

*Parish of
St. John-in-Bedwardine*

2022

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

and

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 29th May at 11.30am

AGENDA

and

REPORTS

**The Accounts for 2021 and the Independent
Examiner's Report are shown in Annexe A**

St. John-in-Bedwardine Church
Agenda for the Annual Meeting
Sunday 29th May 2022 at 11.30am

Welcome and Opening prayers

PART 1 MEETING FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS Page

Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2021 Part 1.

1. Election of Churchwardens. 2

PART 2 ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Apologies.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2021 Part 2. 2-3

3. Matters Arising.

4. Elections of Parochial representatives of the laity:

a. To the Parochial Church Council (5 vacancies).

b. To the Deanery Synod (2 vacancies).

5. Appointments:

a. Appointment of Independent Examiner. 4

6. A Report on changes in the roll since the last annual meeting. 4

7. An Annual Report on the proceedings of the parochial church council and the activities of the parish generally:

a. Vicar's Annual Report. 4-6

b. Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council..... 6-7

c. Reports from Church Committees and Groups (written). 8-19

8. Financial Report and Accounts for the year ending 31.12.21

*The Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2021 are contained in **Annexe A** and incorporate the Finance Report and the Independent Examiner's report.*

9. Churchwardens' annual report on the fabric, goods, and ornaments of the Parish Church. 20-21

10. Report on the proceedings of Deanery Synod. 22

11. Joint Council

12. Any Other Business.

PART 3 MEETING OF THE NEW PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

1. Election of Lay Vice-Chairman.

2. Election of Secretary.

3. Co-option of Members.

4. Election of Treasurer.

5. Confirmation of Standing Committee

6. AOB.

7. Date of next meeting.

ST JOHN-IN-BEDWARDINE
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
11.30AM SUNDAY 23RD MAY 2021

The Vicar, Phil Bradford, took the chair. He noted that due to Covid-19 restrictions the meeting would be as short as possible. Questions had been invited before the meeting, but none were forthcoming.

Attendees: Revd Phil Bradford, Graham Evans, Sue Evans, Sue Bale, Jane Askew, Catherine Templeton, Pam Youens, Luise Horrocks, Liz Forman, Margaret Rutter, John Brierley, John English, Jenny English, Anne Everitt, Roger Job, Joy Job, Barbara Willis, Graham Willis, Peter Collier, John Pound, Thomas Pound, Arthur Lee, Pamela Botsford, Ruth Reeves, Edward Reeves, Ellen Little, Rob Little. Arthur Miller, Mary Hancock, Lawton Hancock, Dorothy Little, John Pragnell, Tim Cox, and Liz Edwards.

Apologies: Colin Nash, Sandra Nash, Revd Sarah Cottrill, Alice Evans, Philip Evans, Chris Rees, Amy Rees

Part 1 *The appointment of Churchwardens.*

The minutes of the meeting on 18th October 2020 (part 1) were approved.

There were two nominations for the post of Churchwarden, Gordon Templeton, and Joy Job. The meeting elected them both unanimously.

The Vicar thanked Gordon and Joy for all their work during the last year which has been made more difficult with guidelines constantly changing.

Part 2 *The Annual Parochial Church Meeting.*

The minutes of the meeting on 18th October 2020 (part 2) were approved as a true and accurate record.

For the PCC election: There were 5 vacancies. 4 people were proposed and elected: Amy Rees, Luise Horrocks, John Pound, and Jenny English. There is one vacancy.

For the Deanery Synod election: There were 2 vacancies and no nominations.

Appointment of Independent Examiner – All were in favour of the re-appointment of Grahame Lucas as our independent Examiner for 2021.

Following the yearly revision of the electoral roll, it now has 117 members.

The Vicar noted that all reports had been issued in advance in booklet form. He drew attention to the statutory reports. He thanked everyone for their great response to the difficulties of the past year.

The 2020 accounts and treasurers' report were contained in the annexe to the annual report's booklet. Phil Bradford proposed that the accounts were formally adopted. All were in favour, with one abstention.

Phil Bradford recorded thanks to Chris Rees for all the time and effort he had put into the accounts.

