



# ST MARY WITH ST LEONARD, BROOMFIELD ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting is scheduled to take place on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

It is planned that the meeting will take place following the 9.30am service.  
The Vestry Meeting (for the election of Wardens) will be followed by the APCM.

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Whereas every effort has been made to include all the activities in the life of St. Mary's Church within this Annual Review, there may be some omissions. We apologise for these and they are in no way deliberate. However, we hope that you will agree that this review gives a flavour of the many diverse groups that are active within the parish and events which are made open to all to promote our worship of God and to proclaim the Good News in the wider community.

*Carol Knott*  
(PCC Secretary)

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Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council  
for the year ended 31 December 2023

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### 1. Administrative Information

St. Mary with St. Leonard is a parish church within the Chelmsford Deanery, one of the twenty-three deaneries which make up the Diocese of Chelmsford, within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Vicarage, 10 Butlers Close, Chelmsford, CM1 7BE. St. Mary with St. Leonard is part of the North Chelmsford Mission and Ministry Partnership (NCMMP). More about the NCMMP is contained in the NCMMP Report included later in this Annual Review.

As from 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017 St. Mary's PCC became a charity in its own right under the title "The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Mary with St. Leonard, Broomfield" with the charity number of 1173143.

PCC members who have served from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 are:

<i>Incumbent:</i>	Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott	(Chair)
<i>Curate:</i>	Rev'd. Dawn Butcher	
<i>Authorised Local Preacher:</i>	Andrew Mussell	
<i>Permission to Officiate:</i>	Canon John Brown	
<i>Wardens:</i>	Susan Garwood Margaret Powell	(Re-elected March 2023) (Elected March 2023)
<i>Representatives on the Deanery Synod:</i>	Ros Mercer Kathy Rouse Jill Readings	(Lay Co-Chair of Deanery Synod)
<i>Other PCC members:</i>	Christine Bailey Rachel Butterworth Sarah Clark Charlotte Dodsworth Lis Hardy Yvonne Heaver Carol Knott Karen Paxton Alun Powell Trudy Stevens Jim Tibbott Deborah Williams	(Press Officer) (Parish Safeguarding Officer and NCMMP Representative) (resigned March 2023) (Hon. Secretary) (Hon. Treasurer) (Minutes Secretary) (Elected March 2023)

## **2. Structure, governance and management**

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure.

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 may stand for election to the PCC. As St. Mary with St. Leonard's Church has Charity status, all PCC members become Trustees.

The PCC generally meets bi-monthly and members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC has a Standing Committee to progress decisions agreed by the PCC.

The PCC met six times during the year, with an average level of attendance of 77%; an increase of almost 8% on 2022. The Standing Committee also met on six occasions.

During 2023 the majority of PCC time was spent discussing and making decisions on: ensuring compliance with regulations and guidance from the Diocese; worship; finances and spending; repairs and maintenance of the church building and grounds; the Rutherford Project; Eco church; NCMMP matters; and fundraising events. A new standard agenda item of 'Church and Community' was added during 2023 to encourage PCC members to think creatively regarding the church and consider how we may serve the community.

## **3. Aims and purposes**

St. Mary with St. Leonard's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of St. Mary's Church; St. Leonard's Hall attached to the Church; and Broomfield Churchyard.

## **4. Objectives and activities**

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St. Mary's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship and contributes to discussions on how our services, groups and activities can involve and meet the needs of the diverse groups of people that live within our parish. We are always looking for new opportunities to worship God and build fellowship in this Church.

In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- worship and prayer, learning about the gospel, developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus;
- provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish;
- missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the church of St. Mary's and its associated buildings and land.

During the year we continued to seek ways to continue offering worship, prayer, pastoral support and to maintain our church fellowship. The following reports demonstrate what was achieved.

## **5. Achievements and performance**

### ***Worship and prayer***

We offer a range of services, both on Sundays and during the week. A calendar of all services and other events is made available in the Round Tower parish magazine; on St. Mary's website; and advertised on our Facebook page. We also have a presence on Instagram.

Our regular Sunday worship usually follows the pattern of: a 9.30am service in church each week, mostly these are Parish Eucharist services. On a once-a-month basis there is: an 8am BCP Holy Communion service in church, followed by a 9.30am Family service; plus a 5.30pm sung Evening Prayer service. During 2023 we decided to combine our Family Service and Eco Church on the third Sunday of the month: the service is less formal and more interactive than the Parish Eucharist services, with an eco-theme, plus a Fairtrade stall. This is one of the ways in which we are aiming to try and attract families across the community to join our church.

Our regular weekday pattern of worship includes: 9am Morning Prayer in church Monday to Friday; plus a weekly 9.30am Thursday morning Thanksgiving Eucharist; and, once a month, a 10.30am Wednesday mid-week Eucharist in church. The church building is open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 10.30am-12.30pm for people to sit and pray or to explore our Project Rutherford exhibition area.

We usually have two bible classes weekly, both on Wednesdays. One, entitled 'Baffled by the Bible', is at 1.45pm in St. Leonard's Hall. The other is held at a church family member's house or garden. Our Friends with Faith group is a bible study group catering for parents and carers of children of all ages. A report from each of these groups is included later in this review.

The electoral roll numbers declined by five during 2023. The estimated number of people in our 'worshipping community' as at the end of 2023 was as follows (the numbers in brackets show the figures as at 2022, for comparison): Total 140 (138); Children age 0-10 yrs: 18 (18); young people age 11-17 yrs: 9 (8); Adults aged 18-69 yrs: 49 (46); and adults age 70+: 64 (66).

St Mary's offers Festival and other special services at various times through the year including Holy Week, Easter, Harvest Festival, at Christmas and Christingle. We take opportunities to share worship with other organisations, including the local Primary School, and partner with the uniformed organisations on Remembrance Sunday.

We usually include in this report statistics on average Sunday attendance during the year and numbers attending Easter and Advent services; and in the past have shown comparisons with the previous year. However some COVID rules were still in place at the beginning of 2022 which restricted numbers who could attend services and some of our church members and village residents remained cautious, therefore a comparison with 2022 is not appropriate. The total number of people attending worship at Easter of 2023 was 147. The number attending for special services from Advent Sunday until 23<sup>rd</sup> December, e.g. the Village Carol service and school nativity services, was 564. The total number of people attending worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day was 360.

### ***Ecumenical relationships***

St. Mary's has a Covenant with Broomfield Methodist Church, although there have been no covenant meetings or joint worship services during the year.

### ***Mission and evangelism***

Our aim as a Christian Church in this community is to make Christ's love known to everyone. We enable this through teaching, worship, bible study and discipleship groups; through baptisms; services and groups for parents with babies and young children; and through groups that give opportunities for fellowship for young and older people alike.

St. Mary's Ladies Group; the Film Club; and the Beetle Drive group are all held once a month. Our Churchyard Working Party meet every Tuesday morning. All the meetings are listed in the Round Tower parish magazine and on the church website. You will find reports from all these groups within this review.

Other organisations who used St. Leonard's Hall in 2023 were: Friends of Broomfield Hospital; the Chelmsford & District club of Soroptimists International; Friends of Historic Essex; and the Essex Society of Archaeology and History.

With respect to St. Mary's work with children, families and young people, our Friends with Faith group caters for parents and carers of children of all ages, meeting fortnightly on a Monday. We have our Little Lambs support group for parents/grandparents/carers with pre-school aged children which meets weekly on Thursday mornings in St. Leonard's Hall. You will find reports from both these groups later in this review. There is a Family service on the third Sunday of the month and our ministry team have been looking at the way children are being educated in school to understand how we might best capture their imaginations. Over the last year we have tried a variety of different styles for our Family Worship services, plus a new initiative introduced in October 2023: Lego Church - 'Building church brick by brick', run by Heidi and Amber Mussell in the Hall during the service, as a way to engage children and their families. Lego was put out for the November Family Service and the plan is for Lego Church to run on the first Sunday of each month. At each Family service there is a Fairtrade stall.

St. Mary's joins with the NCMMP for youth-focused provision, led by members of the Clergy and people who work with young people across the MMP. The Light Group, a group for children of school years 6-9, is held on the first Tuesday of the month at 5.30pm in St. Leonard's Hall. More details are included in the report on page 33.

Liaison with local schools increased during 2023. Details can be found in both Rev'd. Dawn's report on page 25 and the Rutherford Project report which starts on page 27.

St. Mary's is involved with community group meetings organised by Donna Hance, the Events and Fundraising Manager at Broomfield Parish Council. This group consists of representatives from Ayletts Care Home, Madelayne Court Care Home, Keen Homes, the Methodist Church, Broomfield Football Club, Broomfield Cricket Club, the British Legion etc. The aim is to share dates of events and ideas and start to build relationships between the different groups so they can work together as a community. Dates of events will be advertised in the Broomfield Times.

### ***Review of the year***

2023 was a very busy and eventful year!

Throughout January we opened the hall on a Tuesday from 12-2pm as a 'warm space' – part of the parish Warm Spaces Initiative – where anybody could come in and get warm and have a hot drink. It was planned to continue this through to the end of March, however we had no-one attend so it was agreed to stop at the end of January.

The new church website was launched on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023, designed to be mobile phone friendly. Also there are now QR codes around the church and the exhibition area which will take people directly to relevant areas of the website for more information. Visitors also can use QR codes to donate. Several people have now been trained and given access to update specific areas of the website: Andrew Knott can update general information; Anna Duke loads notices and posters; Ian Mercer updates Rutherford information; and Joan Vine updates the calendar.

The Rutherford Project team achieved a huge amount during 2023. The exhibition area inside the church was opened. The building repair work to the exterior of the tower and spire - repointing of the tower walls; the replacement of all the shingles with oak shakes; and restoration of the weathervane - was completed. The inside of the tower was re-decorated and refurbished and the conservation work on the fresco in the ringing chamber of the tower has been done, creating a place for reflection within the tower. All of this has been a very significant undertaking and our most sincere thanks go to Trudy Stevens who took the lead on the project; and to all the project team and volunteers involved. Trudy has spent many, many hours on this project, diligently working away in the background recording all the details and filing reports with the NLHF, as well as all the more visible project work she does. We are very lucky indeed to have her working on this project. Our thanks also go to the rest of the Core Leadership Team and all volunteers for all their hard work. We greatly appreciate the funding received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, other funding bodies, and everyone who has supported the project by coming along to talks and other fundraising events. Sincere thanks go to all those people and organisations who have made donations – without them this work would simply not have been possible. A full update on the project is contained within the Rutherford Project report at page 27.

The next big expense is the repair of the lychgate, for which funding has been secured, and the repair work began in early January 2024.

A comprehensive survey of all the trees in the churchyard was organised by David Marcus, our Tree Officer. David has produced a schedule to tackle all the work that is required to maintain the safety, integrity and health of the trees. More details can be found in David's Churchyard Working Party report at page 36. Needless to say more fundraising will be required to help pay for the work. We are very grateful to David for all his hard work in obtaining quotes, organising and participating in the surveys, going through the process of obtaining the relevant permissions from the Diocese and Chelmsford City Council and supervising the work that is undertaken by contractors and by the Churchyard Working Party. All this has taken very many hours of diligent work by David which is much appreciated.

