

2023 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist Elmore

1) Aims and Purposes

The PCC's role and responsibilities can be summarised as follows.

St John the Baptist's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating, along with the Priest-in-Charge, the Rev Richard Martin, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, liturgical, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The PCC is the main decision maker of a parish. Its members are clergy, churchwardens and others elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. Its powers and duties are defined principally by the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. All PCCs are charities and every member of the PCC is also a charity trustee. The PCC must comply with the Charity Commission guidance and legislation in relation to charities.

The PCC is specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church and grounds. These responsibilities are executed by the churchwardens but all PCC members must share in the oversight. It is also responsible for the finances of the parish. The PCC has a voice in the forms of Service used by the church and may make representations to the bishop on matters that affect the welfare of the parish.

The Priest-in-Charge provides leadership concerning safeguarding, working with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, to encourage everyone to promote a safer church.

Our parish is one of three parishes within a United Benefice (the other parishes being St Nicholas Hardwicke and St Laurence Longney).

2) Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our Church and to become part of the worshipping community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions as to how our services can attract the many different people who live there. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities, we bear in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and the supplementary guidance on the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through

- worship and prayer, learning about the Christian faith, and developing their personal devotion and trust in Jesus
- provision of pastoral care for people in the parish.
- mission and outreach work in the community

We also try to help people live out their faith in their daily occupations. To facilitate this work we maintain the fabric of our Church and grounds.

3) Achievements and Performance. A normal pattern of Sunday services continued. 19 weddings, one blessing of marriage, 2 baptisms, 2 funerals and one memorial service have also taken place in Church, with one burial and 2 interments of ashes being conducted in the Churchyard. The weddings rely on a team of people: vergers, organists, bell-ringers and sometimes the choir. Thanks to them all and especially to Pat who organises the banns, Liz who deals with the admin

and money, and John who accounts for it. Our Benefice website and A Church Near You page are kept updated each week.

The Elmore Music Festival took place in August – please see separate report.

4)

- (a) Worship and prayer.** The fortnightly 9.30am Holy Communion service has continued, accompanied by the choir. On the 2nd Sunday BCP Evensong, and on the 4th Sunday Common Worship Evening Prayer has been said, with hymns. Whilst Easter and Christmas services are popular, average attendance, discounting choir members and wedding couples, remains in single figures.
- (b) The Church building and grounds.** The Church is listed Grade 1. The most recent architect's quinquennial inspection was carried out in 2021 and recommends some expensive and important short-term repairs – The PCC will prioritise the roof work. Work began on some aspects of this late in the year. The PCC engaged a cleaner to keep the Church neat, especially after weddings. Temporary permission is still in place to use an electronic organ (kindly loaned by Jed Hughes) until the PCC decides on a permanent replacement pipe organ. The Church grounds have been kept tidy and attractive by our team of volunteer mowers. A children's pew was removed and sold after faculty was obtained. A condition inspection was carried out on the 2 ancient chests, and a dendrology test performed on one of them.
- (c) Pastoral care.** Informal and regular contact was maintained with lonely, unwell and bereaved folk by visit, and phone calls. Janice Williams, the wife of our organist Colin Squire, died in April. Our sincere condolences to her family.
- (d) Mission and evangelism.** Our main forms of outreach are our fund-raising events, and making our church available for weddings. Our Harvest Supper and Christmas Lunch attracted a good number of village people and their friends. We contribute articles for "The Bridge" and post details of services on the Elmore village Facebook page. We held a very successful 'celebration of love' service on 12 February, which many of our 2023 wedding couples attended, and a coffee morning on 19 August which attracted many folk from the village. We informed the village about this and about our Christmas services using professionally-produced leaflets. A carol service was held for Elmore Brownies and Guides, their leaders and parents, and was very well attended. We also held a memorial service for bereaved families, on 5 November, and again the attendance was encouraging.
- (e) Co-operation within the Benefice.** The Ministry team met most months. Rev George Parfitt and our licensed Readers Pat Buckland, Judy Cheshire and Mike Williams, together with our licensed Leaders of Worship Neil Hollis and Doff Stone, took a full part in leading and preaching, in their various styles.
- (f) Co-operation with local Clergy and Churches.** Collaboration with the vicar of Quedgeley (Rev Mark Siddall) has been continued. He and Richard say Morning Prayer together twice a week, and offer chaplaincy at Severn Vale school fortnightly.
- (g) Deanery Synod**

The Deanery Synod met 4 times this year, with Area Dean Rev'd Jo Pestell and assistants Rev'd. Sarah Todd and Rev'd. Richard Martin. Lay Chair Mrs. Mary Gould and assistant Mr. Andy Wilson and new Deanery Secretary Justine Sullivan took over in July from Sheila Bennett who had served nearly 9 years as secretary.

