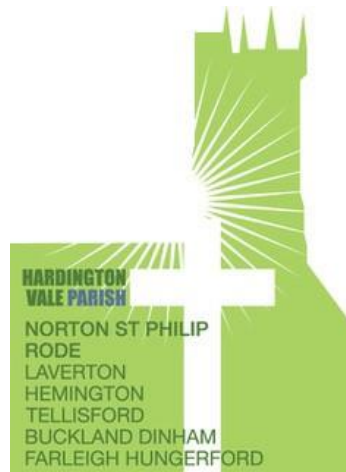


HARDINGTON VALE NEWS

Spring 2024



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To follow under separate cover - Annual Report & Accounts

**This booklet contains reports for the APCM.
Please read before the meeting
*see back page.***

Rector's Report

Our Dwelling in the Word passage for 2023 was Philippians 4 vv 4 - 13, the tension and complementarity of rejoicing and anxiety has been a theme that has run through many of our times of reflection and sharing at the start of a PCC or Ministry Team meeting. Across the benefice there is much to rejoice over in the midst of lives and a world that is very broken, in chaos and hurting.

Things to rejoice and thank God for over 2023 include:

Services We have a great team and I am privileged to be part of it all. Our team for 2023 included Revd Jo Robinson our Curate, Barbara Day, Michael Harrison and Fergus Stewart our Lay Readers and Revd Stephen Kivett PTO who helped with preaching and leading eucharist services. We are all ably supported by Ros Clarke doing all the parish admin. We have continued to see a steady growth in Breakfast church attendance and in the main Holy Communion services in both Norton St Philip and Rode. I am delighted that the idea of moving around the benefice for the different services has really embedded itself now and is thus proving a real encouragement to the different villages. Our preaching at the main services has focused on People of Prayer - looking at bible characters from the Old and New Testament. Breakfast church looked at The Lord's Prayer using material from the Pilgrim course. Attendances at all the Christmas services from crib to outdoor events and in our churches have reflected all this connectivity and growth in our communities.

Buckland Dinham: The Frome Deanery plan was approved by the Archdeacon Mission and Pastoral Group (AMPG) in April. The impact of this plan for Hardington Vale was that Buckland Dinham is becoming part of the benefice. They are joining us under the banner of Hardington Vale and as a Chapel of Ease. The implementing of this has gone remarkably smoothly. They are now well and truly part of the church family in all but legal terms. This has been largely helped by Jenny and Rob Waller and Jonny and Meg Griffiths. People from HV are enjoying supporting their creative services and third Saturday coffee mornings - not to mention the joy of the now robust bell ringing team - headed up by Andy Pickett and Jenny Middleton as going to Buckland Dinham gives them the opportunity to ring 10 bells. There is now an established bell ringing rota around the whole benefice on Sunday mornings.

Homegroups: Our Homegroups continue to grow and flourish. These groups are led by Fergus & Rachel Stewart, Michael Walker & Anne Harkness, Peter Yarker and Robin Campbell. Beth Harrison & Barbara Day's group has divided and Beth is now co leading with Becky Rhodes and Barbara with Vivienne Bolton. The exciting and positive thing about our Homegroups is that they welcome Christians in the villages who do not necessarily worship with us but who have a heart for fellowshiping together and praying for the people in the communities that we are all part of and we can now offer this opportunity on Monday through to Thursday evenings.

Curate: Jo Robinson continued to play a full part in services and other activities across the whole parish. Forget Me Not cafe has continued to have a loyal clientele and is much valued by those who attend. Jo has also drawn together teams to lead some very creative family services including a Mother's Day service, an Easter Trail on Holy Saturday and a Father's Day service not to mention the Lay Pastoral Assistant training that she, Mary Morrison and Barbara Day led and offered not just to Frome Deanery but also to Midsomer Norton Deanery.

Prayer: Prayer continues to be the central bedrock to all we do in parish life. For our parish weekend away in October we went to Sheldon and were blessed to have the teaching and ministry of Phil and Marian Moore for this time. Their teaching looked at what we can learn from the prayer life of Samuel and the Psalms.