Every five years the entire church building has to have a comprehensive inspection done by our Architect, known as the Quinquennial Inspection. This was carried out in May and September 2023 and we now have a detailed report. The good news is that there are no Priority A urgent works to be done. However, there are a range of Priority B works which need to be done within a year and further Priority C works which will need to be done before the next Quinquennial Inspection in 2028. Yet another reason why fundraising efforts will be very much needed in 2024. Those who give of their time in the churchyard working party and those who look after our church should note that, in her report, the architect commented that "*Praise should be given to the working groups that regularly clean the church and maintain the churchyard.*"

#### *Worship:*

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of January we held a Christingle Family Service. Christingle is a beautiful celebration and this was the first of our new look Family Services. During the service there was a collection for The Children's Society and all those who have Children's Society boxes were invited to bring them to this service – donations from box holders totalled £633.60, with Gift Aid added on top.

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from 18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> January we hosted one of the evenings of prayer for Christians of all denominations across Chelmsford. The theme this year was exploring how the work of Christian unity can contribute to the promotion of racial justice across all levels of society. 2023 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence and by looking at the work of restoring hope through justice undertaken in Stephen's memory, we together prayed for justice and hope to change lives for the better.

On Ash Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February we held a Day of Prayer. The overarching theme for the day was thanksgiving for what is, what has been, and looking forward to the future. It started at 8am with Morning Prayer and ended at 8.30pm with Compline. For each hour through the day the prayers focused on a particular topic. There were prayer stations, drawing tables, music, and silence to aid individual prayer.

The Parish Lent Course this year was called Travelling Well Together and Rev'd. Dawn led a weekly Lent Course on a Thursday evening via Zoom for 5 weeks from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> March. Canon John Brown was the speaker for the Ladies Group for their Lenten talk.

Our APCM in 2023 was held on 12<sup>th</sup> March: 38 people attended. Rev'd. Carolyn gave an overview of the new website; there was a Rutherford Project update; an update on Eco Church; and Rev'd. Carolyn introduced the '*Travelling Well Together*' booklet produced by the Diocese.

A Mothering Sunday Family Service was held on 19<sup>th</sup> March with flower posies for all ladies in the congregation. During Holy Week, on Palm Sunday there was a procession of palm crosses from the Hall into church for a 9.30am service. On Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April Bishop Guli, Bishop of Chelmsford, joined us for 9am Morning Prayer at the start of a Pilgrimage walk from Broomfield to Great Waltham. She was impressed with the Rutherford exhibition and asked Rev'd. Carolyn to pass on her thanks to all concerned with the project. There was washing of feet in church on Maundy Thursday at 7pm. On Good Friday there were reflections in church at 2pm. On Easter Sunday we held a 6.30am Sunrise celebration. Then we had a full church for the 9.30am service, with a baptism. Thanks go to Charlotte Dodsworth, her mother Karen, and to Heidi and Amber Mussell, for organising activities for the children. These included a craft activity making Easter gardens followed by an Easter egg hunt in the churchyard. The day ended with Evening Prayer at 5.30pm.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May saw the Coronation of King Charles III. The bells at St. Mary's were rung at 10am in celebration, as they were in churches across the country. Our King Charles I bible was withdrawn from Essex Records Office to be displayed in church for viewing before and after our services over the Coronation weekend. The history of the bible is that in St. Mary's, partly hidden by the altar, is the tomb slab of Patrick Younge, librarian to Charles I. During the Commonwealth period (1649 to 1660) Patrick Younge came to live in Broomfield, bringing with him the King's last gift to him – his own bible. This book, bound in crimson velvet and heavily embroidered with the Royal Arms in silver and gold thread, was left to St. Mary's by his granddaughter Sara Attwood. For reasons of security and conservation it is kept in the Essex Records Office. A special Coronation commemorative service was held on the Sunday evening, using the order of service provided by the Church of England and afterwards prosecco and nibbles were served in celebration. Thanks are given to all those who helped make the weekend so enjoyable – the bell ringers, refreshment makers and servers.

We held a Fathers' Day Family Service, with a Baptism on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June. On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June we held our annual Songs of Praise service on the Green followed by a Strawberry Tea. Sadly this service has not attracted anyone other than existing church members over the years and the hard work involved of moving equipment and chairs onto the green, combined with at times difficult weather conditions disturbing the sound system, means we may well hold this in church rather than on the Green in future.

Our Harvest Festival service was held on 17<sup>th</sup> September. A few donations of food were distributed as harvest gifts to members of our community and the rest went to Chelmsford Foodbank to support the work of the Trussell Trust. The church was beautifully decorated with flowers thanks to Margaret Pinkerton and the team of flower arrangers. During the service a Fairtrade video was shown to help think about the overseas farm workers who produce chocolate, coffee, cooking oil and so on who often do not get paid a fair wage for their work. A Bring & Share lunch, held the same day, was enjoyed by 28 people each paying £5, with money raised being donated to the Foodbank. Thank you to Broomfield



Primary School for their generous gift of Fairtrade tea and coffee - a week later the children came into church to celebrate a school Harvest Festival Service.

During the weekend of All Saints and All Souls we held our Bereavement Service on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October. An opportunity to name those who have died over the past two years and light a candle in their memory.

Rev'd. Carolyn led the Armistice Day service at the War Memorial on Church Green on 11<sup>th</sup> September, attended by members of the local community; the British Legion; Broomfield Scouts; and the Blue Knights. On Remembrance Sunday The Blue Knights, a motorcycle club of ex-uniformed services personnel, formed a guard of honour as members of the British Legion, Broomfield Scouts and Broomfield Football Club joined the parade into church. Canon John Brown gave a very moving address during the service. The knitted poppies with a name for each of the 56 Broomfield men who died in WW1 and WW2 were this year tied to the railings in the courtyard – thank you to Sue Cole for doing this and for decorating the church with poppies; it was a lovely tribute.

Three evenings of reflections were held in church on Monday evenings throughout Advent (the fourth falling on Christmas Day): a quiet hour of led prayer and reflection to prepare for the coming of the Christ Child into the world. On the second Sunday of Advent the new Archdeacon of Chelmsford, Jonathan Croucher, joined us for our Eucharist Service. 'Carols around a campfire' with hot chocolate was held in the churchyard on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December thanks to Charlotte and James Dodsworth and to Mark and Cole Crossley. There was a Blue Christmas service on 16<sup>th</sup> December, a gentle alternative for those who find the usual Christmas Celebrations difficult and a time to remember those we have loved and who have now passed into God's Eternal Care. The Village Carol Service was held on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December, attended by the Mayor of Chelmsford and the Deputy Mayor, followed by mulled wine and mince pies served in the Hall. Broomfield Primary School had three Christmas celebrations in church: one for year 2 children on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December and two for years 3-4 and 5-6 on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December. As ever it was a delight to see so many children coming into our church.

There was a 9.30am Eucharist service on Christmas Eve and, in the afternoon, two 'crib' services for families, with traditional Carols, the lighting of the Christmas tree and a Nativity Tableau for the children to join in with. Christmas Eve drew to a close with Midnight-Mass. A Christmas Celebration service was held in church at 9.30am on Christmas Day.

Where there is a fifth Sunday in the month we now hold an NCMMP joint service. New Year's Eve 31<sup>st</sup> December was such a Sunday, so at 9.30am we held an NCMMP Eucharist service with prayers for the New Year; and at 5.30pm Canon John led a traditional BCP Evening Prayer Holy Communion. It was good to welcome members of other NCMMP churches to our worship that day.

#### *Social and community events:*

There were lots of community social and fundraising events held in 2023, starting on 14<sup>th</sup> January with our first Quiz night of the year. This raised £375 and was a sell-out. Further quiz nights were held in June and September. Our thanks go to Rev'd. Carolyn, Jim Tibbott, Kathy Rouse and her daughter Michelle for their hard work running these events.

The first talk of the year in the 'People & Stone' series for the Rutherford Project was held on 28<sup>th</sup> January. A list of all the talks given throughout the year is contained in the Rutherford Project report on page 29.

A Family Pancake Party was held on 19<sup>th</sup> February in St. Leonard's Hall which raised £62. Our thanks to Sarah Clark for organising this event. Several events were held over the spring period. Our organist Jill Parkin organised a Festival Concert in church on 5<sup>th</sup> March which raised £400. Our Rosemary

Rutherford exhibition was formally opened on 25<sup>th</sup> March: you will find details about this on page 29. A St. George's Day bangers and mash Parish Lunch was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April and raised £120. Thanks to all those involved in organising and running these events.

On 20<sup>th</sup> May we held our first May Fayre on the Green since before the Covid pandemic. We had stalls including an amazing raffle with a top prize of a free holiday caravan stay, children's games, toys, cakes, plants, Eco church, Fairtrade, Scouts, crafts, a wine & water tombola, refreshments, a bar, candyfloss, slush and popcorn. We had classic cars, a blood bike, bell ringing, and our Rutherford exhibition open. Entertainment included a 'Matilda' performance from Chelmer Valley High School, a karate display from Shinjitsu Martial Arts and Line Dancing from the local Broomfield group. Thank you to all the village organisations who participated, we really appreciated them joining us. A big thank you goes to Sarah Clark, Rachel Butterworth and Anna Duke for all the work they put in to pull the event together. Also, thank you to all those who prepared and served refreshments, ran our stalls, and donated raffle prizes, cakes, bric-a-brac, toys, books and so many other things to help the day go so well. With some match-funding from Barclays, in total the Fayre raised over £2,000.

During the summer, we celebrated Rev'd. Canon John Brown's 56 years ordained as Deacon and 55 years ordained as Priest, with an afternoon tea on 4<sup>th</sup> June followed by evening prayer. On 1<sup>st</sup> July Ian and Ros Mercer kindly held an Open Garden event, raising £110 for church funds. On 6<sup>th</sup> August, we welcomed 31 visitors from St Andrews Church Melbourne Avenue who included a trip to the exhibition and fresco on their afternoon circular walk.

It was a sweltering day for our combined 'Plants and Produce' sale and Gift Day held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September. We also participated in the Ride & Stride event the same day. Plants came flooding in from friends, neighbours and our church family which made for a chaotic time setting up but it was wonderful. Many thanks go to Yvonne Owen, Val Pattenden and Sonia Hudson who stepped in at the last minute to run stalls when we realised we had far more plants than we had stallholders lined up for. Thank you to all the stallholders, to those that helped with setting up and ferrying plants to and fro, to Margaret Pinkerton for making jam and marmalade and to all those who donated plants and produce. And of course to all the people who came along to buy and participated in the raffle. Out thanks also go to Philip Taylor at Lathcoats Farm who so kindly donated a box of delicious 'Elstar' apples. Owing to the generosity and hard work of everyone involved, the plants and produce sale (including the further sale of plants after the Sunday service) raised over £800. In addition, £2,740 was taken in donations for the Gift Day, not including Gift Aid to be claimed on top of that.

On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September Michael Dodsworth performed a Story Telling Anglo Saxon event starting at the church as part of the Heritage Days organised by the City Council. The church was opened for the sale of the People & Stone booklets as well.

