

# Parish of St Michael & All Angels, Beetham



Agenda and Reports  
for the Annual Parochial Meeting 2024

## **The Annual Vestry Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meetings**

To be held on Sunday 14 April 2024  
in the Parish Church at 12.15 pm

## Church Committees at April 2024

Priest in Charge		The Revd. Andrew B. Norman
Curate		The Revd. Hannah Wallace
Church Wardens		Dianne Lomax Brian Smalley Jenny Marks
Parochial Church Council	Chair:	The Revd. Andrew B. Norman
	Vice Chair:	Brian Smalley, Ex-officio Churchwarden
	Secretary:	Elizabeth Rocke
	Treasurer:	John Lomax
	Ex-officio Churchwarden	Dianne Lomax
	Ex-officio Churchwarden	Jenny Marks Jenny Andrews. Darrell Lancaster Sheila MacInnes Dorothy MacLeod Ann Robinson, Co-opted during 2023 Tess Rowlands
	Deanery Synod Rep:	The Revd. Hannah Wallace Vivien Stirrup
Standing Committee		The Revd. Andrew B. Norman Dianne Lomax John Lomax Jenny Marks Elizabeth Rocke Brian Smalley Vivien Stirrup The Revd. Hannah Wallace
Finance Committee		Vivien Stirrup Tess Rowlands Darrell Lancaster John Lomax
Friends of Beetham Church	Chair:	John Lomax
	Administrator:	Brian Smalley Deborah Lancaster Dianne Lomax Jenny Marks Tess Rowlands Sue Smalley Vivien Stirrup Dennis Wright
Fabric Committee	Chair:	Jenny Marks
	Secretary:	Harry Parrott Darrell Lancaster John Lomax Brian Smalley Ian Stirrup Dennis Wright
Foundation Governors for Beetham School		John Lomax (Chair of Governors) Chris Christou Katharine Parrott-Edwards Brian Smalley Vivien Stirrup Dennis Wright
	Ex-Officio	The Revd. Andrew B Norman

**Parish of St Michael & All Angels, Beetham**

Agendas for Annual Parochial Meetings 2024

**The Annual Vestry Meeting  
and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Sunday 14 April 2024 at 12.15 pm

Welcome and introduction

Opening Prayers

Apologies for absence

**Agenda: Annual Vestry Meeting**

*Please note that only those on the Church Electoral Roll or those resident in Beetham Parish and on the Civil Electoral Roll are entitled to vote.*

1. Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held on 23 April 2023
2. Election of Churchwardens

**Agenda: Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

*Please note that only those on the Church Electoral Roll are entitled to vote.*

1. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 23 April 2023
    - a) Approval
    - b) Matters arising
  2. Electoral Roll
  3. Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council 2023
  4. Finance Report for year ending 31st December 2023
    - 4.1 Gift Aid report
  5. Fabric Committee and Health & Safety Report
  6. Kendal Deanery Synod Report
  7. Kent Estuary Mission Community
  8. Safeguarding
  9. Reports from Church Groups
    - a) Social Events
    - b) Bell Ringers
    - c) Website, Gateway and Community report
    - d) Church Flowers
    - e) Choir and Music
  10. Churchwardens' Report
  11. Priest's Report
  12. Elections and Appointments
    - a) Parochial Church Council Members
    - b) Independent Examiner
  13. Comments from the meeting for consideration by the PCC
- Closing Prayers

# Annual Vestry Meeting 2024

**Agenda Item 1: Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held in the church on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 at 12.25 (minutes of the meeting are below in italics)**

*Present: Rev'd. A.B. Norman(AN) – Chair, Dianne Lomax (DL) - Churchwarden, Brian Smalley (BS) – Churchwarden, Elizabeth Rocke (ER)- PCC Secretary, and 27 members of the congregation.*

*Apologies had been received from: Katriona Field, Mike Houghton, Pam Houghton, Chris Roberts (CR)*

## Annual Vestry Meeting 23 April 2023

1. *Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held on 08 May 2022 were approved  
Prop. Sue Smalley (SS), sec. Dorothy MacLeod (DM), agreed unanimously.*

2. *Election of Churchwardens: AN thanked the Churchwardens DL and BS for all their dedicated and hard work in ensuring that the many aspects of the church's life had functioned and flourished over the previous 12 months. Three nominations were received for the three posts of Churchwarden. The nominations were as follows:*

*Dianne Lomax – Prop. Helena M. Nixon, sec. Dennis Wright*

*Jenny Marks – Prop. BS, sec. John Lomax (JL)*

*Brian Smalley – Prop. J.S. Marks, sec. Vivien Stirrup (VS)*

*There being no other nominations these three were elected unanimously.*

*AN advised the meeting that DL and BS had stated that the forthcoming 12 months will be their last period of service as Churchwardens and therefore will not be seeking election to this office at the 2024 APCM. AN also advised that JM had been a Churchwarden previously and the Church cannot guarantee to rely on the same people going forward. AN urged the congregation to consider how such roles would be occupied in the future going forwards from the 2024 APCM and reflect on whether they should put themselves forward for the role of Churchwarden.*

End of Annual Vestry Meeting at 12.32pm

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting

*Please note that only those on the Church Electoral Roll are entitled to vote*

### AGENDA ITEM 1a – MINUTES OF APCM 2023 FOR APPROVAL

***(N.B. The following minutes should be read in conjunction with the 2023 printed reports)***

1. a. *The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were approved  
Prop. BS, sec. DL, agreed unanimously*
- b. *There were no matters arising from the minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022.*
2. *AN referred to the individual written reports in the composite APCM report which were all accepted as read. He expressed his profound gratitude for the reports which demonstrate the multitude of ways in which the church and its community is supported through individual and collective efforts, time, resources and talents.*

### **3. AGENDA ITEM 11: Priest's report**

*AN gave his Priest's report orally to the meeting.*

*He first thanked all who had served God in the Parish Church of St Michaels and All Angels, Beetham and its*

community. He gave his personal thanks for the support, prayers, encouragement and ways, both seen and unseen, in which the congregation has blessed the life of the church. He gave collective thanks that the church was a place of light, worship, peace and prayer.