Children and Youth Work: We have been blessed to have Maria Fleming take on (voluntarily) leading Tots and Toys. Muriel Duckett and Ros Lockley support her in this. Sue Cragg is also training up to be stand by for the weeks that Maria cannot do. Jo, Fergus, Revd Katie Thomas and I have been doing weekly assemblies in Rode and Norton St Philip schools and I have carried out Open the Book (with Jean Richardson joining towards the end of the year) at Hemington once a month. We employed Lydia Chancellor for 6 months a day a week

to research the way forward for Youth work in HV and across the Deanery. Her report highlighted the potential that there is and the need to have deanery-wide vision. Further talks have been held with Tony Cook from the Diocese and Paul Bennett from Youth For Christ to see how we shape this vision going forward. As a result of this we launched a tester Youth Space event at St Philip and St James Norton St Philip in October and 22 young people came and had a fun evening of pool, table tennis, badminton, skittles, pizza and hot chocolate. A good team of 13 people met to plan the way forward for this for 2024 in Dec.

'Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!' Philippians 4 v 4

Caroline, Rector

Curate's Report

Ongoing Ministries:

Forget me not Café – this is primarily for people living with dementia and their carers. We have a great café team and the café is attended by people from a wider area than just our parish.

School Assemblies - it's been great to be involved in these and also to bring the children to church for a special festival assembly or to learn about the meaning of baptism.

Other Ministries/Courses:

Baptism/Confirmation groups – in April-May 2023 four people attended the Emmaus Course and one was baptised and another is planning to be confirmed. This February (2024) two people are preparing for confirmation using the Start Course. It is encouraging to see people growing in faith and taking steps of commitment to Christ.

Lay Pastoral Assistants Course – this was a Diocesan course held at NSP that Mary Morrison, Barbara Day and I organised and ran in April-May 2023. 16 people came on the 8-week course, the majority of whom came from other parishes. It is great to have lay people trained and enthusiastic to do pastoral ministry.

Bereavement Journey Course – I supported Caroline in running the Bereavement Journey course at NSP for 8 people.

Prayer Ministry Training – I prepared and ran a morning to equip people to do prayer ministry after a Sunday service – 12 people attended.

One-off events in Rode including a cream tea in my garden and a Puddings and Prosecco evening and acting in a Murder Mystery play – both of these in the Memorial Hall. It has been good to include those on the fringes of church in these events and develop relationships with people in the village.

All-Age Services/events in NSP – last year we did three “messy church” style events – a Mother's day service, an Easter Trail and a Father's Day service. The first two were well attended, but the Father's Day wasn't! It was great to offer something that whole families could get involved with and we are building a team to continue these events.

Thank you! I am so grateful for my 4 years here at Hardington Vale. I have learnt so much from everyone here - especially about how to be an outward looking and hospitable church – inviting others to sit at the table and discover that God is good! Thank you so much for investing in my training and offering me fellowship and friendship!

Jo Robinson, Curate

Electoral Roll Report

From the 164 names on the electoral roll as reported in March 2023 there have been the following additions during the year: Catherine Ashburner, Mark Baines, Timothy Davies, Thomas Sheppard, Caroline Vandridge-Ames, Bernard and Barbara Purrier and Jean and Paul Richardson. Only one name has been removed and that was Mhairi Milligan. There are currently 172 names on the electoral roll.

Ros Clarke, Electoral Roll Officer

PCC Report

The annual report of the Parochial Church Council for the year 2022/2023.

This report relates to the year April 2023 to March 2024. The PCC met in person three times. The Standing Committee met five times in person and once by email. It dealt with forthcoming PCC agenda items and matters that would otherwise have had a lengthy wait until the full PCC met.

Administrative information:

- The Parish of Hardington Vale in the Diocese of Bath & Wells includes the Churches of St Leonard (Farleigh Hungerford); St Mary's (Laverton); St Philip & St James (Norton St Philip); St Lawrence (Rode); All Saints (Tellisford) and the church of St Michael and All Angels, Buckland Dinham. The churchyard at St Mary's Hemington remains open and is under the care of the PCC.
- The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Hardington Vale is a charity registered with the Charity Commission Reg No. 1128078.
- The Parochial Church Council (PCC) Members (Trustees) who have served during the year are shown below:

Incumbent	Revd. Caroline Walker	(Chair)	
Curate	Revd Jo Robinson	(occasional Chair)	
Readers	Barbara Day Michael Harrison	Fergus Stewart	
Secretary	Tony Day Until May 2023 and Lorna Powell from June 2023		
Parish Wardens	Geoff Banwell	(Rode) (Chair Finance Committee)	
	Fergus Stewart	(Norton St Philip)	
	David Lockley	(Norton St Philip)	
	Chris Cloke	(Norton St Philip)	
Chapel Wardens	Guy Hungerford	(Farleigh Hungerford)	
	Rachel Feilden ¹	(Tellisford)	
	Bob Hill	(Laverton)	
	Jenny Waller	(Buckland Dinham)	
Deputy Wardens	Murial Duckett	(Norton St Philip)	
	Sally Pickett	(Rode)	
Deanery Synod	Andrew Morrison	(Vice Chair) (Health & Safety)	
	Jenny Waller		
	Diana Lucas		
	Barbara Day		
	Mark Baines		
Elected Members	<u>3 years to run</u>	<u>2 years to run</u>	<u>1 year to run</u>
	Mark Baines	David Mayell	Anne Harkness

Anthony Powell	Peter Stratford	Sally Pickett
Andy Filkins	Diana Lucas	Rachel Stewart
Nicky Robinson Moore	Brenda Graham	Susie Filkins

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election.