Our Christmas Fayre was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Margaret Pinkerton ran a Christmas Wreath and table decoration making workshop. There were stalls including tombolas; home-made cakes; toys and puzzles; guess the name of the cuddly reindeer; games for young ones run by the Light Group; a raffle; and of course Santa in his grotto. This was followed at 4pm by Carols around the campfire with marshmallows and hot chocolate and our thanks to Charlotte and James Dodsworth for organising this. Thanks go to Heidi and Amber Mussell for their work on Santa's grotto and making all the wonderful gift bags, they did make the children's visit to Santa really special. Our sincere thanks to Rachel, Sarah and Anna in organising the Fayre, which involved many hours in the planning, setting up and clearing away, and to all those who ran stalls. It was a joyous event and in total raised £774.

St. Mary's continued to support various charities throughout 2023. The collection of used stamps, old or foreign money and ink cartridges, for the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, continued to be organised by Glynis and Brian Worboys. A MacMillan Coffee Morning was hosted by Trudy Stevens on 23<sup>rd</sup> September which raised £721.50. On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November, 29 shoeboxes for Operation

Christmas Child were collected at the morning service and at least a further 12 were donated online. We took collections in church for the DEC-Christian Aid appeal for Turkey-Syria and a further Christian Aid collection for the Middle East appeal which raised over £300 with Gift Aid on top. Other charities were supported by the Ladies Group and Eco Church.

We continue to support the Children's Society and St Mary's continues to be a collection point for donations to the Foodbank. In an email from Chelmsford Food Bank in April, thanking us for our support, they stated their end of year statistics revealed shocking new figures that 7,455 emergency food parcels were provided to local people who couldn't afford the essentials between April 2022 and March 2023 in Chelmsford – 3,247 of these went to children. This represents the largest number of food parcels that they have ever given away in a year, and a startling 70% increase on the previous year. Food donations are needed more now than ever, so please continue to support their efforts.

*Acknowledgements:*

As a PCC we are very pleased to be able to support the Clergy. We give thanks for Rev'd. Carolyn and her wise leadership. We give thanks for Rev'd. Dawn Butcher our Curate; for Andy Mussell our Authorised Local Preacher, who began training for ordained ministry during the year; and for Canon John Brown who has Permission to Officiate and leads some of our services. We thank all the Ministry team for their hard work and dedication. Also, we thank the Pastoral Assistants who continue to provide support and comfort.

We thank our Churchwardens Susan Garwood and Margaret Powell for their hard work this year and for the work they will be doing in resolving the repair and maintenance work identified in the Quinquennial Inspection Report. We thank Alun Powell, our faithful Treasurer for many years, who has continued to provide a great service to us in what continue to be difficult circumstances. Alun spends very many hours working on our finances and we are fortunate indeed to have him.

We are very grateful to all of our wonderful volunteers who, in whatever capacity, help to maintain our buildings and grounds and work tirelessly in the background to ensure things run as smoothly as possible. The good order in which the church and grounds are kept was acknowledged by our architect in her quinquennial inspection and by many visitors to the church and churchyard. Our Churchyard Working Party turn out each Tuesday morning throughout the year, come rain or shine, to maintain this special place for the community and wildlife of Broomfield.

Thank you to our band of bell ringers who ring for our Sunday services week in and week out and for weddings and other special events. It takes many hours to learn to ring and many, many more hours of practice and training to improve and progress. Especially as Broomfield is renowned in local ringing circles as being a particularly challenging tower to ring at due to the long draught on the ropes, with no guides. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated band.

It has been a disruptive year and a very expensive one. Thank you to all those who worked so tirelessly to overcome many challenges to bring about the achievement of so much with the Rutherford Project. Thank you to all those who donated to church funds, through regular planned giving, service collections, our gift weekend, and supporting the many fundraising events. Thank you to all those people who have stepped up to help with fundraising events: those who ran stalls, served refreshments, made cakes and jams and soup or donated items. It all contributed to much needed fundraising.

In short, there are many people who enable St. Mary's to continue providing worship, fellowship and support to our community here in Broomfield. You will find reports from many of them contained within this Annual Review Report. There are also many others who give of their time and effort behind the scenes. Never doubt that you are all very much appreciated. God bless you all.

***Carol Knott***  
***Hon. Secretary to the PCC***

## Financial Report

### *Summary*

Both the general (unrestricted) fund and the restricted funds were once again in deficit in 2023. The general fund was in deficit by £7,491 compared with £5,081 in 2022 while the restricted funds were in deficit by £16,426 compared with £60,732 in 2022. Overall, the Parish's accounts were in deficit by £23,917 for 2023 down from £65,813 in 2022.

Although the general fund deficit widened slightly in 2023 compared with 2022 it should be remembered that in 2022 the PCC made the decision not to pay the Parish Share in full. This decision was made in the context of an expected drop in income as well as the extra internal funding which might be needed to complete Project Rutherford, given the worse than expected condition of the spire timbers. Payment of the parish share in full in 2022 would have meant a general fund deficit of nearer £30,000.

### *Unrestricted funds*

#### **Income**

Underlying general or unrestricted income continued its post-pandemic recovery in 2023, rising from £79,802 in 2022 to £99,345 for 2023. **Planned giving** via the standing order and envelope schemes weakened slightly to £37,812 compared with £38,733 but the continuing return to a normal pattern of services meant that **loose collections** after nearly doubling to £3,437 in 2022 saw further strong growth in 2023, reaching £5,083. **Money raising** also continued its post covid recovery totalling £6,132 compared with £2,366 in 2022 and just £645 in 2021. Donations to general funds totalled £8,618 on a par with 2022's £8,706. The main boost to income in 2023 compared with a year earlier, however, came in the form of bequests which totalled £12,878 compared with nil in 2022.

#### **Expenditure**

By far the largest item of expenditure was the Parish Share which I am happy to report was paid in full in 2023. This amounted to £80,236 or 75% of our total expenditure.

Elsewhere, the cost of utilities rose to £5,901 from £4,527. Partly this reflected the high cost of energy but also the fact that the church and the hall are in use more often. I am sure, however, that we can manage this figure downwards with a little bit of thought and I would ask all church and hall users to think about the use of energy in the church. Do I need to **fill** the kettle to make **one** cup of coffee? Do I need **all** the lights on when I'm only using **a part** of the building? Should I keep the doors **closed** when the heating is on? Please treat the church's energy bills as you would your own. As an Eco church these are questions we should be asking anyway but the high cost of our energy bills brings the problem closer to home.

The cost of insurance for the building and hall was £3,261 slightly below the 2022 outturn while the cost of music, largely organists and organ and piano tuning, stood at £1,965 compared with £1,676 in 2022. General expenses and normal building maintenance costs added up to £10,561 slightly below the 2022 figure of £11,207. Spending on the churchyard amounted to £1,775 compared with £5,166 in 2022. The cost of printing the Round Tower was £1,436 which was almost exactly covered by sales and advertising fees

In total, expenditure out of the general fund amounted to £106,835, leaving a deficit of £7,491.

Once again, our grateful thanks to all those planned givers, donors and supporters of church events. However, it needs to be said that this is the third year in a row that the general fund has been in deficit. Income has been improving post covid but not sufficiently fast enough to cover our increase in

expenditure. I would ask each and every member of our congregation to assess his/her financial support of our church. We do need more members of the congregation to commit to joining the planned giving scheme and it is also important that current members look at their giving on a regular basis and, if able to increase their giving, we would be very grateful.

### ***Restricted funds***

#### **Spire Fund**

At the beginning of 2023, the spire fund stood at £20,465. Donations to the fund during 2023 amounted to £2,396 while money raising schemes raised a further £5,325. Grants were received from: Friends of Essex Churches Trust (£30,000), Congregational and Charitable Trust (£5,000) and Walter Farthing Trust (£5,000). Initial claims from the National Lottery Heritage Fund amounted to £70,141. Overall receipts in 2023 amounted to £117,862. Payments to the contractors, architect and other professional bodies totalled £144,337.94 leaving the fund in deficit by £6,010.43. Further claims to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a claim for a VAT refund will be made in 2024.

#### **Lychgate Fund**

A generous donation of £8,000 was given to the lychgate fund in 2022 which with gift aid meant that the fund at the beginning of 2023 amounted to £10,000. In addition, we were successful in obtaining two grants, one of £8,000 from the Essex Heritage Trust and one for £2,000 from the Tom Amos charity leaving the fund at £20,000 at the end of the year. Once VAT has been reclaimed on the lychgate repairs this means that the project should be fully funded.

#### **Organ Fund**

Small donations have continued to be made towards the organ fund which now is in surplus by £2,332.

#### **Other Funds**

There was no movement in the stained-glass window fund; the cremated remains area fund; and the sound system fund.

### ***Reserves Policy***

At the May 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 PCC meeting, the PCC agreed to the following Reserves Policy.

It is PCC policy to try to maintain unrestricted funds at a level sufficient to cover one year's unrestricted (general fund) expenditure. This should not only be sufficient to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow but also allow the Parish to meet emergencies, to offset any shocks to the parish's income such as the Covid pandemic and to maintain our Parish Share commitments.

It is customary for parishes to have a much lower target than this with the aim of, say, having sufficient reserves to cover just three months of general expenditure. There are several reasons, however, to have a much more conservative approach including:

- (1) the fact that St. Mary's general income over the last few years has relied heavily on bequests and one-off large donations. By their very nature, however, we cannot assume that these will be repeated every year and we therefore need to hold sufficient funds for those years when such generosity is not apparent.
- (2) The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that one off shocks to income can be extremely damaging. In 2020 general income (excluding bequests) amounted to £64,000 compared with nearly £90,000 in 2019, a drop of £26,000 equivalent to around three months expenditure.

At end 2023 unrestricted assets stood at £102,981, compared with an average level of expenditure over the past three years of just under £100,000, satisfying the reserves policy criteria.

## ***Expenditure Approvals Policy***

The expenditure approvals policy (agreed at the May 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 meeting) is that: expenditure of up to £100 can be approved by the Vicar; expenditure of between £100 and £500 can be approved by the Vicar acting in conjunction with the two church wardens and/or the Treasurer; with expenditure above £500 needing to be approved by the PCC.

## ***Outlook***

The Parish's finances are recovering from the effects of the pandemic. Collections at services, money raising, donations and fees are strengthening although planned giving remains flat. We also need to remember that over the last few years we have undertaken three major projects: the renovation of the organ; Project Rutherford; and the repair of the lychgate. We should be proud of that achievement and give thanks for their completion. Now that these are all complete, we should be able to concentrate on raising funds for the general running of the Parish rather than for renovation.

But there is a long-term problem in our accounts which needs to be fixed. In my report last year, I talked about the bequest "problem". While it is always a plus to receive bequests, we have become overly dependent on them simply to help make our accounts balance. And yet we simply cannot assume that we will receive that type of extra funding year after year. We should be in a position where bequests are a bonus and not a means to pay our regular bills. It's not the whole story of the last few years but in 2022, for instance, we did not have any bequests and were unable to pay our Purse in full. In 2023 we had bequests totalling £12,877 and did manage to pay.

