



Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council
For the year end 31st December 2024



St. Mary's Weldon Church Annual Report 2024

It is with both gratitude and reflection that I present the Annual Report for St. Mary's Weldon Church for the year 2024. This year has been one of both challenges and blessings. As a community, we have experienced significant changes, notably the addition of Newton and his family as curate, and we have faced some difficult financial realities, but we have also seen signs of renewal and growth within our congregation.

One of the most positive developments of the year has been the arrival of Newton and his family. Newton has brought a deep spiritual insight to our congregation. His background in ministry and his passion for serving the community have already made a significant impact.

His outreach efforts have included local community events, helping us to extend our presence beyond the walls of the church. Newton's leadership is already helping to cultivate a deeper sense of fellowship among our members, and we look forward to seeing his continuing development in the coming years.

This year, safeguarding has remained a critical area of focus, not just at St. Mary's but across the wider Church of England. We have witnessed an increasing awareness of the importance of safeguarding, with national initiatives aiming to ensure that every church remains a safe place for all, especially children and vulnerable adults.

While St. Mary's remains fully committed to upholding these standards and ensuring a safe environment, we cannot ignore the troubling reports of safeguarding failures within the broader Church. These incidents have had a profound impact on the reputation of the Church as a whole, and we must continue to take proactive steps to safeguard the well-being of all who walk through our doors. This includes ensuring regular training for our leadership and volunteers, as well as maintaining open and transparent communication within our community.

I want to acknowledge and thank the dedicated service of Maurine Rae who was our safeguarding officer and this year has stood down after many years of faithful service. I also want to thank Susan Allen for stepping up to the plate as our Safeguarding officer, supported by Christine Hunt as a safe recruiter for St Mary's.

As we reflect on the year, we must also acknowledge a significant challenge: our finances. Despite our best efforts and the ongoing generosity of many, St. Mary's is facing a budget deficit this year. Our income has been lower than expected, primarily due to reduced donations and the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis on our congregation. While our expenditure has been carefully managed, we have found ourselves unable to balance the budget fully.

This deficit is a serious concern, and the PCC (Parochial Church Council) is actively working on strategies to address it. We are exploring ways to increase our income through fundraising initiatives, grants, and a renewed focus on stewardship within the congregation.

Additionally, we are reviewing our expenses to ensure that we are using our resources in the most effective way possible.

While the situation is challenging, we are not without hope. Our financial difficulties are not insurmountable, and with your continued support, we are confident that we can address the shortfall and return to a balanced budget in the near future.

Amid these challenges, we are also seeing signs of new life and growth within our church community. We are seeing an increase in attendance at services, and there has been a growing sense of excitement and energy within our congregation.

Our outreach efforts have been well-received, with more local residents attending events and becoming involved in the life of the church. These “green shoots” of growth are promising, and we are hopeful that, as we continue to nurture these relationships and deepen our ministry, the church will continue to flourish in the years to come.

As we look toward 2025, a year of preparation, I am filled with hope for the future. I acknowledge the challenges we face, but we also recognize the many blessings we have received. St. Mary's is a resilient and faithful community, a renewed focus on safeguarding, and a strategic approach to our financial concerns, I am optimistic about what lies ahead.

I thank you all for your continued support, both in prayer and in action. Your commitment to St. Mary's, to one another, and to the mission of the Church is what enables us to move forward, even in difficult times. Let us continue to walk together in faith and hope, trusting in God's provision and guidance for the year to come.

St. Mary's Weldon Church stands at a crossroads. While we face challenges, there is much to celebrate. I am confident that, with your ongoing support, we will emerge from this period of difficulty stronger and more united, with the bright future God has promised.

We are committed to using 2025 as a year of preparation as we get ready to look at ways we can grow in faith and trust of God through prayer. Thinking how can we become even more welcoming that we are, this includes looking at the way we use space and the way we communicate with our local community. This will prepare us for 2026 when we head into a Year of invitation looking at the events, we run to ensure we can invite more people to join our growing community.

Thank you for your continued support, and may God bless you all. Kane

Annual Safeguarding Report

I started my role as Parish Safeguarding Officer in June 2024, with the support of Christine Hunt as the recruiter. Since starting I have created a WhatsApp group for the safeguarding team and an email inbox has been created for anyone to use to raise concerns or pass on safeguarding news. Following a discussion at a recent PCC myself and Rev. Kane Taylor have created an auto email response so that anyone using the email receives an acknowledgement that their queries/concerns have been dealt with.

Many thanks to Christine Hunt for her help and support with completing DBS checks (all up to date), updating the Parish Dashboard and helping with getting the mandatory training done by the PCC and volunteers. There are still some PCC members to complete the required training, and I am working with them to get everything up to date. The safeguarding documents were adopted by the PCC on 20/01/25.

I am now part way through my Leadership Training, Christine has completed hers.

Finally safeguarding has taken centre stage due to recent revelations within the Church of England, and I urge anyone who has any concerns to approach me, so that any necessary action can be taken.

Susan Allen

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Bell Tower Report 2025

There is still a shortage of bell ringers locally and when we can ring for the Joint service, we don't have enough capable ringers to do our job properly, so we often call on ringers from the area when needed. However some ringers are approaching an age where getting up the tower is becoming a challenge. Thank goodness we have some new learners in the pipeline – see below.