The Deanery Strategic Plan is still a big topic with Rev'd. Richard Martin giving quarterly updates on our progress. Five chosen areas are:-

- 1) Deanery Finance and Buildings Project.
- 2) Youth Ministry.
- 3) Pioneering/ Mission/Outreach work.
- 4) Collaborative working.
- 5) Links between Cathedral and Deanery.

We had several Deanery Services around our area open for all to attend, and a choir to join if you wish. This year we have a Deanery Evensong at the Cathedral on 30th September 2024. Look out for further details.

The first part of Deanery meetings has an invited guest speaker, anyone from deanery parishes is invited to attend especially if they have an interest in the topic to be discussed.

February Meeting: Speaker Rev'd. Canon Dr. Sandra Millar, recently appointed Director of Mission and Ministry for the Diocese of Gloucester, spoke to us about using our baptisms, weddings and funerals as stepping stones to growing faith. At the business meeting doubts were expressed as to whether some parishes could continue to fulfil the financial commitments over the next five years, we looked at collaborative ways of funding ministry.

May Meeting: We celebrated Deanery Eucharist at St Oswalds, Coney Hill and Dean Andrew joined us from the Cathedral. There was a buffet Social afterwards.

July Meeting: Andy Wilson and Jo Pestell helped us explore the different ways we are being church across our deanery. In conclusion, we found a lot of pioneering, outreach and mission going on which is wonderful, and is engaging with people who will never step inside our buildings, we need to continue and build on this.

November Meeting: Jodie Calcutt from Stroud who spoke about the collaboration across the Stroud parishes on life events, hall hire and other administration areas. Using a shared database they use Church Suite (several Gloucester Deanery churches are using this database). This has helped all their churches in the Benefice to be more productive and efficient. Great ideas for more collaboration in our deanery. It was agreed to start up a cycle of prayer for the Deanery and have a Deanery Prayer. The cycle of Prayer will start in January 2024.

All Parishes in the Deanery made their financial commitment for 2023.

Justine Sullivan and Doff Stone, Deanery Synod Reps, Hardwicke, Elmore with Longney

(h) Ecumenical relationships None

(i) Safeguarding:

The Parochial Church Council has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on Safeguarding.

Members of the PCC have completed The Basic Awareness online training course. Foundation, Leadership and Safer Recruitment training has also been completed by the relevant members of the PCC and Clergy.

Not all members have completed the Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. I now feel this is URGENT and needs to be completed.

To enable this to happen and to support members that have not completed the training I have the opportunity to undertake training so as I am able to deliver 'face to face' training.

I will only undertake this training if members think this would enable them to complete the training.

This will be discussed further at a PCC Meeting.

No Disclosures were made during 2023.

I have not completed the Courses I hoped to do regarding my role a Parish Safeguarding Officer eg Mental Health Awareness but hope to do so in the near future.

Liz Bates

(j) General Data Protection Rules: The Church aims to be fully compliant.

5) Financial review

Treasurer's report on the annual accounts of Elmore Parochial Church Council Year ended 31 December 2023

Significant repair costs underlie what was an expensive year in terms of running costs, so it is good to be able to report that income held up well, not least from the couple of fundraising events held and for which we thank the continuing support of the community.

Overall, the very small surplus of income over expenditure reflects that income and costs balanced out pretty evenly. It is to be hoped that the same can be said of 2024 in due course.

John Tooth - Treasurer, Elmore PCC Weir Lane, Elmore 7 March 2024

6) Volunteers

We would like to thank all those who volunteer in any way to further the work of the church. In particular we would like to thank our retired Warden Pat Buckland, current Wardens Colin Stone and Liz Bates who is also our Safeguarding Officer and weddings administrator, our choir and its leader Hazel Morgan, all those who provide floral displays for festivals, those who act as Sidespeople, read lessons and lead our intercessions, Jill Hurran our Secretary, and John Tooth our Treasurer. Thanks to Michael Watts and Nick Stewart, our Fabric team, to Colin Stone our Health and Safety officer, and to Michael Watts and the Social Committee. We also thank Mary Hughes and Colin Squire our organists.

