

St Peter's Church, Grandborough



Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council for 2024

Priest-in-Charge

Rev Phil Price

BANK

CAF Bank
23 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4JQ

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr A Robinson
School Street
Churchover
CV23 0EG

St Peter's PCC has a duty to work with their Incumbent in the Parish in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, ecumenical, evangelistic and social.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL AND OFFICERS 2024

Ex Officio members

Priest-in-Charge

Rev Phil Price

Deanery Synod Representative

Alex Suffell

Elected members

Phil Blundred

Tom Crane

Dorothy Johnson

Dave Proctor

Alex Suffell

Charmaine Williams

Officers appointed by the PCC

Secretary

Tom Crane

Minute Secretary

Dorothy Johnson

Safeguarding Officer

Alex Suffell

Treasurer

Dave Proctor

Electoral Roll Officer

Charmaine Williams

The PCC met five times during 2024. In view of the small number of members there are no sub-committees

Electoral Roll - The present total is 16

Occasional Offices

During 2024 we held

1 Wedding:

Finn Brown & Mica Allen

3 Funerals:

Kay Worrall

Frank Clarke

Janet Clarke

1 Memorial:

Christopher Jones

1 Baptism:

Toby Grout

Church Attendance Figures

2023

2024

Easter

No service

No service

Christmas Carol Service

220

300

Christmas Day

No service

No service

Holy Communion (9.00 am)

12

13

Breakfast Service

14

12

Remembering Service

22

39

Remembrance Service

75

47

Harvest Festival

38

42

Good Friday (Messy Church)

10A + 9C

18A + 10C

Vicar's Introduction

2024 was another significant year in the life of our Benefice, marked by growth, development, and consolidation. It also marked the end of my third year as your Rector, a period I view as one of laying strong foundations for the future. Reflecting on the past year's key highlights and developments, I see them as the culmination of a three-year process of establishing essential structures and activities. These foundations will enable us to focus on sustainable growth and flourishing in the years to come.

This report is divided into three sections:

1. **Looking Up** – How we have fixed our gaze on God this year (primarily concerning Worship).
2. **Looking Out** – How we have reached those beyond our worshipping community (primarily concerning Outreach and Service).
3. **Looking In** – How we have grown as individuals and as a Benefice (primarily concerning Discipleship and Relationships).

1. Looking Up

Our worship life in 2024 continued to evolve, with the 'new worship pattern'—introduced in September 2022—now well-established. It is encouraging to see a growing number of people understanding and appreciating the vision behind it.

The Celtic Stream

One of the most exciting developments has been the emergence of the 9:00 AM non-Eucharistic services as the 'Celtic Stream.' Initially grouped under 'Early Risers' in 2022, these services have since developed their own distinct identity. The incorporation of liturgy from the Northumbria Community has provided a unifying thread, fostering a sense of cohesion and purpose. It is wonderful to see people engaging with this liturgy and traveling across the Benefice to take part in these services.

- The Long established breakfast service in Flecknoe continues to thrive, averaging 17 attendees per month.
- The newer Grandborough breakfast service has grown, averaging 13 attendees per month—up from 2023. Early figures for 2025 suggest further growth, potentially matching Flecknoe.
- The Bourton breakfast service, while smaller, has developed into a deeply valued gathering with a special sense of community among its regular attendees.

The Allsorts Stream

2024 saw the Allsorts Stream truly come into its own, averaging 24 attendees—making it our second most popular service after the Communion Stream (25 attendees on average). This growth can be attributed to:

1. **Special Services as Key Gatherings** – Using Allsorts for special services like Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival, and Christingle has significantly boosted attendance. Baptism inquiries have also been directed towards Allsorts, further increasing participation.
2. **Growing Interest in Informal Worship** – Regular Allsorts gatherings have seen increasing attendance as more people experience this contemporary, family-friendly worship style.

While the growth is encouraging, delivering informal worship which is suitable for all ages in churches where many attendees prefer traditional structures remains a challenge. We continue to seek a balance that honours both approaches.

The Communion Stream

In 2024, the Communion Stream remained our most popular stream, as it continues to reflect the worship style preferred by the majority of those who have been attending our churches for some time. However, while the Allsorts and Celtic Streams have shown growth, attendance at Communion services has remained static. Although it was the most popular stream in 2024, early figures for 2025 suggest this may not be the case in next year's annual report.