A return to money raising, healthier fees, donations and collections is happening, but to close the gap between income and expenditure will require something more. We are extremely grateful to all our parishioners who have supported the church in Broomfield financially during a very difficult period but, if we are to return our finances to the black, we need more members of the congregation to commit to joining the planned giving scheme as well as current members looking at their giving on a regular basis and, if able to increase levels of giving, that would be very well received.

***Alun Powell***  
***Honorary Treasurer***

**Parochial Church Council of St. Mary with St. Leonard,  
Broomfield**

**Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 December 2023**

**Table 1: Receipts and Payments Account**

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
<b>Voluntary receipts</b>					
<b>Planned giving</b>		37,812.60		37,812.60	38,732.60
<b>Collections at services</b>		5,082.62		5,082.62	3,436.67
<b>All other voluntary giving</b>	4a	21,495.80	122,578.28	144,074.08	100,231.55
<b>Gift Aid recovered</b>		11,702.27		11,702.27	12,970.55
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>	4b	6,132.07	5,333.42	11,465.49	3,694.87
<b>Investment income</b>	4c	2,678.17		2,678.17	1,579.24
<b>Church activities</b>	4d	14,441.19		14,441.19	14,010.26
<b>Charitable income</b>			1,009.68	1,009.68	1,102.84
<b>Deanery Synod/NCMMP</b>					0.00
<b>Total receipts</b>		99,344.72	128,921.38	228,266.10	175,758.58
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
<b>Church activities</b>					
Diocesan parish contribution		80,236.02		80,236.02	55,000.00
Clergy and staffing costs		1,700.74		1,700.74	1,954.52
Church running expenses	4e	24,898.55	143,672.65	168,571.20	182,892.56
Charitable giving	4f		1,009.68	1,009.68	1,083.61
<b>Costs of generating funds</b>			665.29	665.29	641.00
<b>Deanery Synod/NCMMP</b>					0.00
<b>Total payments</b>		106,835.31	145,347.62	252,182.93	241,571.69
<b>Excess of receipts over payments</b>		-7,490.59	-16,426.24	-23,916.83	-65,813.11
<b>Cash at bank and in hand at 1 January</b>		110,471.70	45,443.58	155,915.28	221,728.39
<b>Cash at bank and in hand at 31 December</b>		102,981.11	29,017.34	131,998.45	155,915.28

**Table 2: Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>Total 2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cash funds</b>				
Bank current account	81,909.47		81,909.47	42,151.28
CCLA deposits	18,302.78	29,017.34	47,320.12	109,696.94
Other cash and deposits	2,768.86		2,768.86	4,067.06
	<b>102,981.11</b>	<b>29,017.34</b>	<b>131,998.45</b>	<b>155,915.28</b>
<b>Investment assets</b>				
Tithe Chancel Fund		10,654.78	10,654.78	9,465.40
J Gyne Foundation		2,011.87	2,011.87	1,838.86
		<b>12,666.65</b>	<b>12,666.65</b>	<b>11,304.26</b>
<b>Total monetary assets</b>	<b>102,981.11</b>	<b>41,683.99</b>	<b>144,665.10</b>	<b>167,219.54</b>

Notes:

- (1) The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the receipts and payments basis.
- (2) The income from the J Gyne Foundation is for ordinary church purposes. Income from the Tithe Chancel Fund is undistributed and is added to the capital sum.
- (3) The movements in restricted funds during the year were:

**Table 3: Restricted Funds**

	Balance b/fwd	Receipts	Transfer	Payments	Balance c/fwd
Organ Fund	2,282.20	49.56		0.00	2,331.76
Spire Fund	20,465.37	117,862.14		144,337.94	-6,010.43
Lychgate Fund	10,000.00	10,000.00			20,000.00
Stained Glass Window Fund	12,500.00				12,500.00
Cremated Remains Area Fund	24.74				24.74
Sound System Fund	58.37				58.37
Charity Fund	50.98	1,009.68		1,009.68	50.98
North Chelmsford MMP	61.92				61.92
	<b>45,443.58</b>	<b>128,921.38</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>145,347.62</b>	<b>29,017.34</b>



**Table 4: Further Analysis of Receipt and Payments Accounts**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>				
<b>a) All other voluntary giving</b>				
Donations general	8,618.10		8,618.10	8,706.09
Donations organ fund		41.56	41.56	1,930.60
Donations Project Rutherford		2,395.60	2,395.60	3,578.30
Donations Lychgate fund			0.00	8,000.00
Grants (organ)			0.00	12,315.87
Grants (Project Rutherford)		110,141.12	110,141.12	65,700.69
Grants (Lychgate)		10,000.00	10,000.00	
Legacies	12,877.70		12,877.70	
	<u>21,495.80</u>	<u>122,578.28</u>	<u>144,074.08</u>	<u>100,231.55</u>
<b>b) Activities for generating funds</b>				
Parish Magazine - advertising	525.00		525.00	825.00
May Fair	1,867.54		1,867.54	
Christmas	1,124.06		1,124.06	600.85
Other	2,615.47	5,333.42	7,948.89	2,269.02
	<u>6,132.07</u>	<u>5,333.42</u>	<u>11,465.49</u>	<u>3,694.87</u>
<b>c) Investment income</b>				
Interest	2,678.17		2,678.17	1,579.24
	<u>2,678.17</u>		<u>2,678.17</u>	<u>1,579.24</u>
<b>d) Church activities</b>				
Fees for weddings, funerals etc	12,997.49		12,997.49	11,657.33
Parish Magazine - sales	953.00		953.00	1,096.24
Other	490.70		490.70	1,256.69
	<u>14,441.19</u>		<u>14,441.19</u>	<u>14,010.26</u>
<b>Payments</b>				
<b>e) Church running expenses</b>				
Music	1,964.80		1,964.80	1,675.78
Cost of services (utilities)	5,900.82		5,900.82	4,526.97
Cost of services (insurance)	3,260.81		3,260.81	3,850.26
General expenses	7,737.72		7,737.72	49.84
Church building running expenses	2,783.58		2,783.58	4,050.29
Parish Magazine - printing costs	1,436.30		1,436.30	1,501.94
Church repairs & maintenance				5,960.40
Spire		143,672.65	143,672.65	117,069.40
Organ				37,895.20
Churchyard	1,774.52		1,774.52	5,166.48
Other	40.00		40.00	1,146.00
	<u>24,898.55</u>	<u>143,672.65</u>	<u>168,571.20</u>	<u>182,892.56</u>
<b>f) Charitable giving</b>				
Children's Society		410.05	410.05	90.00
LMDC		0.00	0.00	334.90
Ukraine (IRC)		285.00	285.00	230.00
Toilet Twinning		0.00	0.00	120.00
RBL Poppy Appeal		314.63	314.63	308.71
		<u>1,009.68</u>	<u>1,009.68</u>	<u>1,083.61</u>

Approved by the PCC on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Signed



Rev'd. C A Tibbott  
PCC Chairman



Mrs C Knott  
PCC Secretary

*Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of the Parochial Church Council  
of St. Mary with St. Leonard, Broomfield*

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 12 to 18.

**Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner**

The Church's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for the year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement.**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - to prepare accounts, which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

(Signed)



Richard Wood

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024

# VICAR'S REPORT

It had been my hope that the repairs to the Lychgate would have been completed before the end of 2023, so that we could begin 2024 afresh, without the burden of repair works going on around us. However, that was not meant to be! Although the delay to the Lychgate repairs wasn't particularly long, it does mean that we will have had major repairs running throughout three years, rather than two. However, it has been a real delight to welcome so many people through our doors during 2023 as the Rutherford Project really took off and we had so many visitors coming to see what was going on.

A high point of 2023 was the topping off ceremony, where I climbed the scaffolding with a bottle of prosecco and stood, looking out over the whole of Broomfield as we celebrated the emplacement of the regilded weathervane. Although the whole event was slightly tarnished by the discovery of rotten wood under the metal work which holds the weathervane in place, I am sure that will soon fade from our minds as we are now able to see the weathervane all around the village. When I arrived as your new vicar in 2011, someone asked me when I was going to 'get the weathervane back up there?'. Considering that I had never set eyes on it, or had any idea where it was, it feels quite an achievement... it has taken a long while, but it is good to say that it has been repaired and replaced in my time here.

Our ministry team remained much the same during 2023. Rev'd. Dawn completed her curate training and was signed off to apply for her first post of responsibility at the end of December. Canon John Brown has continued to support the worship and ministry in this place and gives us much to ponder upon theologically. In September Andy Mussell began his three-year Ordination Training course. Although we continue to enjoy his preaching occasionally, obviously his training does take priority for the time being. Much changed in the NCMMP as well last year, with Rev'd. Dan Pierce continuing his work in St. Francis whilst also working across our six neighbouring parishes which are now collectively known as 'Gracefields'. Rev'd. Emma Whyllie announced in November that she is moving to a new post in Plaistow, we will miss her gentle ministry amongst us. Rev'd. Susan Iskander left All Saints' Springfield and after a fairly short vacancy, during which the ministers here provided much cover, Rev'd. Sally Croft was licensed as Rector there in September. After a short break following his third retirement, Rev'd. Mike Aston now has Permission to Officiate across the NCMMP and is still offering lots of ministry at Pleshey, although he does like to attend here and will always offer support when he can. We also heard at the end of 2023 that Rev'd. Caroline Brown, who is Priest in Charge at St. Augustine's, will be retiring in the summer of 2024. The NCMMP continues to offer mutual support across the twelve church communities in North Chelmsford and I have taken up the Chair of that group again.

I was also asked in the autumn of 2023 to officially take up the role of Assistant Area Dean (something that I had been doing for a while in an unofficial capacity). Rev'd. Tony Cant from Writtle is also going to be an Assistant and we are working together with Tim to ensure that all the Chelmsford Deanery Churches are offered the pastoral support and inspections which are required, as Area Dean Tim prepares for his retirement in early 2025.

By the autumn of this year the PCC had backed a whole series of fund-raising events as we take seriously our need to pay our Parish Share in full; which, I am delighted to report, we achieved in 2023. I would like to thank our Treasurer Alun Powell for his careful management of our financial resources, during what have been difficult years of balancing the monies, whilst the various schemes of work have been undertaken. I would also like to thank all those of you who stepped up to run or organise the events. It is always good to look for new ways to fundraise and engage well with the community of Broomfield.

David Marcus, our Tree Officer, has worked tirelessly to ensure that all the necessary surveys and works to keep the churchyard trees healthy have been undertaken in a timely manner. You may have noticed

the large amount of work undertaken at the beginning of 2024, which should have happened at the end of 2023, but these things happen. The trees will continue to bring us great joy as we celebrate the beauty of creation that they remind us of every time we walk around the churchyard. The Working Party has been carrying on its work throughout the year and the churchyard continues to look wonderful.

The Life Events in 2023, which the Ministry Team were privileged to preside at, are as follows:

- 6 infant baptisms
- 3 child baptisms
- 6 weddings
- 2 services of Prayer and Dedication after a Civil Marriage

Members of the ministry team officiated at 33 funerals of which 12 were held in church, all the others were conducted at the Crematorium. We also conducted 16 interment of ashes services in the churchyard. Pastoral care of the bereaved continues to be a priority for the ministry team.