Objectives and activities

The PCC has responsibility for co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical throughout the Parish as well as responsibility for the maintenance of the churches in the Parish.

In 2023/24, the average attendance at PCC meetings was 18 of a possible 27 with a minimum of 16.

The standing committee met six times to expedite the following matters:

July 5 in person post PCC meeting discussion of Lydia Chancellor's paper on mission to young people

September 7 in person The Sixth Bell Project at St Leonard's Farleigh Hungerford, the Visit of Bishop Michael on

September 11th and Extraordinary PCC meeting and the PCC Awayday on November 4th

October 19 by email decision to apply for a List B faculty to trim a few of the trees in the churchyard

November 20 in person Preparation for the sabbatical of the Rector from New Year until 4th March 2024 and the result of the Skills Audit undertaken by church members

At each meeting, the PCC received written reports: on Teamwork from the Rector and the Curate and from PCC members with specialist responsibilities, including Finance, Buildings and Churchyards, Safeguarding, Eco Church and Health and Safety. Meetings were held either in in NSP church or at St Lawrence church, Rode. Each meeting began with Susie or Andy Filkins leading the PCC in "Dwelling in the Word" using the passage Philippians 4:4-13.

The PCC agreed to the following appointments.

Andrew Morrison	Vice-Chair
Lorna Powell	Secretary
Nick Brown	Treasurer
Geoff Banwell	Chair of the Finance Committee
Rachel Stewart	Safeguarding Officer
Andrew Morrison	Health & Safety Officer
Ros Clarke	Electoral Roll Officer

At its meeting on **29 June, 20** of a possible 27 attended.

The PCC considered papers on *Developing our vision and strategy for ministry with young people and children* and on the *Mission Action Plan for Hardington Vale* (MAP) incorporating Partnership in Missional Church (PMC) and discussed plans for a longer than usual Awayday on November 4th.

Requested expenditure of £58,435 plus VAT on the church roof at Rode, supported by the paper *Note on St Lawrence Rode Roof Project*, was approved.

The PCC agreed to appoint Lorna Powell as Secretary and the following positions:

Acting Captain of Tower NSP: Jenny Middleton

Tower Captain St Lawrence Rode: Sally Pickett

Tower Captain St Leonard's Farleigh Hungerford: Sandy Wheeler

At its meeting on **18 September**, 19 of a possible 27 attended.

Jenny Waller from Buckland Dinham PCC was welcomed as an observer. Buckland Dinham had confirmed their willingness to become part of Hardington Vale benefice.

The PCC agreed to:

- the transfer of the parish of Buckland Dinham, in the benefice of Mells with Vobster with Buckland Dinham, Elm, Whatley and Chantry, to the benefice of Hardington Vale
- the union of the parish of Buckland Dinham and the parish of Hardington Vale, in the benefice of Hardington Vale
- the parish church of St Michael and All Angels, Buckland Dinham, to become a Chapel of Ease in the parish of Hardington Vale

Members were encouraged by the feedback from Bishop Michael following his visit to the benefice on 10th September.

Eco Church: Barbara Day presented a paper and the PCC agreed that surveys would be carried out in Tellisford, Rode and Norton St Philip churches. Eco Church would be a standing agenda item for the foreseeable future.

PCC meeting papers were now being displayed on an overhead screen, instead of being provided on paper, thereby saving trees, print and cartridge costs and electricity.

At its meeting on **30 November**, 16 of a possible 27 members attended.

As part of Mission, Fergus reported on a successful first evening for 22 teenagers held in the church in NSP, with the young people and some parents asking for it to be run again. The church aim is to reach out to young people 'on the margins' and to have some spiritual input.

Fergus summarised the key points from the 4 November Away Day and how, together with Dwelling in the Word feedback on the day, the PCC now had a sense of God's guidance. The day had informed PCC priorities and it was agreed to keep the resulting plans under review. The Mission Action Plan would therefore be on every PCC meeting agenda, focusing on one or two of the key priorities.

Safe Families was adopted as the charity the parish would support.