Secondly, he apologised for any way in which he had failed the church and its congregation, humbly suggesting there may be many failings, there may be none.

Thirdly, referring to the encounter of Cleopas and his companion with Jesus on the road to Emmaus from that morning's Gospel reading, AN hoped that we will receive encouragement from God for the year ahead for all that God wants us to do, just as these disciples had done from meeting Jesus following his resurrection.

BS expressed the view of all that AN had nothing to reproach himself over, over the past 12 months. AN's leadership and pastoral care was an exemplary demonstration of what a parish priest should be and that he had the full support of his congregation.

## **12. Elections and Appointments:**

**a) Parochial Church Council Members:** Five places on the PCC have become vacant and four nominations were received:

*Dorothy MacLeod– Prop. ER, Sec. Tess Rowlands (TR) (re-election after 3 years in office)*

*John Lomax– Prop. ER, Sec. DM (re-election after 3 years in office)*

*Tess Rowlands- Prop. DM, Sec. DL (re-election after 3 years in office)*

*Elizabeth Rocke – Prop. DM, Sec. TR (re-election after 2 years in office)*

*There being no other candidates all four nominations were unanimously approved.*

**b) Deanery Synod:** *There were two vacancies. One nomination was received:*

*Vivien Stirrup- Prop. BS, Sec. Jenny Andrews*

## **c) Appointment of the Independent Examiner**

*David Carey had expressed his willingness to continue as Independent Examiner of the Church's accounts.*

*Proposed by JL and seconded by BL that David Carey be appointed as Independent Examiner.*

*Unanimously agreed.*

## **d) Appointment of the Quinquennial Architect**

*An inspection of the church's building takes place every five years and Mike Darwell who has been previously appointed as the Church's architect in respect of the re-ordering and other previous works is the preferred architect to undertake the inspection. It was unanimously agreed that Mike Darwell be appointed to undertake the quinquennial inspection.*

## **13. Comments from the meeting for consideration by the PCC:**

*Sue Smalley commented that services rarely began at 11am and that on Easter Day 84 people had been kept waiting for AN and the Rev'd Hannah Wallace (HW) to arrive for nearly 10 minutes. She also pointed out that services are becoming longer. She was aware that it was difficult for AN and HW to depart St James's Arnside to give them sufficient time for both to travel to Beetham to arrive for the start of the service at 11am. She recognized St James's parishioners would wish to talk with AN and HW after their service. She suggested that the Beetham service could start at 11am with the first hymn, led by VS or CR and then AN and HW could join the service when they arrived.*

*AN thanked SS for her comments understanding her concern, pointing out the difficulties in ensuring that all Sunday services in both parishes are attended to, which is a situation which is unlikely to continue indefinitely,*

*especially as we consider and plan for a changing understanding of ministry within the wider context of our belonging to the Kent Estuary Mission Community. This also comes with a need to recognise the privileged position that the parish (together with Arnside) find themselves in compared to the majority of parishes in the Diocese. AN also articulated that although the presence of HW was an immense gift through her ministry as an Assistant Curate in training, the reality was that the service pattern needed to be aligned so that it could be served by the Priest-in-Charge. AN explained that he did not delay in any way his leaving of St James unnecessarily, recognising that more often than not there is no time for any conversation after the conclusion of the service. It was also noted that, despite this, it was not as simple as rushing out the door and, quite significantly, that it was impossible to take account of the traffic week-to-week.*

*Above all, AN commended the need for grace and charity in discussing and reflecting on all these issues and cultivating an awareness of the perspectives of others.*

*It was agreed that this issue and discussion be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting of the PCC.*

*David Mc Innes asked that brass cleaners be identified to take over from Sheila and himself who it is recognised by the meeting have kept the brasses immaculately polished for many years.*

*There being no further comments the meeting was closed with a prayer and the Grace at 12.58pm.*

**AGENDA ITEM 1b: Matters arising from the minutes of the APCM held on 23 April 2023.**

**AGENDA ITEM 2: Electoral Roll 2024**

<b>Electoral Roll:</b>	At March 2024 77 names have been recorded on the Electoral Roll for the forthcoming year
<b>Lesson Readers:</b>	Morning Service – 26 Evensong - 8
<b>Intercessors:</b>	8
<b>Sidespersons:</b>	26

Thanks go to all who volunteer to be on one or more of the rotas. Additional volunteers are always welcome throughout the year. In 2025 the Electoral Roll will be scheduled for the full six year revision and all members will need to reapply to go on the Electoral Roll. (Note: if you wish to apply to be on the Church Electoral Roll during the year, please download the application form from the 'Links' page on the website and return to the Churchwardens)

*Jenny Marks, Electoral Roll Officer*

**AGENDA ITEM 3: Report on the Proceedings of the PCC 2023**

This report mirrors the content of last year's report in that all details of the proceedings of the PCC are contained in the Minutes which are available from me. Meetings of the PCC have taken place on a regular pattern of every other month on the third Thursday. They are held in the school. Standing Committee meetings have taken place in the intervening month when considered necessary. Standing Committee meetings are notified to all PCC members as they are open to them to attend. If any person wants further information as to the proceedings of the PCC they can contact me and I will provide a copy of the minutes to them.

*Elizabeth Rocke, PCC Secretary*

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4: Finance Report for the year ending 31 December 2023**

This report refers to a very busy year for St Michael ad All Angels PCC on the financial front! In the previous year I was able to report on revenues recovering from the years of the Pandemic and lockdowns: I am pleased to be able to report that this trend continued into 2023, thanks to the generosity of our membership.