This trend highlights an important reality that we must consider in our planning and expectations. The Common Worship Communion service has been a source of spiritual nourishment since its introduction in 2000, and it continues to sustain those who are familiar with it. However, our attendance statistics and anecdotal evidence suggest that it is not a format that naturally attracts those who are new to Church.

For this reason, Communion will remain a vital part of our worship pattern, as it continues to meet the spiritual needs of many within our congregations. At the same time, as we look to the future, we must be intentional about investing in the other streams, where we are more likely to see the long-term growth necessary to ensure the viability of our parishes for future generations.

The BCP Stream

The picture for the BCP Stream is similar to that of the Communion Stream. Attendance remained steady at an average of 10 throughout 2024, and it is clear that there are people across the Benefice who deeply appreciate this form of worship. One of the blessings of being a Benefice is that it allows us to continue offering this style of worship through our different streams. Whilst there is a committed, albeit, small following the BCP will remain an important part of our Worship offering.

2. Looking Out

2024 was a strong year for outreach. I want to acknowledge the fantastic work of those running the Coffee Stop in Stretton, the Farmers' Market in Grandborough, and the Soup and Social in Willoughby—activities that continue to build vital connections with our wider community.

A key focus in 2024 was our work with children and young people, an area of significant change and development:

- **Building Church** – Launched in April at Leamington Hastings, this all-age gathering combines crafts or Lego, a Bible story, worship, and a shared meal. It has developed a core group of three families with an average of 20 attendees per month. A second Building Church launched in Stretton in January 2025.
- **Faith, Food, Fun, and Friendship** – This youth group replaced *Knightlow Reunited*, offering deeper relationships and a clearer mission.
- **St Nicholas' Children's Choir** – This cherished choir meets weekly for practice and sings in services throughout the year, significantly boosting attendance.

Schools Ministry

Our churches continue to support Leamington Hastings Academy and Knightlow Primary School in a variety of ways:

- We regularly lead **collective worship**, sharing Bible stories, Christian teaching, and opportunities for reflection.
- We provide **foundation governors** to both schools, ensuring a strong link between church and school life.
- We contribute to **RE lessons**, whether by baptising a doll, conducting a pretend wedding, or helping children explore Christian traditions in a hands-on way.
- We welcome pupils and staff into our **church buildings for special services**, such as Harvest, offering them a space to celebrate and reflect as a school community.

3. Looking In

In 2024, we continued to offer new opportunities for people to grow in faith and strengthened our Benefice's sense of community. Our average Sunday attendance across all services in 2024 was 74—an increase of approximately 10 from 2023. This growth reflects both new members joining and greater willingness among existing congregants to visit other churches when their home parish is not holding a service. This signals not only numerical growth but also spiritual deepening.

Key discipleship initiatives included:

- **Bible Book Club** – Thriving with participants from all eight parishes, fostering friendships and deeper Scripture engagement.
- **New Home Groups** – A Wednesday evening group in Thurlaston (drawing people from four parishes) and a Monday morning fellowship group in Stretton, both strengthening community ties.
- **The Romans Course** – Held across Sunday services in September and October, with midweek discussion groups in person and via Zoom, allowing wider participation.

Closing Thoughts

As we look back on 2024 there is much to be excited and pleased about. I haven't even touched on a lot of really special moments and achievements, such as our really successful Advent and Christmas Season.

Looking ahead into 2025, my hope is that we have laid the groundwork for steady and sustainable growth. While adjustments may be needed in certain areas, our ministry and mission offering now has a clear and effective shape. There is still important work to be done in reviewing and refining our governance and leadership structures to ensure they are both sustainable and fit for purpose in the long term. However, as we begin this new year, we find ourselves in a strong position—one where we have a clear sense of identity and direction for ministry and mission across Draycote and the Leam Valley.

We have achieved so much over the past 12 months, and as I conclude, I want to acknowledge that none of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of so many individuals. While the following list is by no means exhaustive, it highlights some key groups who have been vital to our ministry this past year:

- Our ministry team: Barbara Clutton, Karen Hatch, and Karen Armbrister
- All our PCC members
- Everyone who has given their time to our work with children and young people (both through our schools ministry and through the activities we run ourselves)
- The teams behind the Stretton Coffee Stop, the Willoughby Soup and Social, and the Grandborough Farmers' Market

- All those who uphold our Benefice in prayer
- Everyone who serves on our rotas across the Benefice, ensuring that our churches and services continue to run smoothly

Each of these individuals—and many more—have played a crucial role in keeping our parishes flourishing in 2024. Yet, ultimately, we recognise that the true foundation of all our work is the God who made us.