The mission of this church in Broomfield has been completely refreshed through The Rutherford Project, as we have continued to reach out to the people of Broomfield and beyond. As the works here are now complete, we look forward with renewed enthusiasm to sharing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all those who come through these ancient doors. Hopefully here they will find refuge for their souls, a warm welcome and much to interest and challenge them. Our engagement with local schools is at a record high and we continue to offer visits to both local schools. We welcome children from the schools and uniformed organisations so that generations to come know that this church building represents Christ in this parish.

As we look forward to our ministry and mission together in 2024 and, considering all that we have had to deal with since the beginning of 2020, I want to encourage you with the words of one of the Epiphany collects:

“Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new;  
Transform the poverty of our nature  
by the riches of your grace,  
and in the renewal of our lives  
make known your heavenly glory;  
Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen”

We have been through trying times, and yet, as we reflect on all that happened in 2023, in a place that has drawn the faithful of this village to worship for nearly a thousand years, we find ourselves refreshed and ready for God to transform us. We pray that He will make us ready to face the future, for it is through Christ that we are given all that we need to ensure that people know of the love, compassion and grace of Jesus Christ. We have been well provided for, people have come forward with the gifts to sustain our ministry here, even when things felt cold or damp or hopeless. Our calling as the people of God in 2024 is to be thankful for all that we have, to be hopeful in all that we do and to continue to share the love of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit with all those we meet and who come through our doors.

with every blessing  
Carolyn

*Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott, Vicar of Broomfield*

# THE CHURCHWARDENS' FABRIC REPORT

## ***Building:***

A number of routine matters were addressed during the year:

- The inspections of fire extinguishers and signage are carried out regularly.
- New batteries were fitted to the defibrillator, the cost of which was covered by a donation.
- The piano in St. Leonard's Hall was tuned to "concert pitch" in October.
- The Lightning Conductor was inspected and tested in October and a Test Certificate was issued.
- The boiler in the kitchen was serviced in November.

The re-pointing and re-shingling of the Tower was completed. The temporary guttering installed to protect the surface of the tower from natural chemicals leaching from the oak shakes will be removed in the Autumn. The weather vane was renovated and now shines brightly in the sunshine - when we get some!

Pews were removed from the rear of the North Aisle to provide an area for the Rutherford Exhibition to include a ramp to enable wheelchair access.

The fresco in the Tower has been renovated. The interior of the tower has been decorated. Carpet has been laid. A table made by Malcolm Deacon with a covering made by Joan Vine have been installed. Thank you both for your hard work. This is now an area for peaceful contemplation and meditation.

The work to restore and repair the Lychgate commenced in early January and by the time this report is published it is anticipated that it will have been fully completed.

## ***Grounds:***

The Tuesday Churchyard Working Party under the direction of David Marcus continue to work hard to keep the churchyard looking good. Thank you all. During the year the railings around the grave close to the South door were repainted.

The contractors continue to carry out grass cutting in the churchyard extension and the new hedge has been maintained by the Churchyard Working Party.

Tree work was carried out in January 2024. All waste was chipped, some of which was moved to the newly planted hedge in the wildflower meadow to enable it to be used around hedge plants.

*Margaret Powell and Susan Garwood*

## SAFEGUARDING

The PCC have adopted the Church of England Safeguarding Policy – Promoting a Safer Church – this is reviewed annually and was last adopted at the PCC meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and will be reviewed at the PCC meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

In accordance with this policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a risk to others.

Safeguarding telephone numbers are displayed in the church, church hall, parish magazine and website.

On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 the Church of England published a set of National Safeguarding Standards as an essential benchmark to understand the quality and the impact of its safeguarding activity at a local and national level, which will in turn inform their strategic planning in respect of safeguarding. These five standards are displayed on posters in the church and church hall.

The Basic Awareness Safeguarding training is available for any member of the congregation. As Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility; if you are interested in undertaking the Basic Awareness course then please contact me.

*Lisbeth Hardy*  
(Parish Safeguarding Officer)

## ELECTORAL ROLL

The Electoral numbers have depleted over 2023 and now stand at 116 compared to 121 in 2022. There are many reasons for the decline in numbers, people have moved away, some elderly people have moved to care homes and sadly others have died. There has been an increase in congregation numbers, on some occasions, but this is variable. In 2025 there will be a complete revision of the Electoral Roll when everyone will be required to re-apply to be included on the list. This revision happens every 6 years.

*Kathy Rouse*  
(Electoral Roll Officer)

## NCMMP

St. Mary's is a member of this partnership alongside St. Andrew's church in Boreham, St Augustine's and All Saints churches in Springfield, Holy Trinity at Pleshey and also the group of 6 churches Gt. and Lt Leighs, Gt. and Lt. Waltham, Ford End, the Chignals; plus St. Francis at Beaulieu. These last 7 churches all come under the ministry of Rev'd. Dan Pierce and are now collectively known as 'Gracefields'.

Mission and Ministry Partnerships (MMPs) no longer have the same responsibilities around certain aspects of finance and ministry provision as previously; so, the NCMMP council, which is composed of

the clergy and lay representatives, continue to meet exploring ways of supporting all parishes. The clergy work in collaboration to ensure that ministry is available across the parishes despite their reduced number.

Moving forward we are looking at ways we can collaborate to share skills and resources and foster links between the parishioners from all our parishes. We have started by arranging joint services for all parishes in the partnership on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month.

NCMMP has been acknowledged as being successful and it is important that we continue to work together and support all our clergy.

*Lis Hardy*  
*(Lay NCMMP Representative for the PCC)*

## DEANERY SYNOD

The Chelmsford Deanery Synod met on four occasions in 2023, to pray together, to consider business and to hear from those engaged in different work in their churches.

In March we heard from Evie Ball about a group she runs at Meadgate Church for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and the joys and challenges of this ministry.

In June the new triennium of the synod commenced and we were joined by newly elected members. A new standing committee was subsequently elected.

The business of the synod in June was focussed on learning more about the churches in the synod and an exercise was conducted where representatives recorded and shared their joys, hopes, challenges and fears for their churches. This information was captured in a summary report which was shared and discussed at the September synod and this has formed the basis for planning the upcoming Deanery Day in February 2024.

In December we heard from the Deanery Environmental Advocate on her aspirations for Eco Church and the Carbon Footprint Tool in the deanery. The advocate is available to help churches with both of these initiatives. Also in December we were joined by Bishop Adam who, having undertaken a tour of the deanery in November with the Area Dean and Lay Chair, addressed the meeting and took questions from the floor.

The synod representatives from Broomfield are Kathy Rouse, Ros Mercer (also on the standing committee) and Jill Readings (Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod) and thanks are offered to these three for all that they have contributed in the past year.

*Jill Readings*



# WORSHIP & MINISTRY

## THE CURATE'S REPORT

As I look back on 2023, Project Rutherford was without doubt a significant focus for us all in terms of finances, prayer, and time. The building work, creation of an exhibition space and conservation of the fresco are detailed elsewhere in this annual review, but, for me, the real joy of the project has been our reconnection as a church with the wider community. Covid and lock down had interrupted some of our connections and so it was with renewed vigour that the Project Team, and particularly the Activities Team, sought to re-establish and rebuild community links.

It has been a highlight for me this last year to be busy with our two school communities and with 1<sup>st</sup> Broomfield Scout Group and seeing the church building full of children is exciting. Connections with young people have included leading the Beavers and Cubs in Christingle celebrations and inviting these sections into church to explore the building and talk about the Christian faith; the whole of Year 7 from Chelmer Valley visited to explore the building and think about how Christians worship; Year 1 from Broomfield Primary explored our Churchyard and had fun looking at the different trees we are blessed to have, and Year 3 had a session on our stained-glass windows. These are a few extra visits from our schools and scout group in addition to the Harvest and Christmas Celebrations and our visits into school for classroom visits and assemblies.

My experience is that young people ask the best questions! So, whenever we welcome groups into church and we go into schools or groups, I am always ready for the question that makes me stop and think. As adults, we can learn much from the inquisitiveness of our young people.

Our Family Services have also seen the church building full and a reconnection with some of our families which has been a joy to see, as has been the continuing growth of our Light Group and the start of Lego Church. My prayer is our connections with families and young people will continue to grow in 2024.

2023 was also a year for me of rich pastoral connections – we celebrated with a number of weddings and baptisms in church, which were all wonderful occasions. Looking back, I also conducted a significant number of funerals in 2023. Whilst, of course, funerals are sad and moving occasions, it is always an honour to conduct a funeral service for a precious loved one, to sit with and listen to stories and lives lived in connection. To journey alongside, if only for a short while, families in the difficult time of loss is an honour and part of ministry I hold carefully and precious. Even in these sad times, I see God at work, comforting, loving, and reminding us of his constant presence with us. Pastoral visiting is deeply moving for me, and a real privilege and I see God a little more clearly when, as a church, we journey with each other in the good times and the bad and the sad. It is in the connections we make, the relationships we treasure, where fellowship is known and we live, giving and receiving, the love of God.

But as well as the festivals and big life events, I reflect on the wonder of our ordinary time worship. The quiet, ordinariness of life when we can live the love of God and be the hands of Jesus to our neighbours. The Sundays of Ordinary Time are perhaps my favourite – when into our ordinary, our extraordinary God steps and is present with us.

It is a pleasure and honour to serve the parish as Curate and be assured of my continuing prayers for us all as we seek to know God more deeply and love our neighbour more widely in the year ahead.

*Rev'd. Dawn Butcher*

## AUTHORISED LOCAL PREACHER'S REPORT

The year has sped by again and it certainly has been an important one for reflecting on the direction that God has moved us as a Church. The exhibitions and talks that have been held really have attracted people to us and provided a community space through Project Rutherford. Our tower looks wonderful with the new carpet, it really frames the fresco beautifully. I pray that the achievements we have with the whole project and the creation of a community space will allow us to remain focused on the mission of our church and that those who enter will experience the love for God that drives and sustains us. We must always be aware that God's Church is also for those who are not its members, may the light of Christ shine through us and be experienced by those who visit.

Last November I had the honour of continuing to develop Remembrance Sunday in the village of Little Waltham. It was amazing to see the efforts that the local residents had made in only the second year of this service there. There was a road closure and a good attendance at the memorial and the local motorcycle club also attended. Despite the rain we managed to pay our respects followed by a welcome coffee at the White Hart.

Our Church family has been growing and more people are coming to our family services and the new Lego Church that runs alongside them. I particularly like to see the Lego creations that the children have made when they come back to show us at the end of the service. I pray that we continue to be a welcoming Church and that we are able to be as Christ when we open the door for all.

I have now begun my studies in earnest and I am into my second term of the first year as an Ordinand (as I write this I am on a train home from another weekend residential course). My study and formation to the priesthood is all-consuming and much of my spare time is spent in study and essay writing. I am hoping to maintain a monthly contribution to services and I will attend whenever I am able, my ministry remains forever in my heart and sustains my studies as I focus on my vocation. I am forever grateful for the support I have received during the long discernment process resulting in the recommendation to training. I particularly remember Jennifer Salisbury who was so pleased that I had been successful and I thank her and all who have held me in their prayers.