The PCC agreed that the Buckland Dinham's Friends Constitution would be incorporated into the Hardington Vale Structures and Responsibilities document. The aim of this overarching document would be to take

account of the individual nature of each church while ensuring consistency in approach and would be a living, working resource.

The PCC considered the Deanery Questionnaire on Communication - and communication from Parish to Deanery and vice versa. More use would in future be made of the Deanery leaflet; and Deanery meeting feedback would be published in Parish News, on Facebook and on the church website, along with the names of Deanery representatives.

On Finance, in relation to Giving and the Parish Share, the PCC noted the overall good financial picture but agreed to focus on building God's kingdom. It was agreed that the proposals in Geoff's paper 'PCC. Expenditure Limits' would apply across the parish.

Lorna Powell, Secretary
Hardington Vale PCC
21/02/2024

Home Groups

Our Homegroups continue to flourish and in the past year four have become five: one group grew big enough to seed another. It is heartwarming that there are now more than 50 Christians in the Parish regularly meeting, praying, studying the Bible and reflecting together, including people who don't necessarily worship with us. Fergus and Rachel Stewart's group (Tuesday evening) is currently using art linked to scripture as a basis for reflection and discussion; Peter Yarker and Robin Campbell's (Tuesday afternoon) is finding great riches in the Psalms; Michael Walker and Lorna Powell's (Tuesday evening) is studying a Bible Society course on Romans; both Beth Harrison and Miriam Bruggers's group (Wednesday evening) and the group run by Barbara Day with Vivienne Bolton (Thursday evening) are following the Ignatian contemplative model and include a scripture passage and time of silence. Groups generally meet once a fortnight. If you are interested in joining one of these, please do contact Robin Campbell robincampbell@gmail.com

01373 834583.

School Report



RODE AND NORTON ST PHILIP FIRST SCHOOL FEDERATION



The highlight of our Autumn term was our '**Museum of Me**' exhibition which we ran in Rook Lane Arts Centre in Frome. Photos and exhibits celebrated family members who were World War 2 heroes, spies, inventors, footballers, rugby players, prisoners of war, famous ballet dancers and even pigeon fanciers.

The Spring term kicked off with '**Wonderful Words Week**' where we explored writing poetry, adverts and song writing. During this week we also launched the national '**Poetry By Heart**' Competition which sees children learn two poems off by heart. Their performances are filmed, and the national winners get to perform at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. Fingers crossed!

We celebrated **World Book Day** on March 7th with a carousel of book themed workshops in different classrooms. One included writing (and mixing!) revolting recipes for 'The Spider and The Fly'. There were also several 'Mystery Readers' who visited the classes to read their stories dressed as 'The Princess and the Pea', a wolf and an old lady from a gingerbread house!

Our topic this term is '**Tales and Teeth**' and the children in all year groups have been learning about animals, their habitat, food and offspring. Two classes had a **visit from vet Chris Mangham** who brought in some animal skulls and teeth. Revolting! The children loved it!

Every class has been on trip this term to aid their learning. Reception went on a **Troll Hunt** in Rode and studied rivers and bridges. Year 1 and 2 visited **Longleat**. Year 3 spent **a day in Bath** at the Ladybird books exhibition in the Victoria Art Gallery and trying out experiments at the 'Brilliantly Engineered' workshop at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. Year 4 journeyed to the new **Bristol Zoo**.

On March 13th our Toot and Dood players (a modern recorder/flute) took part in a **concert at the Frome Cheese and Grain** alongside other local schools and professional musicians. It provided a wonderful opportunity for them to play as part of an orchestra.

As I type excitement is building for next week's Design Technology project '**The Great Big Mini-Egg Challenge**'!



www.rodeandnortonschoolfederation.co.uk
Or call us on 01373 830523 or 01373 834327.
COME AND JOIN THE ADVENTURE!

Church Wardens' Reports

St Michael & All Angels, Buckland Dinham

In 2023, as part of a Deanery reorganisation, and following a lengthy period of consultation on both sides, St Michael's joined the Parish of Hardington Vale from the Mells Group benefice. As part of the reorganisation, St Michael's is no longer designated as a parish church with all the responsibilities that entails.



From September 2023, services have been coordinated with Hardington Vale, including the introduction of an evening service on the fourth Sunday of each month to increase the options available to worshippers. In early 2024, finances will be fully merged.

St Michael's has a small congregation, but is well supported in the village. Attendance at festival services is rising again post lockdown - appropriately for a farming village, the harvest service and produce auction is particularly well

supported.