It is only fitting to give Him the final word, as He reminds us in Scripture:

"Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." — Galatians 6:9.

Rev. Phil Price, Rector

Chair's Introduction

2024 was another successful year for St Peter's. The worship pattern is now well established and forms part of the broader pattern across the Leam Valley Benefice. The church held a number of special services, which were well supported. Other regular events, in particular the Farmers Market, continued to thrive.

A key focus of activity was approaching different grant funders to help pay for different projects around the church. Grant funding was provided to enable the installation of new cupboards, noticeboard and displayboard. Further grants were obtained for the more significant projects to restore the church clock and Reredos. In 2025 the PCC launched an appeal for funds from the local community to complete the fundraising process.

In closing my thanks to everyone who helps make St Peter's a beacon of God's word in Grandborough - the Leam Valley Ministry Team, the members of the PCC who contribute in so many different ways to help the church minister to the people of this parish.

2024 Fabric Report

The following works were completed in the church through the year:

- (i) **South Aisle Ceiling**- Peter Johnson and Phill Davis kindly repainted the inside ceiling. The PCC is grateful for their help with this project.
- (ii) **Cupboards**- New cupboards were installed in the church tower, providing useful storage space.
- (iii) **Noticeboard**- a new noticeboard on the path to the church was installed which enables display of notices about events taking place in the church.
- (iv) **Displayboard**- a new board was installed with details of the church next to the war memorial.
- (v) **Banners** -During the year we had banners which advertise our services made for displaying outside the church in the week before the services. These are more visible to the previous signs that we had and the benefit of these has already been seen with higher attendances at some of our services.

Two key projects were progressed through the year.

First, the required repairs to the church clock, for which a faculty was granted in 2024. There was sustained efforts in terms of seeking grant funding. Disappointingly, the National Lottery Heritage Fund did not wish to support this project, but other funders were willing to provide support. It is envisaged these works will be undertaken in 2025.

Second, the PCC received a report from a professional Conservator, Thomas Organ from Arte Conservation Ltd concerning restoration of the Reredos. His report confirmed the steps that could be taken to restore this important feature of the church. Funding has been very successful on this project, including a major contribution from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is envisaged these works will be undertaken in 2025.

Looking further into the future a specialist architect who has overseen reordering projects in other churches came to St Peter's and explained the potential for the church building to undergo such a process. The PCC will hopefully return to this topic when the clock and reredos projects are completed.

A further, and more immediate priority, are repairs to the north and south aisle roofs, following a leak during a storm in December 2024 on the north side. It is hoped work will take place on this in 2025.

Churchyard

We are very grateful to Peter Johnson and Phil Davis for the work they do in keeping our Churchyard neat and tidy, cutting the grass at least every two weeks. They try to have two tidy-ups in the year, Spring and Autumn, when people from the village are invited to volunteer and come along with hedge cutters, wheelbarrows and a selection of gardening tools in an endeavour to cut back hedges, etc. We are very appreciative of all the voluntary help we get.

Tom Crane

Church Rotas – Readings/Sidesperson/Cleaning/Flowers

We are very fortunate to have an excellent team of volunteers to help with church cleaning and arrange flowers for Easter, Harvest and Christmas. The rotas are prepared every six months and are reviewed at our bi-monthly PCC Meetings.

Christian Aid Coffee Morning

We were delighted with the results from the Christian Aid Coffee Morning when we raised the sum of £205. Added to this, donations of £263.75 were made by e-envelope, making a total of **£463.75p** for this very worthy cause.

Farmers Market is still very popular. Our stallholders enjoy coming, although we have lost one or two. Finding new stallholders isn't easy as they already have other markets they go to, or they don't have the staff. The Café is thriving and usually very busy. In the summer months we put tables outside for our customers to enjoy their chat and refreshments in the sunshine. The total received during 2024 amounted to the sum of **£2,533**.