At the May 2023 meeting of the PCC, my report focused upon Gift Aid tax relief (thanks to our diligent G.A. Secretary) and also VAT reclaimed under the Listed Places of Worship scheme, this being the VAT previously paid upon qualifying work to our Grade I Listed building: the repair to the clock mechanism and also VAT paid upon Architect's fees. We also benefited from a Diocesan Grant to ameliorate the recent huge increases in fuel costs. During the course of that meeting the PCC discussed the level of our future Ministry Offer and it was decided to offer in 2024 the same amount as in 2023, as it was felt that we could not on this occasion confidently afford an increased amount.

The level of our realisable funds was the focus of the July meeting report: including the exceptionally generous bequest in the Will of Jean Metcalfe, our available funds totaled just over £110,000. This enabled us to confirm acceptance of the tender for reordering works from SJA Contractors of Warton.

Our PCC Secretary agreed to make applications for grants from charitable sources: her assiduous attentions soon began to bear fruit and we owe her a debt of gratitude for this massive contribution.

The reordering project now under way, it was necessary to realise our assets: the contents of the Barclays deposit account were transferred into the current account and the investment made some years ago at cost of £10,000 was cashed having almost doubled in value. The cash flow was always going to be tight, because we had to meet the contractors' invoice plus VAT before we could claim a grant from the LPW scheme to cover the VAT - almost £20,000!

By the time of the November meeting of the PCC, we were able to reflect upon the completion of the reordering works, with all invoices paid and VAT reclaimed. This was in no small part possible thanks to further successful grant applications (over £23,000) together with specific gifts from individuals of £10,000 and £5,000 and many more besides! Thank you all!

I have attached the receipts and payments sheet for 2023. On this occasion I have presented it on a different sheet from the previous years', because 2023 has been more complicated and the categories can hardly be sensibly compared between the years.

The level of our remaining funds is now lower than previously: I would of course prefer a more substantial buffer against unforeseen events. The Beetham Church Heritage Trust has some £28,000 but our boiler requires replacement and the Quinquennial Inspection has revealed significant necessary repairs to external stonework.

It would be remiss of me to conclude this report with reference to the support and generosity of so many, not least Andy MacLeod and Colin & Julie Clarke, together with the entire Church membership and Village community. Thank you all!

John Lomax  
Hon Treasurer, Beetham PCC

## St Michael & All Angels, Beetham PCC

<b>RECEIPTS</b>	<b>2023</b>
Routine giving <i>direct to bank</i>	21,142.00
Collections in Church <i>incl sales, coffee.....</i>	12,613.30
Donations contactless	533.08
Gift Aid Tax recovered	9,640.26
all misc banked <i>cash on plate fundraising, sales, donations</i>	20,519.25
Wedding & Funeral Fees Gross	2,755.60
Legacy	3,000.00
Fundraising events	4,423.59
CBF Interest	54.95
CCLA <i>gain on investment when realised</i>	9,375.44
Grants	28,500.00
Specific donations	11,840.00
Legacies	39,096.38
Brightening Beetham - donations	720.00
Deposit a/c interest	25.76
bank refund	114.00
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>164,353.61</b>
B/F as at 01.01.23	
Current Account less uncleared cheques	17,240.39
Deposit Account	11,803.32
CCLA Investment (At cost)	10,000.00
CBF Deposit & contingency a/cs	2.53
	<b>39,046.24</b>
	<b>203,399.85</b>



- Receipts and Payments 2023

<b>PAYMENTS</b>	<b>2023</b>
Upkeep of services, altar requisites	1,116.50
Organists, music, tuning	8,140.42
Heat, Light & Cleaning	6,113.64
Insurance premium	5,237.54
Cemetery & Chyd upkeep	3,047.45
Copier & Stationery	2,855.15
Parish Offering to Diocese	22,741.00
Charities	1,013.90
Clergy expenses	3,617.04
Faculty applications	1,638.00
Gifts	336.82
Christmas incl Brightening Beetham	732.42
Clock	4,778.76
Fire extinguishers	202.41
Roof alarm	102.00
Ashes Memorial stone	5,303.40
Reordering:     main contract	112,929.60
floor sealant	1,268.40
archaeologist	1,296.00
architect	5,119.80
font cover design fee	410.40
electrician	842.63
sundries	1,126.65
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>189,969.93</b>
C/F at 31.12.23	
Current Account	13,401.63
Deposit Account	25.76
CBF Deposit & contingency a/cs	2.53
	<b>13,429.92</b>
	<b>203,399.85</b>

## **AGENDA ITEM 4.1: Gift Aid Report 2023**

### **Gift Aid Summary**

From eligible donations given during 2023 we have been able to claim for church funds a total of **£12,792.05** in tax repayments, compared with **£7,261.43** claimed in 2022.

<b>Gift Aid Scheme</b>	<b>Eligible Donations 2023</b>	<b>Tax Claimed 2023</b>	<b>Eligible Donations 2022</b>	<b>Tax Claimed 2022</b>
Gift Aid Donations	£43,126.00	£10,792.05	£23,144.20	£5,790.20
GASDS (Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme)	£8,000.00	£2,000.00	£5,483.58	£1,471.23
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£51,126.00</b>	<b>£12,792.05</b>	<b>£28,627.78</b>	<b>£7,261.43</b>

