

2024 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St Nicholas Hardwicke

1) Aims and Purposes

St Nicholas'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 John the Baptist Elmore 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. 3 weddings, 14 baptisms, 4 funerals and 1 celebration of life services have taken place in Church. in the Churchyard there were 4 burials and 11 interments of ashes. Our Benefice website, Facebook and A Church Near You pages are kept weekly updated, and we post on the Spotted Hunts Grove social media page. A monthly letter is published in Hardwicke Matters, along with adverts for special events. We held a monthly coffee morning and a Summer Fair.

(a) Worship and prayer. The 11am Sunday service and 9.30am Wednesday Holy Communion services were held each week. We continued holding our 11am Second Sunday (then moved to the 3rd Sunday) Storyteller service in Hardwicke school, and to start with this resulted in more children and families attending, though the numbers fell away after the retirement of the school choir leader. In November the Remembrance service, and in December the Nativity and Crib service, were again remarkably well supported. We presented five adult candidates and one teenager for Confirmation at Elmore in May.

(b) The Church building and grounds. The Church is listed Grade 1. The most recent Quinquennial Architect's inspection took place in 2022 and the report highlighted areas of work to be tackled, most manageable with volunteer labour, but the enlargement of the rainwater goods will require specialist contractors. Our faculty application for the re-ordering of the Church was paused while we come up with a scheme that takes in the whole floor space. A PCC sub-committee formed to take this forward. We have appointed George Legg of Millar Howard Workshop to draw up initial plans.

The bells were rung regularly, including a full peal in November Remembrance Day.. An area of the Churchyard has been designated a wild space and is not being mown. Our thanks to Dale who keeps the rest of it in such excellent order. The graveyard has seen several new burials and interments of ashes.

- (c) **Pastoral care** Home Communion and visits, and the monthly service in St Nicholas's continued. On discovering that a team from St James' Quedgeley were visiting the Lawns each month we stopped our involvement there. Contact also has been maintained with people in pastoral need by phone. The Benefice prayer chain has been much in use, co-ordinated by Sarah Walters. The Tuesday craft group have supplied knitted and crocheted items for baptism and wedding families, and prayer shawls for the lonely sad or housebound, and in a new venture, crosses for bereaved families. Some practical assistance was given to needy local families known to Hardwicke school, through the Fare share scheme, and in the winter months we collected and distributed sleeping bags and duvets. Sportily ran HAF and other holiday clubs in Hardwicke school.
- (d) **Mission and evangelism.** We have maintained contact with local adults through monthly coffee mornings, some held in Church and others at Church house. Our Nativity service attracted over 100 people. Our second (then third) Sunday service each month was held in Hardwicke school. This attracted good numbers, especially at Harvest, which was a Parade service, and when the school choir joined us in number. Several members of the congregation are involved with Hardwicke Parochial Primary academy, as staff or governors, and Tim Fletcher runs after-school clubs and Holiday clubs there. Fortnightly assemblies have been held, and the Open the Book team visited once a term.

A monthly play and praise session in the Church, for pre-schoolers and their carers has proved encouragingly popular.

Assemblies were also held fortnightly in Hunts Grove school. Tim Fletcher, our Sportily "Faith and Sports" pioneer minister, took some of these, and he and Luke Gomez volunteered in the school. They ran after-school clubs and a teenage 'hang-out' there weekly in term time, as well as organising weekly basketball sessions on the community play area. A weekly Youth Alpha group met weekly from November, with 4 teenagers attending. On December 15 a Christingle and carol service was held in the school hall. It attracted 80 local people. We have been running termly community breakfasts there, with a steadily increasing number of folk coming along. We are praying for guidance as to how to develop our ministry on this ever-growing estate.

We decided to tithe our giving to Jane Edwards, a BMS worker in Mozambique. Sadly her work there will end in May 2025, after a BMS change of policy.

- (e) **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 fulfilling the rota of 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. United Benefice services were held on all 5th Sundays.

- f) **Co-operation with local Clergy and Churches.** Collaboration with the new 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.

4) **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 30th September 2024, followed by refreshments- this was a great success.