I look forward to God's will for us this year as we journey in discipleship together, may we all remain attentive to his call.

Yours in Christ,  
*Andy Mussell*

## CANON'S REPORT

It is now over a year since the former Archdeacon of Chelmsford arranged for me to become an honorary member of St Mary's ministry team. So I have the Venerable Elizabeth Snowdon to thank in the first place. But much more importantly in my view is my thanks to the Reverend Carolyn for welcoming me so warmly, and to the Reverend Dawn for accepting me to partner with her in ministry. I have greatly appreciated the provision of a 'base' with the opportunity to share in worship on a daily basis during the week, and to take my turn in presiding at the weekly Thursday and monthly Wednesday eucharists, and to be given a regular monthly slot at a Sunday Eucharist and at the monthly evening service. Further I have much appreciated being allowed to contribute my 'Ponderings' to the Round Tower, for the stimulus to my thinking this affords me. So thank you for the welcome and the fellowship. I find myself gradually able to remember names and faces, not least to distinguish between the Margarets!

*Canon John Brown*

## SERVERS

This year has been a difficult year in some ways for servers as, due to illness, other servers have had to take on extra duties. We continue to have three servers for the 9.30am Sunday services and for the Wednesday mid-month Eucharist. Two servers cover the 8am monthly communion. We have not attended any Chapter of Servers meetings this year due to various issues.

We would very much welcome new servers, so if you feel like joining the group please talk to any of us and Rev'd Carolyn.

**Chris Bailey, Margaret Clarke, Lis Hardy, Sheila Hasler, Kathy Rouse**

## THE PASTORAL CARE AND VISITING TEAM

The Pastoral Care and Visiting Team has continued their invaluable ministry to visit and journey alongside those who are experiencing difficult times and those who cannot join us physically in the church building. Each member of the team is incredibly committed to the people they serve and do so quietly, out of the spotlight and often without recognition. The Ministry Team is grateful for the faithful ministry of the Pastoral Team in supporting the people of the parish.

In the more public face of this ministry, the Team supported the Time to Remember Bereavement service in October and the Blue Christmas service in December, being available to chat and pray with those who attended. We have also been visiting Madelayne Court and Ayletts Residential Homes once a month, holding services for those who wish to join, offering support to the staff and taking Communion to those Residents who wish to receive. We also take Communion to those unable to join us in church in their homes.

And, of course, we pray regularly for those whom the Team is in contact with at Morning Prayer in addition to our personal prayers for those we know who are in particular need.

Please do let the Ministry Team know if there is someone who you are aware of who would appreciate a visit from one of the Team and anyone who would value receiving Holy Communion in their home.

The Pastoral Team do not look for recognition but do know this ministry is happening and available. And please pray for all those involved in pastoral care, thanks for their faithfulness and love of the people they serve.

*Rev'd. Dawn Butcher*

## RUTHERFORD PROJECT

After an exceedingly challenging year in 2022 it is with great joy that we are able to report on the tremendous successes that have been achieved with the project during 2023. Following the roller coaster year, the last 12 months have seen many aspects brought to fruition, with the structural work phase of the project being completed just before Christmas, a year later than originally planned, but worth the effort.

The year started rather tentatively with some discussion and disagreements regarding the scaffolding. At this point, all work on the tower and spire had been stopped because the scaffolding had not met the original design and so affected Bakers', our contractors, insurance. A new designer had been identified but problems were discovered in their plan and it took longer than expected for things to be resolved. But they were, eventually. Part of the original scaffolding was dismantled and a more substantial construction erected so that on March 6<sup>th</sup> Bakers recommenced their work on the timbers and could then start the re-roofing of the spire.

Every effort has been taken to use the most durable tiles so as to avoid the necessity of replacement in any foreseeable future. Oak shakes were used that had been riven by hand to ensure the optimum alignment to growth rings, with no machine-sawn exposed grain, and with stainless-steel backing plates strategically placed to prevent future woodpecker damage. Applying these to our octagonal, part conical, tapered spire proved a challenge as each shake was hand crafted to fit. This took a while. But the result is phenomenal as I am sure you will agree when viewing the spire. To-date we have yet to identify any holes so it seems the hungry woodpeckers have been put off so far. A temporary guttering has been placed around the base of the spire roof to catch the rainwater, that contains tannin leaching from the new shakes, as this would stain the tower below. This will be removed after twelve months.

It took a little longer than expected to complete the external work as, once again, problems were discovered - this time with the timber that supported the newly restored weathervane. However, this discovery was a blessing as clearly the weight of the ironwork could have led to it being dislodged by a strong wind. New timbers needed to be fashioned and positioned to ensure its (and our) safety.

Once the spire roofing was complete and the newly gilded weathervane placed in situ, the scaffolding was removed enabling the remainder of the pointing of the tower to be completed, the previous cement rendering being replaced with lime mortar. The work has taken much longer than originally envisaged, but the result is spectacular and our gleaming weathervane shines out, visible from so many locations in the village. A beautiful postcard of the church and restored tower and spire is now available, priced 60p.

Whilst all this work was proceeding (or not) outside, great changes were occurring inside the church. The Faculty for the removal of pews finally came through and Patrick Readings was hard at work constructing the frame for the exhibition in Jill's garage. Once the space was cleared and a ramp installed, the display furniture was brought in and we could begin to visualise exactly how the exhibition would materialise.

A considerable amount of material has been identified by the research team, comprising Ian and Ros Mercer, Kathy Rouse, Cathy Pearson and Naomi Courtenay-Luck amongst others. However, the collation, extraction and display of such a wealth of information is a truly skilled task. In this, we have been really blessed by the expertise of Ian Mercer, assisted by the research team and professional artists who so kindly gave of their knowledge and talents. The back-lit montage of stained-glass windows created by Ros is particularly effective.

As the NLHF Evaluator commented in his report:

*The permanent display is a major success with different media forms presented in a very professional and fully accessible manner: static displays, tactile content, large print posters, finer detail text, brightly lit images, back-lit transparencies, side-lit and shadowed samples, with eye-catching content. It has been very cleverly constructed using re-purposed components and commonly available fittings and materials at minimal cost – it is truly excellent.*

Alan Coday 2024

This is a far cry from the screen-and-table display that formed our original concept of the presentation. Our heartfelt sincere thanks go to everyone who was involved in the creation of such a professional exhibition, particularly to Patrick, Ian, Ros, Jim, Leez Construction, Billy Bond and Trev Johnson who assisted with developing a display we can be proud of.

Celebrations form an important part of the project, as underlined by the NLHF themselves, so it was with great joy we were able to mark the opening of the exhibition. This proved a jubilant occasion, with 89 participants appreciating a talk about her great-aunt by Naomi, before Jenny Weston, Naomi's mother and Rosemary's niece, cut the ribbon to open the exhibition. Attendees were then encouraged to explore our beautiful church, the artistry contained within, and the displays, whilst consuming cake and bubbly.

This was not the only celebration however as, towards the end of May, a small party led by Rev'd. Carolyn scaled the tower, negotiating the numerous ladders that led to the gleaming pinnacle of the newly restored weathervane. Witnessed by members of the PCC and Project Rutherford volunteers, the ascending team returned to *terra firma* for a festive light lunch. Although minor delays had pushed the scheduled completion of work into June, with the ever-patient project-manager Aiden Fothergill leaving Bakers at the end of May, we celebrated the end of the building work slightly early to ensure his input was acknowledged.

Once the external work was finally completed (in August!) we were able to consider the refurbishment of the internal tower. Initially the walls required some repair work then were painted with a warm white lime-wash and the stairs cleaned and re-glossed. Once the painting work was finished, Claudia, the conservationist from Tobit Curteis, spent many days carefully restoring the beauty of our fresco and removing all the damaging salt efflorescence. Although to the untrained eye it may not appear to be very different, the 'before' and 'after' photographs taken illustrate what an amazing job she achieved. Our warm thanks are extended to her as it proved lonely work in a cold environment.

With all paint pots removed, the carpet could finally be laid. A deep red, chosen by the PCC, adds to the illusion of warmth in the space, making it a much more comfortable environment for anyone who uses it, particularly our campanologists. Furniture is kept to a minimum so as not to interfere with the bell ringing. Nevertheless, a beautiful table, made out of one of the redundant pews by Malcolm Deacon, has been graced by a stunningly embroidered drape reflecting the turmoil of the waves in the fresco, created by Joan Vine. We are exceedingly grateful to both for their exceptional work. This space now offers a more private area for reflection, meditation and prayer, as desired. Please use it.

The important outreach work of Project Rutherford has also continued apace throughout the year.

A number of *People and Stone* talks have been given at the church, motivated by the enthusiasm of Neil Wiffen and assisted by Ros:

28<sup>th</sup> January '*Deep History in the Church Walls*' by Ian Mercer (67 attendees)

25<sup>th</sup> February '*Stained Glass and Rosemary Rutherford*' by Chris Parkinson (56 attendees)

25<sup>th</sup> March '*Life and Art of Rosemary Rutherford*' by Naomi Courtenay-Luck (87 attendees)

29<sup>th</sup> April '*Trees and People in the Churchyard*' by Roger Cole (45 attendees)

3<sup>rd</sup> June '*A tour of the Church Walls*' by Ian Mercer (15 attendees)

24<sup>th</sup> June '*Churchyard Natural History*' – plants and lichen by Sue Browning (24 attendees)

22<sup>nd</sup> July '*Churchyard Natural History – animals, birds & mini-beasts*' by Sue Browning and Ros Mercer (37 attendees)

30<sup>th</sup> September '*The Location of Broomfield Church in the Landscape*' by Simon Coxall (36 attendees)

11<sup>th</sup> November '*The War Art of Rosemary Rutherford*' by Naomi Courtenay-Luck and Kathy Rouse (79 attendees)

20<sup>th</sup> November '*Fresco Workshop*' with Claudia from Tobit Curteis (8 attendees)

and Cathy Pearson gave a talk about Rosemary at the Essex Records Office in October with a stall selling the church booklets.

We also hosted the AGMs of two societies: Essex Society of Archaeology and History on 17<sup>th</sup> June, and Friends of Historic Essex on 8<sup>th</sup> July, and gave talks about the project to both. In this way not only have we enjoyed a wide variety of talks relating to the church in some way, but a significant number of people who do not belong to St Mary's have visited the church and heard about the project. A particular vote of thanks is given to Karen and the ladies who work so hard creating and delivering delicious refreshments that prove a significant attraction for the audiences.

The fifth publication from these talks was made available in March, titled *Rosemary Rutherford: life and work of an extraordinary artist*, and the sixth, focusing on her stained-glass, is nearing completion. Revision of the *Church Walls* booklet, incorporating the new information from the tower, is in progress.

In order for us to gain a wider understanding of Rosemary's work, two coach trips were arranged by Ros via Ray Spiller of Broomfield Coaches. The first, in May, visited a number of churches in Essex containing her stained glass: St Paul's in Clacton, St Edmund's in Tendring and St Lawrence Bradfield. At St Mary's Hadleigh, Ian Grutchfield gave us an impromptu talk about nearby Benton End, where Rosemary spent time painting and we ended by visiting St Mary's Boxford. The second tour, on 19<sup>th</sup> October, started at the stained-glass museum in Ely Cathedral then visited the Suffolk churches of Hinderclay and Walsham le Willows. It was particularly enjoyable to learn more about Rosemary from her niece, Jenny, who accompanied us on both trips, and our thanks are given to Chris Parkinson who gave us an informative commentary throughout both days.