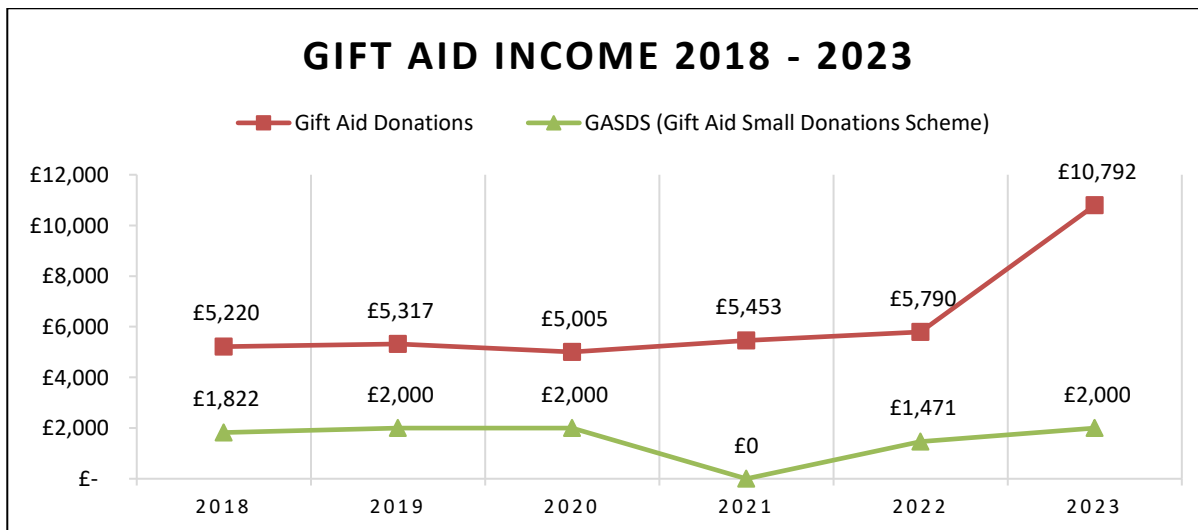
### **Gift Aid Schemes**

The summary table above shows the total tax repayments received in 2023 and 2022 under the two different Gift Aid schemes:

- Gift Aid Donations – a Gift Aid Declaration has been completed by the donor, either by a single form to cover all donations made by the donor, or by a signed declaration on each donation envelope.
- GASDS (Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme) – where no Gift Aid Declaration has been received, a Gift Aid style payment may be claimed from HMRC on cash donations of £30 or less up to a maximum total of £8,000 received in small donations within a tax year. Contactless card donations of £30 or less are also now eligible for GASDS.

### **Gift Aid Trend**

The summary chart below illustrates the tax repayments received under each scheme from 2018 to 2023:



- The tax claimed from Gift Aid Donations was much higher in 2023 than in 2022 because the total of Gift Aid Donations was substantially higher and included a number of very generous donations to assist with the church reordering.
- The tax claimed from the small donations GASDS scheme in 2023 was the maximum possible £2,000 because the maximum eligible limit of £8,000 was received, achieved largely through loose cash given as donations during church services, weddings, funerals, baptisms and other fundraising events. However, within the 2022/2023 tax year we received over £1,000 through contactless payments and this total is also included as eligible under GASDS.

## Gift Aid Claims

To assist with church cash flow, three claims were made through the year on the total of £43,126.00 given in Gift Aid Donations. The final payment was received from HMRC in February 2024 and therefore the 2023 total Gift Aid repayments listed below will not match the 2023 church accounts figure for Gift Aid repayments received within 2023.

Claim Period 2023	Eligible Donations 2023	Tax Claimed 2023
Jan-Apr	£9,258.00	£2,314.50
May-Aug	£14,585.00	£3,646.25
Sep-Dec	£19,283.00	£4,831.30
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£43,126.00</b>	<b>£10,792.05</b>

## Gift Aid Method

A total of 59 different individuals gave through Gift Aid during 2023, mostly through standing order or online banking payments directly into the church bank account. The table below shows a relatively constant number of regular donors using direct bank payments, and also a small increase in the number of regular donors using the numbered envelope scheme. The table below also shows a further decrease in the number of people using hand written Gift Aid envelopes. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant number of visitor donations were made by completing the Gift Aid envelopes available in church. Nowadays, a substantial number of visitor donations appear to be made instead through the contactless card machine available in church.

Donation Method	2023 Donors	2022 Donors	2021 Donors	2020 Donors	2019 Donors	2018 Donors
Bank	33	34	33	34	28	28
Hand Written Envelopes	11	18	11	24	119	139
Numbered Envelopes	15	12	11	14	16	18
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>185</b>

Grateful thanks are expressed to all who have undertaken to Gift Aid their donations and collectively make such a significant difference to church income.

Andy MacLeod  
07 March 2024

## **AGENDA ITEM 5: Fabric Committee and Health & Safety Report 2024**

**“The committee has the responsibility for implementing the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the church.”**

**5.1 Reordering.** This year has been dominated by the long awaited Reordering Project, from planning and approval of the faculty application through to the successful project completion. The contract was awarded to SJA Property Services from Carnforth and work began at the beginning of August. Pews were removed and turned round to open space at the west end of the church for the welcome area and social space near the kitchen block, and improve the access to the font. Additional space was created at the front of the nave and to either side of the chancel; new oak storage units installed; new choir/organ screen made from reused pew frontals; choir stalls improved to give more space for adult choristers; and the floor behind the organ lowered for safety reasons. New sandstone flags were laid in all of these areas, and sealed. The church remained closed during the week during the work, but reopened each Sunday for worship. The project finished ahead of schedule in October and within

budget, with thanks to all the contractors, our architect, all the volunteers who helped with cleaning and setting up each week and moving the surplus pews offsite, and to Dallam Tower and Woodview Grange for storing these pews until new homes are found for them all. A special thank you goes to Elizabeth Roche for her tenacity in completing grant applications and to well-wishers who gave donations, without which the full project could not have gone ahead

**5.2 Quinquennial inspection.** This mandatory five-year fabric inspection was carried out by our church architect, Mike Darwell of JCA Architects. The report has identified areas of concern with the external parapets which will require attention over the forthcoming year, as well as maintenance work required within the church. Some of these interior repairs were completed during the reordering, with the restoration and remounting of the original Victorian font cover, and repairs to the broken tower door window and vestry window. A scope of works is now being prepared for the exterior repairs, to be submitted as part of a new faculty application to the Diocese, and to be used in grant applications

