

2023 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St Laurence Longney

1) Aims and Purposes

St Laurence's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating 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 also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church and grounds. Our parish is one of three parishes within a United Benefice (the other parishes being St Nicholas Hardwicke and St John the Baptist Elmore).

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. The normal pattern of Holy Communion on the second and fourth Sundays, accompanied by the choir continued. Our Benefice website and A Church Near You page are kept updated. The re-ordering project works began.

The fund-raising Advent Coffee Morning raised over £1800. Several grants were obtained to enable the re-ordering project to proceed. A new noticeboard was donated to the Church. Val Porter kindly produced a document containing research into the names on our war memorial.

(a) Worship and prayer. The fortnightly 9.30am Holy Communion service continued. Attendances, discounting the choir, are normally in single figures. A Harvest Festival service including a blessing of pets attracted a few extra families. Two funerals were held in church and there was one interment of ashes.

(b) The Church building and grounds. The Church is listed Grade 1. The project began to install a toilet, upgrade the kitchenette and replace the West end pews with movable chairs. Pews were removed and floorboards and supporting joists replaced, and toilet cubicle and upgraded kitchenette were installed. The sewage pipe runs under the south path, so that had to be dug up and re-laid. The most recent (2021) Quinquennial architect's report listed several items of repair as being urgent and work was carried out on the north-facing roof and gutters by Steve Voyce. A larger job on the roof remains to be undertaken, but currently we are prioritising using our reserves for completing the re-ordering scheme.

The grounds were well maintained, and the Parish council agreed to pay £500 towards the cost of this. In September, a working party of volunteers tidied many of the graves.

(c) Pastoral care Home Communion and visits are carried out as requested. Contact is also maintained by phone or email. Tim Longney, a much-respected member of the Church, died in January, and Janice Williams, the wife of our organist Colin Squire, died in April. Both funerals were held in Church. Our sincere condolences to their families.

(d) Mission and evangelism. We provide material for the quarterly village online newsletter and advertise events and services on the village Facebook page. We delivered professionally-produced leaflets to each house in the village, inviting them to the Christmas services. Other forms of outreach are our fund-raising event, and our involvement with Longney CE Primary school, where two congregation members are Foundation Governors and the vicar ex-officio Governor and member of FOLS. Fortnightly assemblies are taken by the vicar in school and the Open the Book team 'perform' once a term. In December the school Christingle service in Church had to be cancelled, but we held one for the community on 23 December which attracted over 50 people. The Easter Day eucharist, and Midnight Mass were also well-attended. Epney and Longney Parish Council met in the Church. The Remembrance Day attendance was boosted by the presence of Elmore Brownies and Guides, their leaders and parents.

We are praying that the newly re-ordered West end of the Church will be well used as a hub for various activities for the village.

(e) Co-operation within the Benefice. The Ministry team met monthly. 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 fulfilling the rota of leading and preaching, in their various styles.

(f) Co-operation with local Clergy and Churches Collaboration with the new vicar of Quedgeley (Rev Mark Siddall) has 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.

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 children and vulnerable adults. All 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. Most members of the PCC have completed the training on Domestic Abuse awareness. No disclosures were made during 2023.

Hazel Morgan Parish Safeguarding Officer

(j) Health and Safety inspections of our premises and grounds are carried out annually and Risk Assessments compiled for any special activity.

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

4) Financial review – report to follow

Detailed copies of the Accounts are available from the Treasurer, Mike Farmer.

Mike Farmer Hon Treasurer

5) 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 Wardens Tom Whittaker and Sue O'Reilly, Hazel Morgan our Safeguarding Officer and choir leader, all those who provide floral displays for festivals, Cathi Beloe and Cath Brint who clean the Church, those who act as Sidespeople, read lessons and lead our intercessions, and Mike Farmer our Treasurer, and Sue O'Reilly, our Electoral Roll officer. We also thank all the members of the choir, and Mary Hughes and Colin Squire our organists. Thanks too to Tim Batt who keeps our clock on time!

