

## 2024 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 confirmation service (of ten adults, including 5 baptisms), 2 infant baptisms, 2 funerals and one memorial service have also taken place in Church, with two burials and 3 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday BCP Evensong, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> 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 condition inspection was carried out on the 2 ancient chests, and a dendrology test performed on one of them. The proposed conservation work was approved by the PCC and a Faculty obtained but a request for grant-funding has been turned down.
- (c) Pastoral care.** Informal and regular contact was maintained with lonely, unwell and bereaved folk by visit, and phone calls.
- (d) Mission and evangelism.** Our main forms of outreach are our fund-raising events, and making our church available for weddings. | We have a stall at Elmore Court Wedding Fairs to advertise the Church. Our Harvest Supper 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 'celebration of love' service on 11 February, which several wedding couples attended, and a coffee morning on 17 August which attracted folk from the village. We also held a memorial service for bereaved families, on 27 October, 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. Rev'd George began a 6 month sabbatical in September. He will return on 27 April 2025, the date of Richard's last Sunday services prior to retirement. We were delighted to welcome Rev Duncan Hutchison on a year's secondment from Hucclecote, as Assistant Priest in our Benefice. Mike Williams retired as a Reader on 31 December after 51 years' ministry here and in other parishes – we will greatly miss his wise and gentle encouragement and challenges.
- (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**

Our reps are Justine Sullivan (Hardwicke) and Doff Stone (Elmore) – we have a vacancies at Hardwicke and Longney. If you are interested in filling one of these you'll find the Synod a good place of co-operative spirit as we seek to work together more and more.

The Deanery Synod met 3 times this year, with Area Dean Rev'd Jo Pestell and assistants Rev'd. Sarah Todd and Rev'd. Richard Martin. The Lay Chair is Mary Gould, the Treasurer Jane Orr and the Deanery Secretary Justine Sullivan.

The first half of each meeting is given over to exploring a particular theme. The February meeting focussed on Stewardship and Giving, the July one on our links with the Cathedral, and in November we had an extended time of prayer for our city. The other half of each meeting is taken up with business.

The Deanery Strategic Plan is the focus for this part of our meetings. The 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.

Rev Richard Martin provides a quarterly update for all members, which is available also to PCC members.

Elections were held for our Deanery's clergy and lay representatives on Diocesan Synod. We have reports from this, and General Synod, at our meetings. Rev Jo Pestell is now the chair of the House of Clergy.

This year we had a Deanery Evensong at the Cathedral on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, followed by refreshments- this was a great success.

Rev Richard Martin 30 January 2025

### **(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.

Some Members of the PCC have completed The Basic Awareness online training course, there are some members who need to update this training. Foundation, Leadership and Safer Recruitment training has also been completed by the relevant members of the PCC and Clergy. Members of the PCC took part in the Domestic Abuse training which was held at Elmore Village Hall on the 22nd October 2024.

No Disclosures were made during 2024

During 2024 I became Safeguarding officer for the Benefice as no one else could be found to take up the role in Longney and Hardwicke. However, I do not think this is good practice and therefore as from the APCM I no longer wish to be Safeguarding Officer for the Benefice but I am happy to continue the role for Elmore

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 2024

I am pleased to be able to report 2024 as having been a successful year for the PCC's finances. That this was the case is mainly as a result of lower running costs, of which significantly lower repairs costs was the principal element.

Repair costs are but one part of the overall finances of the church but, nonetheless, the saving seen in 2024 will be enjoyed while it lasts. However, given the nature and age of the church building, there is nothing to suggest that a saving of this sort can be repeated in 2025, so the committee will be sure to maintain its value-for-money focus on the maintenance of the church fabric.

I feel that the church's finances are, in the medium term, stable and secure.

John Tooth - Treasurer, Elmore PCC Weir Lane, Elmore

## **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 Wardens Colin Stone (also our Health and Safety officer) and Liz Bates (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, 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 2024 until this report was approved are

**Ex-Officio members:**

Reader: Pat Buckland.

Churchwardens: Elizabeth Bates and Colin Stone

Deanery Synod representative Doff Stone

**Elected members**

Steve Bodle

Jill Hurran (Secretary)

Nick Stewart

Mick Taylor

Jennifer Watts

Michael Watts

**Co-opted** John Tooth (Treasurer)

Mary Hughes

Approved by the PCC on 4 March 2025 and signed on their behalf by Rev Richard Martin (PCC Chairman)

**Electoral Roll**

As at 12 March 2024 there were 28 members of the Electoral Roll, 16 resident in the parish and 12 outside.

For 2025 a new Roll has been prepared. There are now 30 members, of whom 16 live in the parish and 14 outside.

Pat Buckland, Electoral Roll Officer.

**Benefice Readers' report**

When a sermon starts 'What four letter word starts with a Q and ends with a Z?' you know who the preacher is. Which is the strength of Reader ministry. Each of us brings our own experiences to how we lead services and preach. We take great delight in supporting our clerical colleagues in providing what we hope are high quality spiritual experiences across the benefice.

Pat, Judy and Mike

**Longney & Elmore Church Choir report 2024**

Longney & Elmore Church Choir report 2024 The choir continued to sing for all Sunday services in 2024, with anthems for the main religious festivals and holy days including the first Sunday in Lent, Easter Sunday, Trinity Sunday and both Harvest Festivals.