**5.3 Boilers.** During the annual inspection of the boilers, it was identified that one of our two boilers is no longer working to full efficiency, but that replacement parts are no longer available and the boiler cannot be repaired. A Heating Report was completed by the Diocesan Heating Advisor following a site visit by the DAC committee, investigating alternative heating source options but concluding that our only viable and practical option was to replace the two boilers with a more efficient and eco-friendly boiler. Tenders were invited in February, and a preferred supplier appointed to complete the work in the Autumn. The work will require a faculty and will be linked with the Quinquennial application above. Grant aid will also be sought

**5.4 Garden of Remembrance.** The new Garden of Remembrance was created and the large memorial stone put in place in August by Able Memorials, along with four corner stones marking the area set aside for the interment of ashes. It is located in the northern corner of the New Burial Ground

**5.5 Sound system.** Repairs have been carried out to the faulty sound system microphones, and a new induction loop has been installed to rectify the intermittent sound loss

**5.6 Grass cutting.** Tenders were invited for the grass cutting of the churchyard and the New Burial Ground, and cutting will recommence from April

**5.7 Annual servicing.** Annual services have continued to be done on the boilers, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, CCTV, PAT testing, sound system, organ tuning, clock, and bells

**5.8 Work parties.** The reordering preparation and post-completion took up considerable work party time this year, with decluttering the church and disposal of surplus items. Work days were also carried out in the New Burial Ground to clear ivy near the new Garden of Remembrance. Additional ad hoc work is continually carried out by willing volunteers, including general maintenance work, churchyard tidying, church cleaning and brass cleaning

Thanks go to all the volunteers who keep our church looking so well cared for and welcoming

*Jenny Marks, Fabric Committee Chairman*

## **AGENDA ITEM 6: Kendal Deanery Synod Report**

At the meetings of the Kendal Deanery Synod St Michael and All Angels is represented by the Priest-in-Charge and Assistant Curate as licensed clergy and Vivien Stirrup as an elected representative. The parish has one remaining vacancy for Deanery Synod. We hope that St Michael and All Angels will be

able to ensure that it is fully represented on the Kendal Deanery Synod when the elections take place in 2024.

There are three meetings of Synod each year, along with a Deanery Ascension Day service (held in 2023 at St Oswald's Burneside) and, as an innovation this year, a service of prayer for those involved in the General Synod, ahead of their meetings. Each of the Deanery meetings is mainly devoted to a particular 'spotlight' issue, along with any necessary business and a closing act of worship. The officers of the Deanery as follows: the Rural Dean is The Reverend Canon Anne Pettifor, the Assistant Rural Dean is The Reverend George Briggs, the Deanery Secretary is Mr Peter Clarke and the Deanery Lay Chair is Mr Charles Howarth.

In the March spotlight session, which was hosted at St James', Bishop Rob spoke on the theme of 'Hopefulness and Realism', recognising the challenges faced by many congregations. He talked of the need for faithful improvisation – holding fast to a core of belief and tradition, but then improvising around that in order to make it relevant to the particular time, place and circumstance. He then used a garden metaphor to help people think about the changing seasons and the different tasks that accompany them. He suggested that our churches may now be in a time of winter – which can be seen not so much as a time of death, but a time of preparation for new growth – that calls on the gardener to trim and cut back but also to prepare for what will start to be evident in the spring. In the discussion he acknowledged the pressures on a decreasing number of aging people who carry the burden of parish life, and he encouraged pooling and sharing of effort across congregations. He ended with an upbeat note, talking about the signs of life and growth that he was encountering as he moves around the Diocese.

In July, at St Andrew's Sedbergh, The Reverend Les Hann, a supernumerary minister in the Kendal Methodist Circuit, talked about the particular challenges and opportunities for small rural churches. He stressed how they have the opportunity to be part of their communities and connected to the life of the village – not just by expecting people to come to their services and activities, but by actively going out and engaging, listening and sharing. He suggested they were well placed to be "second commandment" churches, oozing the love of God for their neighbours. He encouraged churches to think about what it is in our packaging of our faith that puts people off buying it. He concluded by recognising that it can feel a struggle just to keep a church going and urged people to share and collaborate with other churches, rather than letting the burden of self-sufficiency divert energy from the opportunity of being seen as the body of Christ in a local community.

The October meeting, at St John the Baptist Skelsmergh, focused on some of the practicalities which undermine the aspiration to be open to all. The Reverend Canon Tricia Rogers, the Diocesan Disability Officer, highlighted the need to be proactive and intentional in ensuring our buildings and our worship are accessible to the 20% of the population who have some form of disability, noting that many impairments are not necessarily visible. Things which exclude people may include the steps up to the church door but may also include the way some things are said or done in the service. Her central point was that being welcoming is not about trying to deal with something when someone encounters a problem: it is about thinking through what may be experienced as excluding and building adjustments into the way that we normally do things. She provided an audit tool for each local church to use to help them look at their own building and practice.

**Andrew B Norman**

*(With thanks to Peter Clarke, Mission Community Secretary,  
for his work in providing much of the included information)*

## **AGENDA ITEM 7: Kent Estuary Mission Community**

The highlight of the Mission Community's year was, of course, the wonderful service of celebration which saw The Reverend Hannah Wallace ordained Priest by The Bishop of Penrith at St James'. The service brought together a congregation of around 250 gathered from across the Kent Estuary (and further afield) to celebrate the ministry of all God's people and to pray for Hannah as she was ordained. This brought together the Mission Community in so many different ways: through the assembled joint choir, the preparation of floral displays, the provision of refreshments and the sharing of worship. It was a wonderfully joyous event, for which we give thanks to God.

The gathering together for worship on a Sunday morning initiated by celebrating Hannah's ordination further provoked the Mission Community to commit to gathering regularly (quarterly) for united worship on a Sunday morning. There are four services planned for 2024 (in March, June, September, and December) following the united service at the end of October at St John's Levens to celebrate Bible Sunday.