In addition to three monthly services (two lay services based on Iona liturgy, and one communion service), the church holds a monthly coffee morning run by the Friends group which attracts around 40 people and acts as a vital opportunity for social contact in the community.

The church building is in a sound state. Over the last few decades a toilet, kitchen and audio system have been installed, the bells have been rehung and a small meeting room has been created. Removing several

rows of pews at the back of the church provides a flexible space for coffee mornings and other activities. The Buckland Dinham PCC also brings a healthy bank balance which should take care of regular maintenance needs for some time. This was helped by a recent legacy and a contract with Voneus, who operate a broadband transmitter from the tower.

The Buckland Dinham congregation has been delighted with the move, and has welcomed worshippers from across Hardington Vale. Similarly, Buckland Dinham members have been made to feel at home when they visit other churches in the parish.

The reorganisation has given us a new vision for the future of the church with new friends and new perspectives. Thank you to everyone at Hardington Vale who have given so generously of their time and interest to make us welcome.

St. Leonard's Church, Farleigh Hungerford



This has been a happy and productive year for St Leonard's. The monthly pattern of alternate communion and matins services has been maintained and over the year there have been two weddings and two memorial services. On a sunny day in May there was a very well attended garden party and buffet lunch and a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Friends of St Leonard's. The Carol Service took place on the Sunday before Christmas.

The overall condition of the church remains good and steady progress continues on items of maintenance. Considerable enhancement has resulted from the installation of an electric under-pew heating system and by the fitting of comfortable cushion seating. A new Quinquennial Report will be due at the end of 2024. All improvements have been exclusively funded by the Friends to whom much gratitude is due.

Owing to a major and most generous donation, a faculty has been granted to completely reorganise and reform the arrangement of the bell tower, so that for the first time in the 580 year history of St Leonard's there will be a peal of six bells plus a tolling bell. It is hoped that this exciting project will be accomplished by the end of 2024

The terrier and log book are up to date and show the addition of six more velveteen stacking chairs.

We are fortunate to have so much dedicated support in the maintenance of the Church and churchyard and my warm thanks are due particularly to Mike Smith, Sallie Neill, John Davidson, Robin and Deborah Allen, Rex Eastment, Sue Bevan and Claire Covill for the great contribution they have made throughout the year to the smooth running of worship and to the wellbeing of the Church and the immaculate Churchyard.

We all appreciate the lively brilliance of the flowers arranged by Deborah Allen, Dilys MacKechnie and Catriona Murfitt.

Guy Hungerford, Chapel Warden



St Mary's, Laverton

Mhairi Milligan

Our report starts by featuring this amazing Laverton resident. For several years a Churchwarden, for her care of the churchyard she earned the title Gardening Angel. An actress, she drove herself to auditions, often held in Bristol, and played in productions in Frome. In church, the expressiveness of her readings was unequalled. "It's all I have left" she would say rather sadly. She came to Laverton in 1997 and in 2018 moved from Row Court to live with her eldest son Mark, and Lou. She died in September 2023, aged 97. The service of thanksgiving for her life, held in Norton St Philip, was attended by 160 people: more than twice the capacity of St Mary's Laverton, in

whose churchyard her ashes were interred in a family service taken by the Revd Barry Davies on 10 October 2023. Mark and Lou, and Max, Melissa, Amber, Archie, Wil, Holly Whiting, Lara Delmage, Amy Thorns and Sherry Falconer were present.

Wedding

On 21 October 2023, Trafalgar Day, Jenny Hill (erstwhile of this parish) and Simon Reitter were married in a service taken by the rector Revd Caroline Walker. The church was filled by 39 of their personal guests and 12 from the village and regular congregation. Mary Martin played the organ, Simon's sons Will and Teddy were the Best Men, and Lexi the lurcher paid close attention throughout. The bride arrived, and bride and groom departed in a 1937 Alvis provided and driven by Chris Haynes.

Repair Completions

The final repair of the 2019 Quinquennial Inspection: "Take down and rebuild the northeast corner of the churchyard boundary wall" was completed in this final year of the 5. The 2024 Quinquennial Inspection will be undertaken by architect Rob Toal of Benjamin & Beauchamp.

The long running saga of recovery from the damage caused by mice inside the organ finally ended with the completion by Brian Hooper of the work specified by Dominic Gwynn. It was completed in time for the organ to be used for the 21 October Reitter-Hill wedding.

In June, the church clock striking auto-wind ceased to work properly. Nathan Coffin took it to his workshop, stripped and cleaned the unit, replaced two seized roller bearings and renewed the micro switches. The clock now works well.