Rev Richard Martin 30 January 2025

- 5) **Ecumenical relationships** Relations have been maintained with Quedgeley Methodist Church. Our flower arrangers produced a thoughtful display for their Flower festival.
- 6) **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

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

8) Financial review: a verbal report will be given at the meeting.

9) 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 Neil Hollis and Richard Flower, Liz our Benefice Safeguarding Officer, Mark Walters our choir and music group leader, all those who provide floral displays for festivals, those who organise our community and fund-raising events, those who act as Sidespeople, read lessons and lead our intercessions, or lead our prayer ministry, Justine Sullivan our Secretary, and Sarah Walters who maintains our rotas and prayer lists. Also to Sandra Edwards who keeps the noticeboards up to date. Claire Trafford stood down as Electoral Roll officer and we welcome Will Groves to replace her. A special thank you once again to Wendy Hollis our Treasurer.

10) 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.

PCC Secretary's Report

The PCC met 6 times this year. Mainly at Church House except for March when we met in Church. Again, a lot of focus has been on re-ordering the church to make it both disabled friendly and useful meeting place for the community.

Every month the Tuesday Group organised a coffee morning every month, we had extended one in October for Festive items available for purchase. Several events were organised Ukelele Evening, Summer Fete, and Line Dancing, all raising money to varying extents. If anyone is interested in helping organise events, please let a member of the PCC know.

January: We started the year on discussing our Church Vision Statement concentrating on three areas Worship, Pastoral Care and Outreach and where we hoped to be in 5 years. We decided to move the 3rd Wednesday morning Service at Church to St Nicholas Court at 10.30am.

March: St Nicholas Church Vision Statement was adopted. The re-ordering report was adopted, and we agreed to find an architect we would approach 3 architects to progress to a Feasibility Study. We agreed to put a short survey together addressing the residents of Hardwicke through Hardwicke Parish Council, Hardwick Matters, and other local groups. We agreed to use online banking and to set up a second signature for this and will therefore be able to pay by BACS in the future.

May: We agreed on our new logo. After a short discussion we agreed to receive bread, and wine from the chalice, as before Covid-19 struck. From the survey there was a small response, with no huge opinions either way. Some had concerns that we would take away business from the Village Hall, we do not believe we would be able to compete with the Village Hall and that the two venues would be very different. We had 6 confirmation candidates from Hardwicke this year. Tim (Sportily Minister) on Huntsgrove ran a Summer Camp at TRAC for Hardwicke School, several of the congregation members went along to help with the evening meal, which was much appreciated, especially from the teachers!

July: We agreed after the donated bench was installed that going forward, we would only accept any future benches to replace broken ones. As Rev George will be turning 70years in September he will be taking a 6-month break before hopefully returning to minister. Tim (Sportily Minister) on Huntsgrove ran a Summer Camp at TRAC, again, several of the congregation members went along to help on the evening meal, which was much appreciated by the Sportily team.

September: We have agreed to adopt a blessing on single sex relationships in our church. The Church was opened for an extended coffee morning for Ride and Stride Day on the second Saturday in September, a few walkers and cyclist came in for refreshments and we had one walker from Hardwicke who visited 12 churches around the city.

November: We agreed to engage George Legg from Miller Architects to take us forward on the re-ordering of our church. We have paid our parish share in full for this year

Justine Sullivan , PCC Secretary

11) Administrative information

St Nicholas's Church and grounds are situated on Pound Lane, GL2 4RP. 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:

Churchwardens: Neil Hollis and Richard Flower
Deanery Synod representative Justine Sullivan
Licenced Reader: Judy Cheshire

Elected members

Andrew Plater (to April 2024)
Wendy Hollis (Treasurer)
Angela Peters (from April 2024)
Kate Roxborough (from April 2024)
Mark Walters
Jenny Bell
Nick Denman (to April 2024)
Linda Cook
Glenn Duff

Approved by the PCC on 10 March 2025 and signed on their behalf by Rev Richard Martin (PCC Chairman)

Electoral Roll

At the last APCM the church roll had its review and there were a total of 67 members on the church roll of whom 29 were non-residents.