Web Page/Facebook

Our website, www.stpetersgrandborough.co.uk is updated regularly. **Facebook** is used to advertise our Church services, Farmers' Market, or any other events.

Easyfundraising - We raised £220 through Easyfundraising in 2024, which is down from 2023.

We are very grateful to all the volunteers who help with any of the above duties, and also to those who support us with their donations. On your behalf we would like to thank them all. We couldn't do it without them.

Dorothy Johnson

Safeguarding report

Another good year; no safeguarding disclosures to date.

Please contact Alex Suffell for any support; alternatively Rev Phil Price.

Alex Suffell

Synod

The Deanery Synod was hosted in a variety of rural and town Churches including a meeting in St Peter's, Grandborough, attended by Bishop Ruth – greatly appreciated by the Synod, with many positive comments regarding the Church building especially the walk up with the view into the Church through the big doors.

Each Synod begins with worship in a wide variety of styles and includes an update on the Parish and/or the Benefice in which the meeting is hosted.

In July the keynote speech from Bishop Ruth focused on the value of Children and their voices in our Churches. Nominations for Synod members took place. No Deanery Synod secretary was found. New Deacons and Priests were welcomed into the Deanery.

In November the keynote speech discussed the role of Church schools, and some of the initiatives that are taking place across the Diocese. The Deanery position was discussed and Parish share – as proposed by the Diocese – was agreed. There was a presentation on the Creation Care initiative and a reminder of the Diocese Energy Footprint Tool.

In March the keynote speech looked at Parish structures and guidance, with a focus on PCC structure and purpose. Planned Eco Church and year 6 Worshipping Community meetings were discussed. Positive news regarding Church attendance in the Deanery was shared, especially a 27% increase in children's attendance.

Deanery Synod continues to be a friendly and informative meeting with plenty of knowledge sharing, but with generally low attendance.

Alex Suffell

Electoral Roll Report

In 2025 we were required to prepare a new Electoral Roll. This is a diocesan requirement which has to be repeated every six years and means that all names were removed from the roll and anyone who considers our parish to be their 'home church' has been asked to join the roll as if for the first time. Following this process our Electoral Roll stands at 16.

Charmaine Williams

Finance Report

The accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024 which have been independently reviewed, are attached. These show that we have made a net operating surplus of £14,951 in the year to 31 December 2024. The main constituent elements that contributed to this were:

- the increase in collections at services;
- the grants we have received towards restoration work to the altar and clock; and a legacy.

We applied for a refund of VAT from the Listed Places of Worship for maintenance works totaling £533. This was paid in January 2025.

Following the expiry in 2023 of our three year policy with Ecclesiastical Insurance for insuring the church, we took out a policy for a year to enable us to evaluate options. Following this review, we insured the church with Trinitas Insurance at a premium that was considerably cheaper than the previous year.

We have paid all of our Parish Share in 2024. For 2025 our share remains at £9,300. This, along with the insurance, contribution to the benefice expenses and our energy costs are not covered by our income from collections, covenanted giving, fees for weddings and funerals and any gifts and donations we receive. We effectively rely on grants that we apply for, gift aid and the refund of VAT to undertake any major maintenance to the fabric of the church.

We had a fixed price contract with SSE for our electricity until December 2024. During 2024 we entered into a two fixed price contract with British Gas at rates that were considerably higher than the previous contract, which was let before the spike in energy costs. However, we received compensation from Pozitive Energy of £200 following a complaint raised with them which has reduced our utilities charges for the year.

We contribute £80 a month to the Draycote benefice. The account is used to pay Phil's expenses, and items which are common to all churches in the benefice such as the website, Zoom licences, printing and materials for bible study/lent services/advent services.

Bank charges and interest rates – following the increase in interest rates we are now receiving interest on our bank balance and the monthly fee is now £5. The interest rate on our account with the Coventry Building Society has also increased.

Following the introduction of digital giving, first through QR codes and then through our card machine which was provided by the Diocese, this has resulted in an increase in our bank charges, which is mitigated slightly by the increased amounts that we collect this way.

We paid Parochial fees to the Diocese totalling £1,664 for 2023 and 2024 during the year. Gift Aid – we claimed Gift Aid on our covenanted giving, collections and gifts and donations in April and received £6,662. This includes a double payment by the HMRC which will be offset against our 2024 claim which was submitted in April 2025.

Dave Proctor