Church Services

The pattern of services remained: Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month and lay led morning service on the next 3 Sundays. There was the customary large congregation for the Carol Service which for the second year featured the lovely harpist Yvaine Su who played two carols, also Indy Bass who sang a Fisherman Friends song.

Terrier, Inventory & logbook

The documents have been reviewed. All is present and correct. The logbook is up to date.

Sir Robert Hill, Chapel Warden

St Philip & St James, Norton St Philip



Worship

We are blessed in that our worshipping congregations continue to grow. Our service pattern includes Holy Communion services twice a month a Breakfast gathering on the first Sunday of the month and a time of informal praise and worship on the third Sunday. Morning Prayer is held each Monday and a period of silent prayer on Thursday evenings. Our Palm Sunday procession, led by Bert the donkey, from the George Inn to the Church was well attended as was our Passover Meal on Maundy Thursday. Our Easter celebration began with a Sunrise Service in the churchyard at dawn on Easter Day, always a very special occasion, followed by breakfast.

Our Christmas celebrations included a candle-lit carol service (with our new candle holders around the pillars), a Christingle Service, the midnight communion on Christmas Eve and the Family service on Christmas Day. It was wonderful to see so many young families and children at some of these services.

We are also fortunate to have an *ad hoc* choir under the leadership of Caroline Whitehead singing at Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas.

Other Activities

The church has hosted 'Tots and Toys' every Wednesday between 9 and 11 am and on the third Monday of each month, a 'Forget-Me-Not' cafe has welcomed people suffering from dementia and their carers for conversation and a cup of tea. A course on Bereavement was held in the church during the autumn and in November, an exhibition of photographs and information about former villagers who had served in the armed forces during the war was presented by Tony Day to commemorate the centenary of the Norton St Philip Branch of the Royal British Legion. Children from the school also used the church for their Christmas productions.

The Building

Care of the church building is funded from the Fabric and Friends Fund. Michael Walker has worked tirelessly completing maintenance tasks identified in the last Quinquennial Inspection but in August, our architect carried out the most recent inspection. Her report has identified many areas requiring attention, although thankfully, nothing too serious. We will however need to work hard to raise more money during the coming year. In October, the annual meeting of the Friends of St Philip & St James was held and we were treated to a very interesting talk by Nick Sorensen about the visit of the diarist Samuel Pepys who visited the church in 1668. A new projector was also purchased this year.

Fund Raising

Our main focus on fund raising has been the organisation of concerts, thanks largely to Nick Sorensen. We have continued to hold Lunchtime Concerts every month (except December) and several evening events which included a concert by the talented Sarah McQuaid in April, the return of the American folk duo 'Hungrytown' in October and a most amusing evening with the 'Magnificent AKs' in November. Other fund raising events included a cream tea for the King's Coronation in May and the popular Christmas Fair in December. These events have raised a total of £3,633 for the year. Thanks to our flexible space in the church, we can also hire out the building for parish meetings, wedding receptions, birthday parties and anniversary celebrations and this has raised £770 this year.



The Churchyard

Mowing the churchyard has been undertaken by a new contractor and this seems to be working well but costs have increased. Working parties have been assembled in the spring and autumn under the leadership of Duncan Barley to control the growth of nettles and ivy etc. We are grateful to the parish council for their annual grant to help pay for the upkeep of the churchyard.

Thanks

Our grateful thanks go to our faithful bell ringers, the clock winders, the people who lock and unlock the church, the flower group, the people who provide refreshments at services and concerts and our church cleaners. We do appreciate all that you do.

Church wardens, Muriel Duckett, David Lockley

Norton St Philip Warden Report (Strategy)

The PCC away day in November was a useful opportunity to discuss our strategy. We employed the “Seeking God’s Way Together” approach to find answers to the question: **What is God saying to us as a parish for the next 12 months (and beyond)?** Our discussion then crystallised into an updated Mission Action Plan, with the following key priority areas:

- **Planning** around families and young people (and other parts of our demographic we may not be reaching as well as we should)
- **Prophetic** challenge to care for our environment
- **Practising** hospitality
- **Praying** and praising together
- **Projecting** our faith

We realised that these priorities can be thought of as a kind of checklist of things we should be considering at all the points we touch people’s lives.

In terms of the first priority, we have continued discussions around a deanery-wide approach to work with young people and families. After an encouraging meeting with local clergy, the Diocese Go team and Youth for Christ (south west), we identified the launching of a youth provision in this parish as the initial step towards the wider vision. After an exploratory event in November, which was very well attended, we have now established a monthly “Youth Space” for secondary age young people. This is held in the church in Norton St Philip on every 4th Monday in the month but is open to youngsters across the parish. We have a committed team of volunteers and a good measure of goodwill from parents and young people. This encouraging start helps keep alive the vision of a wider ministry, sharing resources across other parishes in the deanery. Meanwhile, attendance at the weekly Tots and Toys continues to be strong and there has been a good response to family-orientated services such as Christingle and Mothering Sunday.