Further to this 2023, saw further attempts to strengthen collaboration and connection within the Mission Community evidenced through the continued regular meeting of the Leadership Group, the monthly meeting of the stipendiary clergy, and the bi-monthly gathering of those involved in leading worship across the Mission Community. It also saw the initial meetings of the Kent Estuary Pioneering Group, a team of people gathered from across the Mission Community who have indicated a commitment to seeking new and fresh ways of engaging the life of our communities with the good news of the Christian faith and the worshipping life of the Church. It is hoped that 2024 will see the further flourishing of this work as we seek God's guidance in continuing to grow together as a community of churches here in the Kent Estuary.

Along with all the other KEMC churches, St Michael and All Angels has two nominated representatives to the KEMC Partnership Meeting. It met four times in 2023. Its role is to provide a forum for exchange and support around missional activity within the Kent Estuary. During 2023 our representatives to the Partnership Meeting were Vivien Stirrup and Chris Roberts. Viv remains a representative, but Chris signalled his intention to step back from this role during the course of the year. Therefore, we seek another representative to ensure that St Michael and All Angels is well represented within the life of the Mission Community. Each meeting of the Partnership has a primary item, followed by a time of related prayer before then reviewing a report of the Leadership Team's meetings and plans.

At the January meeting, at Storth Village Church, The Reverend Hannah Wallace led a discussion building on The Reverend Beth Honey's presentation at the previous meeting about fresh expressions and pioneer ministry. The aim of both is to connect with people who find the time-honoured traditions and style of our churches off-putting and/or hard to engage with. A central theme to emerge in the discussion was the need to watch and listen before launching some new initiative, making sure that it is working *with* people not *for* them. There were a lot of ideas about potential target groups and thought about how we might connect and listen before growing new, different activity in the area.

The April meeting, at St John's Levens, focussed on inclusion in worship and mission, based on the Methodist Church's strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity. Mrs Irene McKay (of St John's Levens) introduced the topic. This again emphasised the theme of listening and engaging, not making assumptions, or just expecting people to accept the way we "do things here". She emphasised that some things which exclude are fundamental and blunt – citing her own experience of living under apartheid. Other things she suggested are much less obvious and may appear trivial, such as "all

stand". A key message was the need to think about how others hear, see and experience things that we may take for granted – and then acting accordingly.

In July, at Arnside Methodist Church, The Reverend Tiras Dainty-Share talked about worship, *in* the Mission Community and *as* a Mission Community. He highlighted how worship and service are inextricably linked, suggesting that worship is about living an intentionally godly life. Personal worship supports this through prayer and studying scripture and corporate worship involves gathering in symbolic or representational acts. The discussion highlighted the value of the various traditions evident in the patterns of corporate worship **in** the Kent Estuary and suggested that we should do more to highlight the choice that variety gives to people. There was a strong view that the recent ordination service had highlighted the potential for worshipping **as** a Mission Community and a warm welcome to the proposal that there should be quarterly united services.

The final meeting of the year, at Storth Village Church, focussed on what it is like to be growing up today, when we were joined by some of the Trustees and young people from the Kent Estuary Youth Project (KEY) for discussion in small groups. These highlighted the mental health challenges facing many young people, including those still evident from the experience of the pandemic; the pervasive impact of social media which can have some really difficult content; problems of bullying – including cyber bullying; vaping and the presence of drugs within some vapes; drug and alcohol misuse; intolerance of difference; and all the issues which arise as a young person is working out who they are and how they cope with situations in which they find themselves. It was clear that the young people find their involvement in KEY to be a real help and that they value the way it offers a safe space and a sense of belonging. For this, and for all of KEY's work with young people across the Kent Estuary, we give thanks.

**Andrew B Norman**

*(With thanks to Peter Clarke, Mission Community Secretary,  
for his work in providing much of the included information)*

### **AGENDA ITEM 8: Safeguarding**

According to our Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It should therefore be easy to find someone in the congregation who is willing and able to take over this important role at St. Michael & All Angels, as I am retiring this year.

The job is not difficult and there is a lot of help available from the clergy and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. A new system of recording the safeguarding activities of the parish, the 'Dashboard', is being adopted and if you are computer literate then the job of the parish officer will be made a lot simpler and ensure compliance with all relevant legislation. I have sampled it and could follow it and I am not happy around computers!

I am very grateful to all members of the clergy, worship team, and PCC members who have completed in the past all the paperwork and completed the on-line tasks and attended the required training for all aspects of safeguarding without complaint. Can I remind all PCC members that it is required that they complete the basic training on-line and inform the new PSO as soon as they receive their certificate? Thank you.

Sue Smalley, Safeguarding Officer

## **AGENDA ITEM 9: Reports from church groups**

### **(a) Social Events - BEETHAM CHURCH SOCIAL REPORT 2023/24**

The annual Harvest Supper was held on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in the Heron Corn Mill Barn and the Shrove Tuesday Supper on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Over fifty people in September and over forty in February filled the Barn where they enjoyed an excellent supper provided by Alison Thompson of Ackenthwaite, followed by entertainment which involved singing, laughter and quizzing from every corner.

In the light of the re-ordering of the Church in the late Summer and Autumn which involved the removal of the Servants' and Tenants' Pews in the South and North Aisles, together with two rows of pews at the west end and a row at the east end of the Church, the Harvest Supper entertainment in September involved '*The Mysterious Case of the Disappearing Pews*'. The location of the drama was 'Beeplins Holiday Camp', where all sorts of adventures and mishaps occurred to visitors and staff alike, demonstrated in music, dance and verse. The expectant audience was introduced to a collection of stories, poems and holiday tunes, and this together with the dazzling dialogue and spirited acting of the Company, contributed to the great amusement of the assembled company! We are very grateful to Choir Master Geoff Field for his accompaniment and his help in putting it all together.