7) Structure, governance and management

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operates under the PCC Powers Measure 1956. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church representation rules. The PCC membership consists of 4 ex-officio members, and up to six others elected at the APCM by those members of the congregation who are on the Electoral Roll. All those who attend our services are encouraged to join the electoral roll and to stand for election to the PCC.

PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding how PCC funds are to be spent.

The PCC met 6 times during the year, with an average attendance of 90 %.

8) Administrative information

St John the Baptist Church and grounds are situated on Longney Road, GL2 3SP . It is part of the Benefice of Hardwicke and Elmore with Longney, in the Deanery of Gloucester City within the Archdeaconry of Gloucester in the Gloucester diocese, whose Bishop is the Rt Rev Rachel Trewick. The correspondence address is Church House, Cornfield Drive, Hardwicke, GL2 4QJ. The Benefice's website is [Benefice of Hardwicke and Elmore with Longney \(hardwicke-elmore-longney.church\)](http://hardwicke-elmore-longney.church)

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2023 until this report was approved are

Ex-Officio members:

Reader: Pat Buckland.

Churchwardens: Elizabeth Bates and (from 16 April) Colin Stone

Deanery Synod representative Doff Stone

Elected members

Steve Bodle

Jill Hurran (Secretary)

Nick Stewart

Colin Stone (to 16 April)

Jennifer Watts

Michael Watts

Co-opted John Tooth (Treasurer)

Approved by the PCC on 2024 and signed on their behalf by Rev Richard Martin (PCC Chairman)

Electoral Roll

As at 12 March 2024 there are now members of the Electoral Roll, 13 resident in the parish and 13 outside. (2023: 26, 13/13).

Pat Buckland, Electoral Roll Officer.

Benefice Readers' report

In their own idiosyncratic ways, or, as they like to put it, using their gifts to the full, your Readers played their part in the worship of the Benefice as well as being involved in worship at The Lawns and St Nicholas Court and in Open the Book at Longney and Hardwicke schools.

Pat Buckland, Judy Cheshire and Mike Williams

Longney & Elmore Church Choir report 2023

We sang for all Sunday services in 2023, with anthems for the main religious festivals and holy days including the first Sunday in Lent, Easter Sunday, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, Harvest Festivals and Remembrance Sunday.

This year the Good Friday service was at St Laurence, Longney and music included Ave Verum by Byrd and Jesu, Meine Freude by Bach.

We sang at three weddings at Elmore during the year and were also delighted to be invited to sing at Zoe and Lucas's wedding at Standish on a very hot day in June! It was a beautiful service and Zoe, Beth, Winnie and Floss all looked fabulous.

The Elmore Chamber Music Festival took place in August as usual, followed by a Festal Evensong on Sunday 6 August. The canticles were Sumsion in D and the anthem was Jubilate Deo by Sanders.

Over the summer months we were pleased to welcome Susan & Abi Cooke to the choir. Susan has now returned to her benefice following her sabbatical however Abi still joins us when she is home from university.

December was a busy month with carol singing outdoors at Saul Pound on 2 December followed by a service of 9 lessons and carols at The Lawns on 8 December. The second service of 9 lessons and carols took place at St John the Baptist, Elmore on 17 December. Music included O Magnum Mysterium by Morten Lauridsen and the Cradle Song by Bob Chilcott which included "Away in a Manager" sung beautifully by Winnie and Floss. Carol singing at The Ship this year was in aid of Gloucester City Mission and we raised £101.60. The services at Midnight Mass and on Christmas Day morning were both well attended.

Colin Squire's wife Janice sadly died this year, and the choir sang at her funeral in April. Colin and Mary continue as our organists, and we are very grateful for all their help and encouragement.

Thanks to Cathi and Rachel for welcoming the choir into their homes on Sunday mornings for choir practice. Further thanks to Cathi for her work as our treasurer and to Mike Farmer for the examination of the choir accounts.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the choir for their continuing support and unceasing enthusiasm and dedication, even when it is extremely cold!

Hazel Morgan January 2024

ELMORE MUSIC FESTIVAL report

Elmore Chamber Music Festival Thursday 3rd to Saturday 5th August 2023

The festival opened this year with the Elmore String Quartet playing a Beethoven string quartet, followed by a somewhat controversial piece by the contemporary composer Missy Massoli. We heard her Concerto for double bass and string quintet "Dark with Excessive Bright". This had a real 'marmite' effect on the audience! A fascinating work with an interesting story behind its

composition, it is well worth getting to know. After the interval the audience were treated to a thrilling performance of Schubert's Death and the Maiden Quartet, and as the saying goes, 'it brought the house down'(this work had been much requested by audience members over the last few years).