Fergus Stewart, Church Warden

St Lawrence, Rode



Services

We continue to have Holy Communion on the first and third Sundays in the month, Breakfast church on the second Sunday and Informal worship on the fourth Sunday. We are always delighted to welcome our friends from other parts of the parish to any of these services.

Our grateful thanks go to all those who provide the delicious breakfasts on the second Sundays as well as the refreshments at the other services.

The Church Building

The major item on the agenda continues to be the re-covering of the roof. Following a tendering process a contract for the first phase (South Aisle plus South side of Nave) was entered into with West Country tiling. Work could not start immediately because of the need to wait for the departure of the bats in the Autumn. The bat survey alone cost £4,500 and the roofing contract for this phase is over £120,000. At the time of writing the South side of the Nave is complete and work is continuing on the South Aisle roof. This phase should be finished by the end of March 2024. The roofers will then depart so that the bats can return for the summer.

The second phase (North Aisle and Porch plus North side of Nave) has gone out to tender recently. It is hoped that work on that phase will commence in the Autumn of 2024 if a supply of new stone tiles can be secured. The suppliers of these have a backlog of orders and some delay may arise.

The third and final phase (Chancel and Vestry) will be carried out over the winter of 2025-26 if the balance of the necessary funds can be raised and all goes according to plan.

Turning to fund raising for this project, an appeal to Rode residents has so far raised £23,617.50 (including gift aid). One resident has matched this with an equal amount of so that the total received from the village is £47,235.00. Grants totalling £26,000 have been obtained, and, as mentioned previously, the trustees of the Richard Oatley Foundation have pledged £300,000 without which the work could not have been contemplated. We are most grateful for the continuing support of the trustees of the Foundation. However, we still are significantly short of the total required to complete the whole roof project and further donations and grants will be sought.

The Churchyard

The Churchyard has been regularly mown and kept in good order. We are grateful to Rode Parish Council for the annual grant they provide towards the cost of maintenance.

Terrier and Log Book

The Terrier and Log Book are up to date.

Fund Raising

Fund raising specifically for the roof project has been mentioned under "The Church Building" above. Apart from that there are other regular and other donations, funds to pay for maintenance and insurance of St Lawrence are raised by the Heart of Rode committee. During the year the money raised by the committee was as follows: Murder Mystery £659, Rode Roxy (6) £1287, Tombola at the Chapel £111, Raffle at Pudding and Prosecco £170 and Harvest Supper £302 making a total of £2529.

Occasional Offices

During the year there were two baptisms, no marriages and two funerals at St Lawrence.

Geoff Banwell and Sally Pickett, Churchwardens

All Saints Tellisford

Tellisford's Church of All Saints became a Chapel of Ease in June 2017, so each year the congregation and the Fabric Committee elect a Chapel Warden (currently Rachel Feilden), and the Deputy Warden is Helen Curwen. The regular pattern of services changed in 2023 as the last Lay Led Matins was held in August. The congregation continues to meet in the church for Holy Communion at 9am on the fourth Sunday of each month, and Evening Prayer every Tuesday fortnight at 5pm. Some communicants still opt for intincted wafers as Covid cases continue in the community.

Special services included our patronal festival on 1st November celebrating both All Saints' Day and All Souls (2nd November), and Nativity Poems and Carols held inside the church for the first time since 2019.

Our church is open to visitors during daylight hours throughout the year. The team of seven flower arrangers kept the church looking cared for and welcoming. Comments in the Visitors' Book reflect how much our visitors value finding this small church open, and enjoying its peace and beauty. A footpath passes through the churchyard, and from visitors' comments we are evidently on a pilgrimage route linking Wells, Frome and Bath.

Tellisford's Millenium Bench was moved into the churchyard when a Jubilee Bench replaced it at the crossroads. All 62 headstones were checked for stability, of which 11 required attention; these were stabilized in August. There were two burials and an interment of ashes, and the churchyard plan is up to date. The Fabric Committee's mowing pattern continues to be a fortnightly mow including paths connecting to the footpath, a late summer mow of longer growth, and strimming the edges in Autumn. In late September we undertook another inventory of plants, identifying 64 with the help of two knowledgeable people from Hemington.