The Shrove Tuesday Supper in February was followed by the Village Quiz. Our thanks go to Clive Holden who put together an excellent selection of 'head-scratching' questions on a variety of topics which puzzled us all, especially after we had enjoyed ample glasses of wine and plenteous helpings of cottage pie and pancakes.

Our very grateful thanks go to everyone who took part in either or both events, including our very appreciative audiences, whom thought and laughed and sang and clapped at 'all of the right places and in the right order'!

For you diaries, the next Harvest Supper will be on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and the Shrove Tuesday Supper will be on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025. We look forward to seeing you there.

*Dianne Lomax 24/2/24*

### **(b) Beetham Bellringers**

The towerbell and handbell ringers have had another year of enthusiastically demonstrating all things campanological. The church bells continue to be rung every Sunday in calling people to worship, as well as ringing for weddings, funerals and special services throughout the year. We also played host to several visiting bands of ringers from all over the country, including both quarter peal and full peal attempts. Joining the national ringing for the Coronation was a particular highlight for us, and we were also able to give Hannah a special welcome ring the Sunday after her Ordination. Thank you to all the ringers for their dedication in keeping the ancient art of bellringing alive here in Beetham when so many other towers are struggling to survive, and a very grateful thanks to Brian as our Ringing Master for his patient teaching!



The handbell ringers were also busy, as our reputation seems to be spreading further afield. We were invited to play gigs at Crook WI, Underbarrow WI, Arnside Methodist Church for the Dementia Walking Group, and Kendal Abbot Hall Social Centre for Dignity in Dementia, and we played in church over the Coronation Flower Festival weekend and for the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. We were delighted to play Christmas carols at Croftside and Elmsfield, where they joined in by singing and dancing in the aisles! We already have several bookings for next Christmas, including Windermere and Levens

Our annual Clangers & Co outing this year was a trip to The Forum Theatre in Barrow-in-Furness to see Julie (Edwards) starring as the Fairy Godmother in Jack and the Beanstalk, and we all had a wonderful time cheering and booing in – hopefully – all the right places

Thank you to all the ‘clangers’ for another fun year, and if anyone would like to have a go at either tower or handbells please do get in touch

*Jenny Marks, Tower Captain*

### **(c) Church Website and The Gateway**

Our community outreach has continued to thrive through our church website and the publication of The Gateway parish newsletter each month. These rely on the enthusiasm of volunteers contributing articles and information, and particular thanks go to those who regularly write the Front Page article, Andrew and Hannah for their monthly Letters, Clive for his brain-teasing Quizzes, Tess for her Beetham Band articles, the WI for their regular updates, and Abi for the School Corner reports and photographs. Feedback on how much people enjoy reading these is always delightful, and if anyone would like to send in articles for publication please look at the website for details. As always, The Gateway can only happen with the dedication of those behind the scenes who fold and deliver the copies each month, and a huge thank you to this large team of willing volunteers

The website continues to contain notices of forthcoming events, and plenty of information about the church and parish – including copies of this report to download! A reminder that the videos made during the pandemic are also still available to watch via our website, and please do read about the touching story of our Crib Service video and the son of one of the crib makers coming up in The Gateway

*Jenny Marks, editor of The Gateway*

### **(d) Church Flowers - BEETHAM CHURCH FLOWER REPORT 2023/24**

Flowers are usually arranged by a rota of twelve members of the congregation in the Sanctuary throughout the year, excepting Advent and Lent. The team is further assisted by other members in decorating the Church for the major festivals.

As usual, the Church has been especially decorated for the festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Arrangements of poppies in the Sanctuary and by the War Memorial to go with the ‘there but not there’ figures, were put in place for the 12<sup>th</sup> November, Remembrance Sunday. Sixty small bunches of daffodils were again put together for distribution to the congregation on Mothering Sunday and a group of us helped the children of Beetham School to make fifty bunches to take home to their parents. The Easter Garden and Pascal Candle were prepared and the Church decorated for the Easter Festival in the Spring colours of white and yellow.

Daffodils were ordered for placing in Sandy's Cross at the end of the Easter Morning Service. Autumnal colours were used for the Patronal and Harvest Festivals. The Advent Wreath was prepared again and the Church decorated for the Christmas Festival with greenery and in white, red, silver and gold.

The Annual Flower Weekend was held on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> May this year to mark and celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. The Beetham Band played and teas were served. 'The Big Help Day' was marked on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May.

Special flowers have been arranged during the year in memory of loved ones. Flowers have also been arranged for three weddings and a Blessing during the Summer and Autumn.

A flower arrangement was again placed in the porch each week together with the Sanctuary flowers indicating a welcome for everyone.

The reordering of the Church in August and September has provided more space for the Christmas Tree and new locations for arrangements, especially in the North and South Aisles.

We are very grateful to all who continue to help, give and arrange the flowers, as well as for the donations towards oasis, flowers for 'extra' occasions etc.

The Church flowers remain an important part of the peace and tranquillity of Beetham Church.

*Dianne Lomax 24/2/2024*

### **(e) Choir and Music 2023**

2023 was another good year for music in Beetham Church. A big thank you to everyone who has sung, or played an instrument, in any capacity to enrich our worship. As always, I am very grateful to all the choir members for their continued hard work and dedication throughout the year. Their willingness to explore new repertoire, and attend weekly rehearsals, is much appreciated and valued. Thank you, too, to Jenny Marks for her excellent organ playing at Evensongs and occasional morning services, and also to the Clergy for their support and encouragement for all our musical ventures.

The choir sang for every Sunday service during the year, as well as on extra occasions such as at Easter and Christmas. Weekly choir practices on Sunday mornings contribute greatly to the confidence and musicality of the choir, and new members are always welcome! The repertoire of anthems and service settings, sung by the regular and/or augmented choir, continues to grow steadily, both for weekly services and special occasions such as the regular Sung Evensongs, Patronal Festival, Harvest Festival, All Souls, and the Advent and Christmas Carol Services. These were well attended by highly appreciative congregations.