Our work with the local schools and children's clubs has formed an important part of the project outreach and has helped us re-ignite our links post-COVID. A very successful event celebrating aspects of Christingle was held for the local Beavers on 1<sup>st</sup> February, which 21 children and 7 adults attended. Then, in later spring, 180 Year 7 students from the high school visited the church as part of their Religious Education curriculum. This was followed by 60-year 1 primary school pupils guided in an exploration of the churchyard and trees, and later Rev'd. Dawn and Chris Bailey visited the school to talk to 42 year 4 pupils. In October, three volunteers were invited to the primary school to talk again to year 4 students. Although much of this work has related to Christianity, in November two groups were welcomed into the church to study Rosemary Rutherford and stained-glass. The year 10 History Group from Chelmer Valley High School have adopted a project on the Life and Work of Rosemary Rutherford and her impact on Broomfield which, when completed, will be displayed in the school. Later that same week, the whole of year 3 from the Primary School came to explore the use of stained-glass in a church. Grateful thanks are extended to all who are involved in these vital outreach activities.

We have been able to promote the church and Project Rutherford at a number of village events. During the summer, volunteers ran a stall at both the village Coronation Fayre and local primary school PTA Fayre. At these events the project and various items were displayed as well as engaging the children in a number of related colouring activities. Thanks to all who participated in these.

The Christmas Tree festivals run at Gt. Waltham and Broomfield Village Hall were both supported with two different trees decorated with Rutherford related items made by Ros Mercer and Sheila Hasler. Our thanks to both of them for the work involved in these events.

Information about the project has spread far and wide during this year. It was with great pleasure that we were able to welcome 37 individuals from France, visiting Broomfield as part of the twinning programme with Gt. Waltham, and shortly after, 31 visitors came as part of an outing from St Andrews. Over the year we have logged 336 visitors to the church when open on a Tuesday and Thursday morning. It is a great joy to be able to make our church available and we are grateful to all those who act as stewards facilitating such visits.

Over the year we have held four meetings for everyone who volunteers or is interested in helping with the project. These have been well attended and proved exciting gatherings, where sharing ideas and

experiences help stimulate new proposals and keep levels of motivation high. For example, Neil brought the idea of blue plaques to our attention at one meeting and now we are able to boast such a plaque, commemorating Rosemary's work, on an external wall of the church hall. This was paid for by Chelmsford City Council and unveiled by our Chelmsford Mayor in November. It was featured in the January edition of *Essex Life*.

The finances have been an enduring concern since the discovery of the rotten timbers so it was an immense relief when the NLHF reconsidered their original refusal to help, by agreeing to increase our grant. With the donations already agreed we are hopeful this will cover our expenses. However, we continue to raise money through various activities, and selling two pews to Channels helped fund the extra work undertaken.

As can be appreciated from the length of this report, Project Rutherford has proved a complex and stimulating venture that has drawn on the skills of many of our church members and supporters within the local community. We extend very sincere thanks to all who have been actively involved and to those who have maintained support for us with their prayers.

*The Core Leadership Team: Alun Powell, Jim Tibbott, Malcolm Taylor, Trudy Stevens*



## ECO CHURCH

Eco Church is a project that has been set up by A Rocha UK a Christian Charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world. The aim of this project is to equip Christians and churches in the UK to care for the Environment. At St Mary's this work has been ongoing since April 2021.

Eco Church focusses on five key areas: worship and teaching; management of church buildings; management of church land; community and global engagement; and lifestyle. We currently have the Bronze award status and have been working this year to gain our Silver award which we hope we will achieve in 2024. Although we are currently Bronze status, overall the individual breakdown of each category shows that we are already at Gold standard for worship and teaching; Silver standard for both the management of buildings and land; and Bronze for both community and global engagement and lifestyle.

We have continued to work this year to promote better environmental action amongst our congregation. This is done through regular environmental worship and teachings; Eco Church sections of our parish magazine; and Eco Church events. We have had some very successful environmental events within our People and Stone lectures which have been really well attended by both adults and children. As a Fairtrade Church we have a Fairtrade stall at our services once a month. As part of our Eco Church activity we are also committing to praying regularly for a different environmental charity each month.

As we work towards our Silver award, we are concentrating more on moving our environmental efforts beyond our congregation by also thinking about our wider community and global reach. These are areas which we are excited to develop more throughout 2024.

We have a small Eco group working on the above which includes Rachel Butterworth, Sarah Clark, Sheila Hasler, Yvonne Heaver, Karen Paxton, Kathy Rouse and Glynis Worboys. We are also part of the NCMMP Eco Church Network which enables the churches to support one another and share information and ideas about our Eco Church journeys.

*Rachel Butterworth*

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY GROUP (1)

This Group has been hosted by a number of Church members during its over 50 years of existence. Chris Watson and Mavis Tebby shared the leadership for a long time until Chris became unwell and sadly died. Mavis herself has now retired from the leadership as age has crept up, but she still attends and makes lively and incisive contributions.

During the year Jennifer Salisbury, a more recent member who joined when she moved to Broomfield, has sadly died and we miss her contribution based on her deep knowledge of scripture.

We still meet at my home where members are greeted with a cup of coffee. We have decided to share the leading of each session, with the aid of various study guides. We are finding this stimulating and not so daunting as we first thought. We know we are amongst friends and we all support each other. This is one of the strengths of the group. At the start we pray for each other and our friends and acquaintances, as well as wisdom as we study God's word in the scriptures and try to connect it with our lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Ros Mercer*

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY GROUP (2) – 'BAFFLED BY THE BIBLE'

Our little group continues to meet together weekly on a Wednesday afternoon to explore the gift of God's Word to us in Scripture and to consider its relevance in our daily lives.

With the help of a Bible study guide by Tom Wright we looked at the Letter to the Ephesians. This Letter helped us understand some general teachings, theory and practice of the early Christian Church.

We then chose some of our favourite parables. We discussed the meaning of these parables and reflected on what Jesus was trying to teach his followers and how this teaching is relevant to us today.

In our study of Isaiah we discovered how so much of this Prophet's writings are used in the Liturgy and our hymns of today. We noted the many references in Isaiah to the promise of the Messiah.

During Advent we used Stephen Cottrell's "Walking Backwards to Christmas". Stephen tries to look through the eyes of many characters in the Christmas story. He imagines the experiences of some



mentioned in the Bible and some who may have been there. He starts with Anna the prophetess, Rachel weeping for her son, King Herod, Casper, David a shepherd, Martha the innkeeper's wife, Joseph, Elizabeth and Mary. This book gave us a fresh insight into the traditional Christmas story, prompting much discussion and reflection.

All are welcome to join us as we continue to explore together the richness of God's Word to us.

*Christine Bailey*

## LITTLE LAMBS

Little Lambs numbers have increased this year, with between 13 and 15 families joining Rose, Virginia and me on Thursday mornings.

Glynis and Brian have been regular visitors with Errol their guide dog. He is so patient with the children, we will be sad to see him go.

We enjoy watching the children grow in confidence as they learn to play and share with each other and we look forward to 2024.

*Margaret Deacon*

## FRIENDS WITH FAITH

This group used to meet every alternate Tuesday during term time but now meets every alternate Monday from 9.30am for an hour and is run by the Rev'd Carolyn Tibbott. It is a group for parents and carers of children of all ages to meet for mutual Christian support and discussion. If parents and carers have pre-school children, they are able to play whilst we chat.

We continue to enjoy open and relaxed spiritual discussions. It is a group valued by its members providing shared support, a great opportunity to talk about issues beyond day-to-day childcare and also explore members' Christianity. Discussions are mostly based around scripture. Additionally, we are able to give support to each other through open chat both face to face and via our WhatsApp group. All discussions have enabled us to deepen our Christian understanding and faith and find the support we all need from each other.

We are a regular group now of 5 people. All new members will be warmly welcomed, especially those with little ones who are not at school and can play while we chat.

*Rachel Butterworth*

## THE LIGHT GROUP

The Light Group is a group for our young people to explore and think about the Christian faith. We meet monthly, usually on the first Tuesday of the month at 5.30pm in St Leonard's Hall.

Our usual evening consists of a game, a discussion and pizza! It is a space for our young people to meet and talk about things that are relevant and affect them, to build friendships and know they are not alone, and to discuss and ask questions about the Christian faith. All questions are valid and welcomed!

This academic year we are thinking about parables – so far, we have looked at yeast, the speck and the plank, the lost sheep, becoming like a child and the Good Samaritan. We have thought about why Jesus used parables to teach us and how we can apply the parables to us today.

We have a core group of 7 young people attending regularly but there is always space for more to join. Do please chat to any of the team if you know a young person who may be interested in joining Light Group. And please pray for the Light Group and the faith that is growing in each one of these young people.

*Jill Readings, Steve Readings, Joan Vine and Rev'd. Dawn*

## SUPPORTING WORSHIP

### CHURCH MUSIC

I'd like to begin this year's report by thanking all those of you who have commented on and thanked us for the music which fills our church every week. Music is such a powerful form of expression and I am delighted that the singing of the choir and the playing of our organ fills your hearts with joy. It helps to focus our worship and has the power to move us in so many different ways.

Our wonderful and enthusiastic choir meets every week and we have such lovely, fun rehearsals which contain lots of laughter. They have taken on the challenge of learning new music this year and always rise to the challenge. We meet at 4.15pm on a Friday and new members are always welcome.

We have continued to play and sing at a few weddings and funerals during the year, as well as special services such as the celebratory Coronation service.

Thank you to Jane for playing regularly at our services. As I have said a number of times in the past, we are so very lucky to have one organist, let alone two.

I have had the pleasure of choosing hymns for our services this year. My aim was to get through the whole year without repeating a hymn! In the main this was achieved, which is why you've heard hymns which you haven't sung for many years or learned new ones from the modern era. Children's hymns at our family services have been successful and have helped those services go with a swing! If you have a favourite hymn which I haven't used yet please let me know.

*Jill Parkin*

## ST. MARY'S BELL RINGERS

Another year has elapsed with the bells of St Mary's continuing to ring out. This year has seen the restoration work on the tower completed, both inside and out, which has made for a much-improved ringing environment for us with a new carpet and fresh paint work in the tower. We have rung for several weddings throughout the year in addition to regular Sunday Services. We hosted a District Practice with ringers from different towers within Essex attending to ring with us at Broomfield.



Ringers from our tower also participated in nationwide ringing for the Coronation of King Charles III, ringing the bells both at Broomfield and Little Waltham at the same time as other towers all across the country. This was an event organised by the Central Council for Church Bell Ringers to commemorate this historic occasion.

We also entered a band in the Essex Association of Change Ringers Call Change Competition on Saturday 3rd June held at St Mary the Virgin, Burnham-on-Crouch and we came a very commendable second.