Darren Binley as ever is a stalwart on these occasions, and we are grateful for the time he takes each Sunday to ring the call-bell too.

I put out an appeal for new ringers just before Christmas and had three takers. With their children I am now teaching six learners. The future looks bright, for a few years at least.

2024 was the centenary anniversary of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers. To celebrate this, members of the Guild rang a peal at every possible tower in the Diocesan of which there are 271, stretching from Brackley in the South to Market Overton in the north and from Crick in the West to Peterborough in the East.

29th February at St Mary's – Plain Bob Major

21st December at Deene - Deene Alliance Minor

We had a few weddings for which we've had to call on ringers from local churches and would like to record their support here.

St Andrews – Brigstock

St John the Baptist – Corby

St Mary Magdalene - Geddington

St Peter's - Stanion

Gordon Brown –Tower Captain

Deanery synod Report 2025

The Synod has met three times since the last APCM

A major item at meetings has been finance and how to fund the upkeep of our churches.

In September the Synod received a talk by Jon Breckon, Diocesan Historic Churches Support Officer who gave a talk and advice on how to fund projects.

At the February meeting Rev Ian Pullinger talked about his attendance at the meeting of the Diocesan Synod.

A strong theme through these meetings has been finance and how to raise funds to keep churches open and active.

Sandra Whitlam Stavros Skourakis

Electoral Roll Annual Report 2025.

Under the Church of England rules the Electoral Roll had to be re-written this year and new application forms signed by everyone wishing to remain on the Roll.

A large number of church members have signed again and there are sixteen new names on the Roll.

The total number on Weldon Church Electoral Roll is 64.

Janet Player Electoral Roll Officer.

Fabric Report 2025

Boiler serviced September 2024

Clock serviced May 2024

Organ serviced September 2024

Alarm system serviced February 2025

New light fittings to belfry steps

New clock motor

Chubb Fire extinguishers all changed

Western Power trimmed the trees away from cables.

Sandra Whitlam.

Proceedings Report March 2025

Since the last APCM there have been 6 regular PCC meetings , 1 Standing Committee and 1 Open meeting.

The main focus of the work of the PCC has been maintaining the development of Mission and Outreach, managing the ever increasing challenges of finance and looking for ways to raise income and “keep the doors open”, alongside maintaining the Church building and churchyard

The service pattern has been set at 2 services every Sunday. 9.00am Holy Communion with Hymns and 10.30 am Contemporary service, with joint 10.00 am services for Mothering Sunday, Easter Sunday and Harvest Festival.

The attendance at PCC meetings is consistently high with several members maintaining 100% attendance.

Janet Player PCC secretary.

Churchwarden's Report March 2025

Another busy year with many challenges to face.

The service pattern is set at two services every Sunday to cater for both the traditional and contemporary styles of worship with a joint service three times a year, Mothering Sunday, Easter Sunday and Harvest Festival.

Use of church space. The PCC agreed that we needed to consider how space in the church can best be adapted to the different needs of the two Sunday services and also benefit the wider village community. With this in mind the PCC approved the appointment of Stimpson Walter Bond Architects to put forward proposals for a long-term plan for development in a number of phases as finance permits. These are now available for discussion.

Friends of Weldon Church. The PCC is conscious of the need to increase our income if any work is to be done in relation to the above. With this in mind the PCC agreed to the establishment of a "Friends of Weldon Church" organisation. Work on this is ongoing and will it is hoped soon come to fruition.

St Mary's continues to be a vibrant and supportive church community with good attendance at all services. Last July we welcomed Rev. Newton as curate and we appreciate his contribution to the spiritual life of our church community.

We would like to acknowledge the work of all who help to keep the church running, in particular Sandra Whitlam for the day to day running of the building and Janet Player for the paperwork. Again we express our thanks to our loyal church organist Sue Lawson who faithfully plays every Sunday and for weddings and funerals whenever she is asked. Thanks also go to Lloyd Greenwood for his work on the lime trees. And we acknowledge the work of the Community Payback Scheme for the cutting back of the church path.

We look forward to next year with hope and faith.

Nick Sansom & Chris Bream.

Treasurers Report .

Looking back over the year's since I have been privileged to hold the post one phrase comes to mind "Steady as She Goes". We have always paid our parish share proudly never making a large surplus but just ticking over nicely with sufficient income to pay our expenses.

Sadly I must report that this position has changed in 2024 and 2025 looks to be a very difficult year ahead for us. Our parish share for 2025 has increased to £33,268 from £27,516. Therefore if nothing else changes we would need additional income of £480 per month to cover this.

Coupled with this increase to our largest expense we have also seen a decrease in our monthly income under the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). Our current monthly is £452 as we have only have 7 donors within the scheme. In January 2024 our monthly income from this was £1,311. By opting to pay regularly under this scheme the Church receives a regular income irrespective of whether the parishioner attends a service each week.

When faced with a difficult position we can either look to increase income or reduce outgoings. Our expenses are trimmed as much as possible and you can see by the accounts that we are careful as we can be with these. This means that we must look to increase our income ideally by parishioners joining the PGS scheme to give us a regular monthly income to assist towards our greater outgoings.

If you feel you could help us to "Bridge That Gap" with a regular monthly contribution than please do contact me.