A particular highlight of the year was the first performance of a joint choir, from various churches within the Kent Estuary Mission Community, during the ordination service in July of the Revd. Hannah Wallace. This was a most enjoyable and positive experience for all, and it is hoped that more opportunities will arise in the future for such joint choral ventures.

*Geoffrey Field*

## **AGENDA ITEM 10: Churchwardens' Report**

During a year in which the last remaining restrictions forced upon us by the Covid pandemic were finally removed, three events stand out (in chronological order): the Coronation of King Charles III, Hannah's Ordination, and the start (and completion) of our long-planned re-ordering. Against a backdrop of our regular cycle of worship and community activities, these events mark 2023 as a special year in the life and history of St Michael & All Angels.

The King was a little thoughtless in arranging his Coronation for the first weekend in May, but we are nothing if not flexible and so we re-arranged our Flower Festival so that we could celebrate appropriately in floral display this magnificent occasion. The result was an amazing demonstration of artistic flair, imagination and overwhelming generosity. The displays celebrated the first such event for 70 years and showed off our lovely church building to great effect. A memorable service of thanksgiving on the eve of the Coronation, preceded by the tower bell ringers joining in the nationwide 'Ring for the King', gave the choir the chance to perform the Coronation Anthem, 'The mountains shall bring peace', with words taken from Psalms 72 and 149, specifically commissioned by the Royal School of Church Music to celebrate the King Charles' Coronation. Geoff's concluding organ voluntary, William Walton's Crown Imperial, which had been commissioned for the coronation of King George VI in 1937, brought the service to a rousing climax. Many thanks to Andrew for arranging and leading our worship, to Geoff and the choir for their magnificent musical contribution, to the tower bell ringers, and to the flower arrangers all of whom created a celebratory event that was both moving and meaningful.

Hannah's Ordination Service in July was another joyous and unforgettable day. Thanks go to the many members of our own congregation who worked with our friends in Arnside to ensure that the large congregation - which included Bishop Rob and Archdeacon Vernon and representatives from all the churches in the Mission community as well as Hannah's own family and friends - was comfortably and safely accommodated, so that everyone was able to enjoy the occasion. No-one, though, enjoyed it as much as Hannah obviously did; her joy and happiness will be long live in the memory. The legacy of that day lives on in the series of joint KEMC services that will bring the next one to St Michael's in June this year.

After years of talking, planning, money-raising, the PCC was able at last to give the go-ahead for the re-ordering of the interior of this ancient church to create a more practical and usable space fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There is no need in this report to go into the detail of what has been done. Just look around when you are in church. We can all, we suggest, be proud of what has been achieved. Lots of people have been involved in ensuring the success of the undertaking, but special thanks must be recorded to Jenny for overseeing the whole project and organising all the tasks associated with preparation, completion and restoration. That we were able to continue with our regular worship throughout the project was a bonus for which we must thank our contractors, SJA of Warton. The quality of their workmanship is apparent, and drew praise from members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee on a subsequent visit.

Inevitably, the re-ordering has made great demands on our finances. We are particularly grateful to Elizabeth and Alex Rocke for their work in researching the availability of grants and other sources of funding. And we cannot begin to adequately express our gratitude to John for his ongoing – and never-ending – work to ensure that all our financial commitments are fulfilled timeously. Thanks also to Andy MacLeod whose meticulous stewardship of the Gift Aid scheme has boosted our income by over £9000 (see Finance Report).

We take this opportunity to thank everyone who has given their time and talents throughout the year. We cannot list everyone individually but we must mention Elizabeth for her work as PCC Secretary;

Sue for ensuring that our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are all in place and up-to-date; Geoff for the inspiring music that so enhances our worship. Add the members of the choir who give so much time to practise and lead our services; the flower arrangers who make our surroundings so colourful and fragrant; the tower and handbell ringers; those who clean and polish; those who provide refreshments on Sunday mornings; the sidespeople and readers and it quickly becomes apparent that we have an active and involved congregation who are happy to work to maintain St Michael & All Angels as a friendly and loved church where all are welcome.

Links with our church school continue to grow. Andrew and Hannah lead Collective Worship weekly, and the pupils come to church to celebrate major festivals and for end-of-term services. A memorable 'first' Nativity, performed by the younger pupils and utilising the extra space at the front of church was a highlight of the Christmas celebrations.

The Friends of Beetham Church have continued to organise fund-raising and community events, maintaining vital links between the church and our neighbours in the wider parish. The Duck Race, the Autumn Hamper Raffle, Beetham Sports, Carol Singing, Brightening Beetham, the Harvest and Shrove Tuesday Suppers, along with the Flower Festival would not be possible without the enthusiasm and hard work of the Friends. We extend our grateful thanks to them all.

All of the above are vital ingredients of the life of St Michael & All Angels, but we are first and foremost a worshipping community and we are indeed fortunate to have Andrew and Hannah to lead and inspire us. The rich variety of regular and special services throughout the year make great demands on their time and energy and we would like to formally acknowledge our debt of gratitude to them, aware as we are that they also have many responsibilities beyond our own parish. We are also grateful to David Peacock, Geoff Turner, Andrew Schofield and all the worship team for their invaluable support.

An annual report can only give a flavour of all that contributes to the life of our church. We hope that this one gives a true reminder of the past year.

*Dianne, Jenny and Brian, April 2024*

**AGENDA ITEM 11: Priest's Report**

To be given orally at the meeting

**AGENDA ITEM 12: Elections and Appointments**

- (a) Parochial Church Council Members
- (b) Independent Examiner

**AGENDA ITEM 13: Comments from the meeting for consideration by the PCC**

**Closing Prayers**