Members of our local band also regularly support other towers, ringing at Great Waltham, Boreham and Pleshey. We are a community that supports each other and if you are interested in being a part of this and learning to ring please contact Chris Marcus, the Tower Captain, for more information. By email at [broomfield@eacr.org.uk](mailto:broomfield@eacr.org.uk) or by telephone 07730 796 422.

*Chris Marcus*

## BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP (BRF)

These booklets, which are published three times a year, are enjoyed by several of our church-goers. They offer daily texts from the Bible followed by comment from several well-known professional Christian authors. The cost is around £16 for the years' subscription.

The most popular booklet is New Daylight, which also comes in a larger-print form. Other publications are: Guidelines, which gives a more in-depth bible study; and Upper Room, which suggests a bible reading followed by meditations which are written by readers themselves. Within the booklets are suggestions for other publications issued by BRF.

For further information, there are past issues situated on the bier in church where you will also find information regarding the work of BRF. They can also be reached online at [brf.org.uk](http://brf.org.uk).

*Margaret Ginn*

## CHURCH WEBSITE

I am pleased to say that all is going well on the portion of the website I work on – namely the calendar. Having to get to grips with a new website, with a completely different layout did prove a challenge at first, but thankfully, it has now become easier and more accessible to the majority of people. I would like to thank Andrew the webmaster for all the help, support and advice he has given me over the last year.

*Joan Vine*

## THE WIDER CHURCH

### TUESDAY CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

For those who do not know of us we are a group of volunteers who meet every Tuesday morning, usually from 9.00am to about 12.30 - 1pm. There are 18 of us in all including 2 new members who joined in the autumn.

We maintain the churchyard and the car park and our tasks include cutting the grass, trimming the hedges and shrubs, clearing leaves, tidying the graves and the cremated remains areas, attending to the flower beds, sweeping the paths around the church and clearing the surface water channels and drains.

The large variety of trees is a notable feature of our churchyard and the routine maintenance of the trees features in the tasks of the Working Party.

Towards the end of 2022 we had all the trees within the confines of the churchyard and on the boundaries surveyed by a professional arboriculturist. Following on from the survey, permissions were gained from the Diocese and Chelmsford City Council for work to be carried out on certain trees. This work was divided into two phases to spread the cost and a quotation for the first phase accepted. Unfortunately the preferred contractor has been delayed and this work will now take place early in 2024.

As reported last year, the “Queen’s Green Canopy” initiative was for 3 million new trees to be planted by the end of the 2022 Jubilee Year. We participated in this initiative and the churchyard extension meadow area now has a “triple-row” hedge comprising native hedgerow species such as hazel, blackthorn, crab apple, elder, dog rose and rowan. In spite of the very dry summers, the majority of the hedge saplings appear to have survived and we have replaced where possible those that suffered. The hedge saplings have been mulched with collected leaves in the autumn and this has helped them to grow and flourish. Several saplings have been selected to grow into hedgerow trees whilst the remainder will be kept at an appropriate height. There is a plaque commemorating our participation in this initiative attached to the water catchment feature.

The grass of the extension area on both sides of the path is managed by contractors and therefore is not within the Working Party's remit.

The work on the graves includes levelling and filling where they have sunk. We purchased topsoil and grass seed for this purpose. We are also removing edging and chippings where appropriate. These make it difficult to mow between the graves and risk damage to the mowers. Where graves have not been visited for some time we place notices to advise people that we would like to carry out this work and give family or visitors time to contact us. As is to be expected, many of the older graves have no visitors. All of the work on the graves is sensitively carried out.

The PCC have given us authority to ensure that the churchyard is maintained in accordance with the rules and we remove items from graves that are deemed in contravention of those rules. This includes grave surrounds, plastic and artificial flowers, photographs, cards, balloons, wind-chimes, soft toys, ornaments, candles and personal belongings or memorabilia etc. We also remove any dead flowers and shrubs together with empty vases, particularly glass, which may break if blown over.

Expenses are kept to a minimum as much as possible and apart from the trees our major expense is usually petrol for the mowers and strimmers, parts for the latter and weedkiller to deal with the courtyard paving and car park. The recent dry summers have slowed the growth of grass and kept our petrol costs low.

It is estimated that over 1,000 man-hours of work go into the maintenance of the Churchyard and car park every year. This is a very significant voluntary commitment by the members of the Working Party to the benefit of our church.

An important part of our role is a presence in the churchyard on Tuesday mornings when we are available to talk to visitors. We have many regulars with whom we enjoy a chat.

Our very welcome practice of a refreshment break during the morning with sausage rolls has continued and we usually partake of this outside in the churchyard or the courtyard. There is a rota and each member has the important responsibility to buy the sausage rolls and milk when it is their turn. We are very grateful to Di who warms the sausage rolls and makes the drinks every Tuesday. We also enjoy group lunches from time to time at a local hostel and we had a Christmas lunch on the Tuesday before Christmas.

We continue to look after the churchyard in a manner so that there is a balance between the need to make it attractive to local people and visitors, whilst also encouraging wild flowers, insects, birds and bats, by leaving areas of grass uncut and log piles. Areas of our churchyard are at least as old as the church building, if not older, and have been a refuge for plants and animals for generations.

We are a very sociable group and anybody who enjoys a chat would be very welcome to call in and see us on a Tuesday morning anytime between 9.00 and 12.30. If you time your visit to coincide with our break between 10.30 and 11.00 you would even be offered a sausage roll, coffee or tea. Maybe you will enjoy our company so much you might want to join us!

*David Marcus*

## FILM CLUB

At the beginning of 2023 I was asked to assist Peter and then 'fill his shoes' with the running of Film Club. I gladly took this on and enjoy running it every month. It has been lovely to get to know everyone and they have welcomed me with open arms. We have also had a couple of new members join the group too.

A great variety of films were watched during the past year and I thank our regular picture goers for their continued support. We meet every month, other than during the summer break. Some of the films we watched this year were... 'The Kings Speech', 'The Wrong Box', 'Going in Style', 'Mrs Harris goes to Paris', and lots more. We finished 2023 with 'The Nativity', the human story, which was very fitting for the time of year.

The Film Club meet on the second Monday of each month at 12.30pm, other than during school holidays. Bring your own lunch with you, we provide tea or coffee, and I sometimes treat the group to some nice cake and goodies!!

Some of the films lined up for 2024 are: 'Pay it Forward', and 'Chocolat', which is a Lent special, this will be shown after a special Lent Lunch in March. I also have some comedies and romcoms 'in the bag' too!

Any new members are always very welcome. Details of the planned films can be found in The Parish Magazine 'The Round Tower'.

Hope to see you at one of showings in 2024.

*Sarah Clark*

## BEETLE DRIVE

We've had a good attendance at our meetings in 2023 and even welcomed two visitors from Manchester in November. Our sessions are very lively and can be noisy when we get carried away with our enthusiasm. We start at 2 pm on the third Thursday of the month in the Church Hall and end, after a hot drink, cake and a chat, at about 4-4.30 pm. We sadly lost one player in 2023. We always enthusiastically welcome new players.

Give it a go – just £1.

*Margaret Powell*

## ST. MARY'S LADIES GROUP

The Ladies Group has had another very successful year with a current membership of 31 ladies. The topics in our monthly meetings have been wide ranging with speakers from local, national, and international charities. In addition, other afternoons have included a Beetle Drive; a Harvest Supper and our usual Christmas Celebration.

We donated over £400 this year to our chosen charities which included:

- Sanctus – the Chelmsford charity supporting homeless and vulnerable people.
- Safer Places for Women.
- Helen Rollason local cancer charity.
- Amnesty International.

At Christmas we donated numerous luxury Christmas Gifts for clients of the Chelmsford Foodbank. Our meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month in St. Leonards Hall at 2pm. They are also advertised in the Round Tower magazine and on the church website. Any ladies who would like to join us will receive a very warm welcome.

*Sue Cole*

## THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

19 members of St Mary's congregation have a Children's Society box where they deposit their loose change throughout the year. These were brought to church to be blessed at St. Mary's Annual Christingle Service. A total of £633 was raised by our box holders with potentially another £105 in Gift Aid. The Christingle Service itself also has a collection to raise funds for the Society.

The Children's Society helps children in the UK who are living in poverty; going to bed hungry, cold, or living in houses that are not safe. The cost-of-living crisis has additionally put huge pressure on children and their families. Those who are already struggling are being hardest hit and many families are facing devastating choices. This is where the Children's Society focuses much of its help. They also provide specialist support that empowers young people to make positive changes and rediscover their hope.

I would like to thank all those who continue to support the Children's Society. The kindness and compassion shown by box holders makes it possible for those struggling with family expenses to get the right support and for children in crisis to enjoy the healthy happy childhood they deserve.

*Sue Cole*

## CHRISTIAN AID

We used to be the second largest parish in Chelmsford donating to Christian Aid Week, but sadly this has diminished tremendously since COVID restrictions and our decision not to undertake the door-to-door collections. In 2023 I was able to bank £250 from St Mary's, although many may have generously donated online. We are not able to acknowledge these but thank the donors for giving this way.

No doubt our concentration of Project Rutherford has curtailed our efforts elsewhere, so as elements of this are drawing to a close, perhaps in 2024 we may be able to think about the work of this excellent organisation and undertake some fundraising for those who are less well off than ourselves.

**Christian Aid Week in 2024 will be 12<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> May**  
and is being celebrated as  
**'Seven days, so many ways to fund lasting change'**

It will focus on community-led projects across the world. Do visit their website to learn more about these initiatives.

As a start we are introducing Lenten Lunches during the Mondays of Lent with the donations going to Christian Aid. Hopefully our church contribution to this important work will be significantly higher for 2024.

*Trudy Stevens*

## FLOWER ARRANGERS

2023 has been another relatively quiet year for us - starting with 100 posies for Mothering Sunday, three weddings during the year requiring flower arrangements, some extra flowers for the King's Coronation which coincided with a Rutherford project presentation. As usual weekly Sanctuary flowers throughout the year, except during Lent and Advent, have been provided with an Advent ring of foliage. The ladies of the team provided flowers for brightening the church for Easter, harvest and Christmas. Sadly Cynthia, one of the team died during the summer. Roger and Sue Cole kindly adorned the church and courtyard railings with poppies and servicemen's names for Remembrance weekend, which also saw the unveiling of the Rosemary Rutherford plaque and appropriately the talk on Rosemary's war art. Janet Pearson and I helped 11 participants make Christmas wreaths and table decorations at the Christmas Fayre, with very pleasing results.

My thanks to the loyal team of helpers and Rev. Carolyn and Rev. Dawn for their support.

*Margaret Pinkerton*

## THE ROUND TOWER MAGAZINE

Our readership is drifting downwards but we still distribute over 170 a month and many thanks to our distributors who deliver the bulk of them to people's doors. Maybe one day the Round Tower will exist only on-line but for the time being hard copies rule!

When visiting other churches, I always look for their parish magazine to gain ideas for ours but am usually disappointed. The strength of our Round Tower lies in the number of people from the congregation who supply the material for it. We can easily get to a dozen contributors a month and that is something special which I don't find replicated elsewhere. Thank you and well done to our writers, our distributors and our editorial panel. Without you we would be another magazine-less parish.

*Alun Powell*