The electrical appliances were PAT-tested on 25th May and 8th June 2023 on a schedule in accordance with Health and Safety Regulations. Fire extinguishers were inspected on schedule in June. We have inspected the Terrier, and all church goods and chattels therein are in place. The Log Book and Register of Services are up to date.

Occasional Offices

Burial of Philip Pobjoy, 8th July 2023 (following funeral at Chatley Farm)

Baptism of Daisy Dawson, 6th August 2023

Burial of Patricia Myers, 20th September 2023

Funeral of Raymond Ramm, 13th October 2023

Interment of Jenny Arney's ashes, 26th October 2023

All Saints and All Souls, Wednesday 1st November 2023

Memorial Service for Simon Morrell, 11th December 2023

Nativity Poems and Carols, Saturday 23rd December 2023

Rachel Feilden and Helen Curwen, Churchwardens

Safeguarding Report



Safeguarding Action Plan

We are gradually working through our compliance and are showing as having made 45% progress on the dashboard. We can now add DBS checks onto the Safeguarding Hub which sits alongside the dashboard.

Safeguarding concerns

All safeguarding concerns have been addressed and we have had good support from our Diocesan Safeguarding Manager.

I have provided information about how to access safeguarding training and we have discussed appropriate boundaries in interacting with children and other adults with volunteers for the Youth Space and Pastoral prayer ministry.

All helpers have been asked to cover the first 2 levels of safeguarding training.

A training Update will be requested from our Administrator, Ros Clarke so we can see what training is currently outstanding for PCC members and activity helpers.

Rachel Stewart, Safeguarding Officer

Music

We continue to enjoy regular organists for the Holy Communion services with Andrew Morrison playing



at Norton St Philip and David Thomas playing for St Lawrence, Rode, along with various pianists, including Caroline Whitehead, Ros Clarke and Anthony Powell and Sally Pickett helping with other services on an ad hoc basis. There is a mixture of recorded and live playing for the informal services. Caroline Whitehead rehearsed and conducted a choir made up of local volunteers from around the parish for the Easter and Christmas services. We are fortunate to have Nick Sorensen in our community who continues to compose pieces for this choir. Anyone who would like to be involved with helping lead music and worship at any services or to sing in the

choir should contact Ros Clarke (admin@hardingtonvale.org.uk) for the Holy Communion services and Fergus Stewart (fandrstewart1985@gmail.com) for breakfast church and informal services.

Eco Church

The Eco church group has met 3 times this year. Norton St Philip church has almost reached Bronze Award level. Since then we have put up bird boxes in the churchyard and begun to identify small spaces with lots of interesting flora that can be left undisturbed by strimmers. We plan to put up notices in the churchyard and a display at the back of church as helpful educational information about our intentions. How to make our heaters more effective is under discussion. We applaud Rachel Feilden about Tellisford's bio diverse churchyard. We would love to see other churches in our Parish take an interest in this endeavour.

Barbara Day

Parish Clergy Contacts

RECTOR

Rev Caroline Walker, The Rectory, Vicarage Lane, Norton St Philip, BA2 7LY
Tel: 01373 834258 Email: carolinehwalker@btinternet.com
(day off normally Friday)

CURATE

Rev Jo Robinson, Old Rectory, 38 Church Lane, Rode, BA11 6PN Tel: 01373-831381 Email: 321jorobinson@gmail.com

PARISH OFFICE

Parish Administrator, Ros Clarke, Office Opening Times: Mon-Wed 8.30 am – 12.30 pm
Tel: 01373-834488 Email: admin@hardingtonvale.org.uk

Notice of Meeting

The Parish of Hardington Vale

Buckland Dinham, Farleigh Hungerford, Hemington, Laverton, Norton St Philip, Rode, Tellisford

Notice of The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Thursday 25 April 2024 at 19:30

To be held in St Lawrence Church, Rode

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayer and Dwelling in the word.
2. To receive apologies for absence
3. To agree the Minutes of the Annual Parochial Meeting held on 30th March 2023
4. Matters arising from the Minutes

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

(note: All residents of the Parish of Hardington Vale and all those on the Electoral Roll may vote)

1. Election of churchwardens (Parish Wardens)

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

(note: only those on the Electoral Roll may vote)

1. To receive the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023
2. To appoint an external examiner
3. To receive Annual Reports (as published in Hardington Vale News 2024)
4. Deanery Synod Report
5. To elect representatives to the Deanery Synod (see note over page)
6. To receive the Electoral Roll Report
7. To elect members of the Parochial Church Council (see note over page)
8. Rector's remarks

Lorna Powell, Secretary to the Parochial Church Council

Hardington Vale