This year the Good Friday service was at St John the Baptist, Elmore and music included O vos omnes by Victoria and Den Tod by Bach. We sang for a wedding at Elmore in February as well as a confirmation service in June. A highlight of the year was singing at Percy's baptism with prayers for the dedication and blessing of Emily and Elle in November. The service was taken by Emily's aunt, Susan Cooke and was full of joy and happiness. It was so lovely to hear Winnie and Floss sing the second verse of "Praise my soul, the King of heaven" so beautifully and with such confidence.

In June we held a memorial concert in memory of the founder of Longney and Elmore Church Choir, Sue Catcheside, who died suddenly in 2014. We invited back former members of the choir and members of Sue's family to remember Sue and celebrate the ongoing work of the choir. Zadoc the Priest was amazing!

The Elmore Chamber Music Festival took place in August as usual, followed by a Festal Evensong on Sunday 11 August. The canticles were Dyson in F and the anthem was Evening Hymn by Balfour Gardiner.

December is always busy but there were a few changes this year with carol singing at Saul Pound moved indoors and the service of 9 lessons and carols at The Lawns being cancelled due to an outbreak of flu at the care home. The service of 9 lessons and carols at St Laurence, Longney on 15 December was well attended with time to socialise during the refreshments afterwards. Music included Now may we singen by Cecilia McDowall and A Christmas Blessing by Philip Stopford. Carol singing at The Ship this year was in aid of Longfield Hospice, and we raised £128.00.

Thanks to Colin and Mary our talented and patient organists and to Cathi and Rachel for hosting Sunday morning choir practices in their homes. Further thanks to Cathi for being our treasurer and administering the choir accounts. Jed and Mary have spent a great deal of time and effort in researching and visiting potential organs for Elmore church this year. This is proving to be a challenging project. Finally, a big thank you to all the choristers who are not only dedicated and committed to the choir but also a lovely group of people.

The choir accounts will be presented at the meeting.

Hazel Morgan January 2025

### **ELMORE MUSIC FESTIVAL report**

2024 found the Elmore Chamber Music Festival starting a day earlier than in previous years. The first night of the festival was Wednesday 7th August opening with a concert given by double bassist Toby Hughes, pianist Victor Lim and violinist Rosa Hartley. The concert opened with a contemporary work composed by the festival's 'Composer in residence' Leo Geyer. This unusual composition called 'Water Boatman' was written for solo bass and loop pedal, so on stage we saw Toby, his bass, a pedal, a computer off to one side, and a huge speaker. The result was a very mesmerising and atmospheric piece of music. Following that, we returned to more familiar territory with a performance of Franck's Sonata. This year, ECMF was able to build a larger and stronger stage, meaning a larger piano could be used throughout the festival. No longer on a baby grand, Victor Lim was able to produce a rich, supportive sound whilst partnering Toby on the bass. After the interval, they were joined by Rosa for a work by Rachmaninoff and the concert concluded with the amazingly acrobatic Grand Duo by Bottesini.

On Thursday morning, Victor Lim gave a piano masterclass, working with three local young pianists. Then in the evening, at 6pm, a Pre-concert talk was presented by ECMF's Composer in Residence, Leo Geyer. He gave the audience an exclusive look into the creative process behind his two works being performed at the festival, 'Water Boatman' and 'Unfurling' for string quartet. At 7.30pm the evening concert began with a performance of Geyer's 'Unfurling', played by the Elmore Quartet. The quartet were then joined by two more violinists, a violist, cellist and double bass and pianist Filip

Michalak ,treating the audience to a performance of Mozart's Piano Concerto no.12 K414.After the interval, another absolute gem was performed, the Piano Quintet in F minor by Brahms.

Friday morning dawned and Leo Geyer returned to host a fascinating composition workshop. This offered the opportunity for composers, 'would be' composers, young and old to present their compositions to Mr Geyer. It was a well attended event and as interesting for the participants as it was for the audience. Mr Geyer listened to all the compositions presented, gave them real encouragement and urged them to expand their ideas and not be afraid to experiment. Following this workshop, the Young Artists Concert took place. Twelve young, local pianists performed to a full church, giving the youngsters a rare opportunity to perform in an informal atmosphere, at the same time also giving them the chance to play on a marvellous full size grand piano. For some of them, it was the first time they had ever been able to touch such an instrument as this, and then, for some, it was difficult for me to tear them away from the keys!

On Friday evening came the festival's 'experiment', a Jazz evening outside under the festival's marquee. The evening proved to be a huge success. The weather was perfect, maybe a little breezy, there was a large audience, and the Scottie Thompson Trio went 'down a storm'.

On Saturday morning, and back inside the church, a small electric organ was positioned on the stage, enabling the audience to see 'the organist in action'. Jed Hughes gave a recital including works by Bach, Elgar and Mendelssohn, finishing with the popular Toccata by Widor.

On Saturday evening, the final concert of the festival, the Elmore Quartet performed works by Weber and Mendelssohn and following the interval they were joined by Toby Cook on viola and Toby Hughes, double bass for a performance of Brahms String Quintet no.2.

ECMF 2024 was a busy, energetic festival, playing to a full church daily and seeing many more new faces.

However, it cannot be emphasised enough that this music festival would be unable to operate if it were not for the generosity, enthusiasm, support and encouragement from the local community and the PCC. The wealth of hospitality and general offers of assistance from everyone was quite overwhelming and touching.

The dates for this year's festival are Wednesday 6th to Saturday 9th August 2025.

### **ELMORE BELLRINGERS' REPORT**

Ringling this year has been primarily 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.

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. Great fun, and well received by staff and students alike.

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**