For 2025 a new roll has been completed and there are now 50 members, 31 resident and 19 non-resident

Will Groves 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

Hardwicke Parochial Primary Academy Ex-Officio Foundation Governors' Report

No report received. For information about the school please visit [Hardwicke Parochial Academy - Home](#)

BELL-TOWER REPORT 2024

Hardwicke Tower Bellringing Report Date: 15 January 2025 Prepared By: Sue Beynon, Tower contact

Ringling the bells at Hardwicke has seen growing popularity over the past year, with both local and visiting bellringers participating in various events. Visiting bands have rung several quarter peals, and a special peal in November was dedicated to Caroline Gladstone on her retirement from ringing.

Our monthly practices, held on the first Monday of each month, have been well-attended, with up to 10 ringers participating. Since October, we have also been ringing for the Sunday service once a month, as well as for the Remembrance service and the Carol service. A key highlight of the year was the wedding of William Lloyd-Baker during the summer, which saw the bells ringing in celebration.

We hope that local residents and parishioners have enjoyed the sound of the bells at these special events. Thanks to the generosity of regular ringers and visiting bands, we have received £115 in donations to the Bell Fund. Some of this money has been used to purchase a new electric heater (£15) for the ringing chamber, ensuring a more comfortable environment for future ringing sessions

The Music Group (Worship Band) and Simply Singers

Music Group – As mentioned for a quite a number of years now, we could really do with a (rhythm) guitarist. If you, or someone you know, may be prepared to play once or twice a month, please have a word with me/them.

Simply Singers – Currently we are practicing only very occasionally – our repertoire is now fairly well established and it has been rather chilly in church of late! However, we may introduce some new songs during the year for which practices will be needed.

New members are always welcome, there is no ‘audition’ and no obligation to attend every service when the Simply Singers are singing, which is usually for the Simply Worship services. Even if you don’t wish to join the Simply Singers, you are more than welcome to practice with us.

School Choir - The school choir has now restarted under new leadership and (at the time of writing this in late January) we hope they will rejoin our services in school from February onwards.

As always, my sincere thanks to all in the Music Group and the Simply Singers for their support and contribution to our worship.

Mark

HUNTS GROVE

Hunts Grove is a very unique place to pioneer. The startling lack of community facilities and amenities have caused high numbers of residents of this new build community; (which has actually been present for 10 years and they are still only just over halfway through building it) to almost give up hope of being part of place that looks after the people who live there and cares about their needs. This unfortunate situation has however given an opportunity to pioneer some out of the box thinking and a chance to be a consistent presence in the community with some of the sessions that Sportily run.

It is sometimes hard to listen to the needs of a community who feel they don’t have a voice, but by spending time and by being present, we have managed to create weekly rhythms that include after school clubs, a youth hangout, a community detached sports session, a regular community breakfast café, Mother and Baby and all ability Pilates sessions, active prayer and reflection spaces, a social media group where a weekly update and ‘a question of the week’ is posed which people can chat and ponder over. Opportunities to explore faith outside the church walls in sessions such as Active church and a community carol service, (which was the first act of public worship on Hunts Grove) have been a real exciting chance to see God move in such an amazing way. The connection with the young people has led to some extraordinary conversations and even to some of the young people coming along to our 5-day summer residential which has enabled them to express that they want to explore a relationship further with God and how that may look. We have an ethos is all that we do, that we are loved, and we look after each other in the way that Christ looks after us. This has allowed for many a positive conversation with families and young people about how they to can care for the community they live in.

As I said at the start, Hunts Grove is very unique and is riddled with obstacles, but we will continue to listen to what God is saying, faithfully keep turning some soil and call it pioneering and keep an open heart for this community so that Gods light shine into it so brightly that all can see. More please Lord!”

Tim Fletcher

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

CHURCH ROTA

Again, as always, this is the time to say THANK YOU SO MUCH to ALL who remain on this rota and give their time and support to St Nicholas Church. My personal thanks again too, to everyone for their patience when changes have to be made, sometimes last minute !