The following morning, the baby grand piano arrived from Bristol and was positioned on the stage. Soon after that came a concert performed by eleven local young pianists who were keen to display their keyboard skills and they were well encouraged by an extremely appreciative audience. At the conclusion of the concert, Victor Lim the International pianist, arrived from London to prepare for his evening recital. He was so impressed with the young pianists performances that he put his practise time aside to hear and work with a couple of the young pianists and offer some advice. That evening some of the younger pianists came to hear Victor give his recital.

That evening, Victor performed a Haydn sonata followed by Rachmaninoff's Second Sonata. After the interval the Elmore string quartet joined Victor for a performance of Franck's Piano Quintet in F minor.

On Saturday morning, Jed Hughes gave an organ recital at St. James the Great in Dursley (the temporary electric organ at St. John the Baptist being an unsuitable instrument on which to give a recital). Bearing in mind this was an organ recital on a particularly rainy, blustery morning, it was extremely well attended.

In the evening, returning to St. John the Baptist, Toby Hughes, on double bass, was accompanied by Nurry Lee on piano, in a performance of works by Bottesini and Brahms. Following the interval there was a performance of the rarely programmed work by Vaughan Williams, his Piano Quintet in C minor.

The next day, Festal Evensong took place in the afternoon and it was pleasing to see that some of the audience members had now decided to become part of the congregation.

ECMF 2023 again saw audience numbers rise. It has to be said that none of this would be possible without the continued support and encouragement of the PCC and local community who provide a wealth of hospitality and support to the musicians and technical staff.

The dates for this year's festival are Wednesday 7th to Saturday 10th August 2024.

ELMORE BELLRINGERS' REPORT

We continue to be busy ringing for the many weddings held at Elmore Court. It is a joy to be part of so many couples' happy day and see the Church full with their friends and family. We have been able to invite many local ringers to help ring the bells for these weddings and also have welcomed visiting ringers back to the Church.

The work on the bell frame has been completed by a very lovely volunteer, Stuart, who has spent many hours working on the frame, the wheels and also the bells. His work is now complete and we are incredibly grateful for all the work he has done. His report is attached here:

Elmore Bell Frame

Painted End Feb – early Nov 2023 by Stuart Tomlinson.

Total of 27 visits, each typically three hours working in the tower. Approx 90 hours all together.

The frame was in a poor state and needed a lot of preparation before it was ready for repainting – scraping off the old flaky paint and cleaning the surface.

Two coats of Deproma Rustproof paint applied. Green on the bell frame and red on the headstocks and clappers. Woodworm treatment was applied to the bell wheels (precautionary). A coat of black paint (water based) was applied to the actual bells – cosmetic, but it improves the look and makes the inscriptions easier to read.

Practice continues to be on the first Tuesday of the month, numbers permitting.

We heavily rely on visitors from the local area to make up our numbers. Without these regular visitors we could not ring at all. We are desperate to recruit new ringers. Please contact Claire McGoldrick to arrange a visit on a practice night, where we have very experienced ringers only too willing to help beginners learn the art of bellringing.

Claire McGoldrick Tower Captain

OPEN THE BOOK

We “performed” one every half-term in Hardwicke and Longney schools from January-July. Great fun, and well received by staff and students alike. Due to Marion’s accident we weren’t able to offer OTB in the autumn terms.

We’d love more team members! It’s just a chance to dress up and tell a Bible story in a child-friendly way.

Anita, Claire, Derek, Richard, Sarah

FUSION YOUTH GROUP - APCM REPORT 2023 Our Church Youth Group for 11 -18 year olds has closed

PRAYER SUPPORT GROUP / PRAYER-LINE

'prayer is as simple, and as vital as breathing'

Our church prayer line is a real opportunity, to hold those we know, and those we don't, in our prayers, alongside many others.

We can all reach out in our Christian faith and link with others in prayer, whoever we are, wherever we are.

Praying for others, however close, or far away they are, even the other side of the world, can truly feel very humbling. The power of prayer often beyond words.

When, sometimes/often, we feel so helpless in what we can do to support/reach out, we can always PRAY.

Prayer requests are followed through on either: email: marknsarah1980@gmail.com or text, 07757944137. We can reach more than several friends very quickly.

-with my own prayers. Sarah