6) Structure, governance and management

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the PCC Powers Measure. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church representation rules. The PCC membership consists of 3 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 had 6 meetings during the year, with an average attendance of 80%.

PCC Secretary report on business conducted in 2023

This is a summary of the business conducted by Longney PCC at the six meetings that were held during the above-mentioned period.

Our meetings were held in the comfort of the homes of Church Warden, Tom Whittaker, and PCC Treasurer Mike Farmer, so our thanks go to them and their families for their generous hospitality.

- Re-Ordering Project – thanks to the sterling work done by Tom and Mike, an enormous amount was granted to us by Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust, which has enabled work to proceed. A sizeable grant for the conservation of our unique Tabletop Tombs has also been awarded us.
- Fundraising – various ideas have been discussed, also ways of publicising our events. As always, our Advent Draw and Coffee Morning was a great success, and it was good to see John Pockett again in addition to many new faces. Date for diaries: Saturday 30 Nov 24 from 1000-Noon.
- Special Services – Pet Service, Harvest Festival, Christingle were discussed, and dates agreed; additionally an opportunity for the children from Longney School to get involved with the backstories of those named on our War Memorial, a guide to which had been printed.

We continue to step out in faith along the road to bringing the good news of Our Lord to those in and around our Parish and pray that we will do so for many years to come.

Doff Stone, Hon Sec St Laurence PCC

7) Administrative information

St Laurence's Church and grounds are situated on Chatter Street, Longney , GL2 3SL . 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:

Churchwardens : Sue O'Reilly, Tom Whittaker
(Longney has no Deanery Synod rep at present)

Elected members

Cath Brint (to 23 April 2023)
Hazel Morgan
Claire McGoldrick
Colin Stone
Doff Stone
Geoff Smith
Imogen Smith (from 23 April 2023)

Co-opted member Mike Farmer (Treasurer)

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

Electoral Roll

There are now members of the Electoral Roll , resident in the parish and outside. These figures in 2022 were 34: 12/22. Sue O'Reilly, 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

Longney Ringers Report

We have again had a busy year ringing with plenty of practice thanks to the support of regular local ringers who have been able to bring on the skill levels of a number of ringers – myself included ! We have been fortunate this year to have had regular support from both our branch ringing master – Linda Gittings – and also the branch secretary – Joanna Morley. They have been invaluable this year in making up numbers so we are able to practice regularly. There is a very popular regular 8 bell practice with visiting ringers on the fourth Saturday in the month and more visits are planned in the coming year.

Our ringing practice nights continue to be the second, third and fourth Tuesday of each 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 extremely willing to help beginners learn the art of bellringing.

Claire McGoldrick Tower Captain

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

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

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

Longney CE Primary Academy

This has been a year of significant change at Longney school. Penny Howard retired as Headteacher in August. Also all members of the teaching staff left. We thank each one for their commitment and professionalism, as well as friendship, throughout their time at the school. The PCC presented Penny with a picture of the Church.

The Diocesan Trust decided to replace Penny with an Executive Head. The Governors took some persuading that this was a good move. Heather Francis was appointed, and is in charge of Whiteshill school as well as Longney. David Le Templier, her deputy, teaches at Longney but has time out of the classroom to act as Head when Heather is at Whiteshill.

They and the new teachers settled in remarkably quickly and, under DGAT’s guidance, have begun to implement changes, in readiness for an OFSTED visit, expected early in 2024. The governors are very pleased with how things have worked out.

Christmas plans were again disrupted, first when a bat roosted in the school hall, then when the sewage pump failed – the school had to close 3 days early. However, the nativity assemblies were able to be held, and were enjoyed by all.

Further information about the school’s policies, activities and results can be found on its website: [Longney Church of England Primary Academy - Home](#)

The Friends of Longney school (FOLS) raised funds through a series of well-planned events. The proceeds were used by the school for extras for the pupils that the increasingly tight budget cannot cover. Many thanks to them.

Rev Richard Martin (ex-officio Foundation Governor)