I must also take this opportunity to welcome Paul, Emma and Molly who have joined us on the rota. Great to have you on the team.

If you would like to/could join us on the team, however small you feel your commitment could be - once a month or less is fine (!), please get in touch. We are more than happy to talk through anything first and support/help. email: marknsarah1980@gmail.com - or phone/text: 07757944137.

The main duties on the rota are:

Sides-person: a chance to welcome everyone as they come into our church - give out hymn books, service sheets etc.

Reader: usually the Epistle of the day.

Prayers: the preparation of, and, leading us in our time of prayer during the service.

Sacristan: preparing the altar, checking/lighting candles and other small duties alongside this, before and after the service.

- and ! - Coffees/teas to be served after the service - speaks for itself !

MANY thanks again - to EVERYONE. - with my own continued prayers. Sarah

PRAYER SUPPORT GROUP / PRAYER-LINE

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

Our church prayer line remains a real opportunity, alongside many friends, to hold those we know, and those we don't, in our prayers. We can reach more than several friends very quickly to enable us to link together in prayer, especially when urgent, immediate prayer is needed. We can all reach out in our Christian faith to pray, 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, and we should not/cannot under estimate the power of prayer – often beyond words.

When we feel so helpless in what we can do to support/reach out, never stop praying.

Prayer requests are followed through on either: email: marknsarah1980@gmail.com or text, 07757944137.

-with my own prayers. Sarah

‘Stop for a moment and begin to pray.

Just a few words, any time of the day.

God will always listen to what you have to say. 1 Thessalonians v17

Tuesday Group. 2024

We started the year praying for the church and for our work within it. The Prayer Shawl ministry is very dear to all our hearts and we feel God is calling us to this work. In our meetings we pray for the church and its congregation, along with others who ask for prayer every week as well as keeping up with the craft. The prayers are important in the Prayer Shawl Ministry.

We also felt as a group we could manage to run the coffee mornings once a month to help with church finances. We tried to put in a theme for each coffee morning, hoping to bring in more support from within the church and from the wider village. The hope of attracting more people has not come to fruition yet but we live in the hope that more will come.

To start us off for the year as a group, we attended a very nice afternoon tea at Dobbies in January and enjoyed being together and getting to know our two newer members.

Alongside the general knitting and crochet for shawls, hearts for weddings and baptism squares, it was decided that the group would make Easter baskets for sale at church to enhance the fundraising. This did very well.

All the group attended a lent lunch at Sandra's home in the week before Easter. And after the Easter celebrations at Church we had an afternoon tea at Highfields which was a real pick up.

We undertook a deep cleaning of the church cupboards once the warmer weather set in and found many lost/forgotten about items like palm crosses and other equipment as well as a mouse nest and other more unwanted items.

The church fete was the next endeavour and the weather was brilliant but, many more helpers were needed to make it really successful. The group had to admit without general support in the Church we couldn't hold daily events as many of the group is not physically well enough to do this anymore.

We carried on with all our knitting and included the squares in the porch as an aid to prayer, becoming a fixture and seems well received.

The group did benefit from attending two retreat days in the lovely summer days these were days organised by the benefice at Highnam and were much appreciated. The days enabled us to reset and sit in God's presence as we crafted.

The autumn started with a fish and chip lunch at Highfields where we planned the early Christmas event at our October coffee morning

We made Christmas decorations, scarves, gloves, table decorations and tree ornaments as well as collecting pre loved decs for sale. This event was well supported by the village although the charity shops also did well from the left over pre loved Christmas decs.

While we were crafting for the above event we also made the crosses for the All Saints Remembrance service and more poppies for the November Service

Anything newly made for the October event helped fill the church stall at the village hall in November. This was run by the art club and well worth a visit to see the talent in our local area, even if the rain made it a very difficult day weather wise

The group finished the year with a Christmas lunch at the Beacon in Haresfield. It was nice to welcome other members of our congregation to this and we had a lovely time. Thank you to Jenny for organising this.

We would welcome new members to the group on Tuesdays and welcome everyone to the coffee mornings and events.