, and we had quite a variety of speakers and entertainments, including 'Postcards from the Past' which brought back memories of childhood holidays, talks about clog-making and spinning, and a return visit from David Davies who spoke about the Big Freeze of 1947. In June we started the summer break with a meal at the Red Lion, and in December we had fun making edible 'Santa's Sleigh's guided by Kath Bennett. We meet on the first Thursday of the month from October to May, at 7.30pm at the Parish Centre. Visitors and new members are very welcome.

LINDA NELSON

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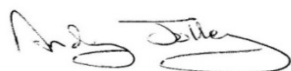
1 May 2024

Dear Val and John

Thank you for the welcome that you both gave me at St Mary's on Tuesday along with Phil, Jo and Dot. It was really helpful to talk with you all, to see the church again and get a better picture of your activities.

I agree with your assessment that St Mary's is now "ok to good" with mission and growth. The picture on financial health is "ok" but is complicated, with reserves currently being good while income is poor, but being addressed. This is the overall background against which to read my comments about ways in which some matters need to be tightened up. I would be grateful if you could let me have your responses and any necessary reassurances by the end of June on these points.

With my prayers and thanks once again for an encouraging time with you all.



Ven Dr Andy Jolley

cc Revd Phil Bishop
Revd Mike Coe (Area Dean)
Revd Mike Green (Asst Area Dean)
The Ven Bill Braviner (Archdeacon of Halifax)