The Churchwardens' Annual Report for 2020 was accepted. The report on the proceedings of Deanery Synod was noted.

Part 3 *Parochial Church Council Meeting*

Attendees: Revd Phil Bradford, Chris Rees, Joy Job, Sue Bale, Luise Horrocks, Graham Evans, Gordon Templeton, Jenny English, John Pound, Barbara Willis, Graham Willis, Margaret Rutter, and Liz Edwards

Apologies: Revd Sarah Cottrill, Colin Nash and Amy Rees

At the PCC Meeting held immediately following the APCM the following appointments were made:

Assistant Churchwarden: It was agreed to abolish the position of Assistant Churchwarden.

Lay Vice Chair: Colin Nash was re-elected unopposed.

Secretary: Liz Edwards (appointed as a non-member of the PCC, remunerated within her role as Parish Administrator) was re-elected unopposed.

Co-opted Members: No members were co-opted onto the PCC. (The PCC can have 2 people co-opted and this can be done at any time during the year).

Treasurer: Chris Rees was re-elected unopposed.

Composition of the **Standing Committee** was agreed as: The Vicar, Lay Vice Chair, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Graham Evans (as previous PCC Secretary), with Sarah Cottrill (Vicar of St Clements) invited to attend.

Flat 1A Bromyard Road: Phil Bradford had previously sent information around the PCC regarding works needed to bring the flat up to date in order to start renting it out again.

Phil proposed the following 4 points.

1. That the PCC authorises Andrew Grant's contractor to undertake these works as quoted.
2. That Brian Askew be authorised to arrange quoted for replacing the boiler and seek permission/quotes for installing secondary glazing, and to ensure that no other permissions are required for the internal works.
3. That the PCC approve the expenditure of up to £20,000 to cover all these works.
4. That an application be made by the PCC to the Feoffees to cover 80% of the cost (up to £16,000).

The PCC were all in favour.

Date of Next PCC Meeting: Monday 21st June 7.30pm in the Blakefield Room or North Aisle (tbc).

*Liz Edwards – PCC Secretary
May 2021*

APPOINTMENTS

Appointment of Independent Examiner

The proposal is to re-appoint Mr Grahame Lucas as our Independent Examiner.

Chris Rees, Treasurer, May 2022

Electoral Roll Report

The church Electoral Roll stood at 117 after the 2021 APCM.

1 person has been added since the 2021 APCM and 5 have been removed. The new roll is 113 (a decrease of 4).

In accordance with rule 5 of the Church Representation Rules 2020, a copy of the roll as revised has been published for not less than fourteen days before the annual parochial church meeting.

Graham Evans, Electoral Roll Officer

Vicar's Annual Report

2021 was another challenging year, as we continued to live with the restrictions and uncertainties of Covid-19. The main difference from 2020 was that we did not face any compulsory suspension of services, while the vaccination programme allowed us to gradually open up throughout the year and (despite the blip of Omicron) look forward to 2022 with more optimism. If the pandemic still dominated much of 2021, at least we found ourselves being able to begin to look at other issues and confront some of the other challenges we face.

Although the country went into lockdown at the start of 2021, we were given the option of whether or not we closed the churches. Sarah and I were adamant that we should continue to offer worship in person, and I am very grateful to the standing committee and the PCC for their resolute support in that. We did offer a few months of online services in addition, which provided access to worship for some who would otherwise have been unable or unwilling to participate in person, and I am enormously grateful to Philip Evans for all the hard work he put into making this happen. Ultimately, however, I believe it was extremely important that we remained open for worship, as it provided a vital service to those unable to access the internet or for whom it was sometimes the only personal contact they had all week. Thanks are due to the ALMs who were willing to continue leading services across the churches, as well as to those who worked behind the scenes to ensure that we were able to continue to stay open while complying with the law.

There were, of course, sadnesses within this; worship with masks and distancing, and especially without singing and wine at communion, did not feel the same. Nevertheless, the key thing was that we did continue to have communal worship, and as restrictions eased through the year, we began to return to something more normal as singing, then the choir, then the chalice returned. If all was not quite as before by the end of 2021, given concerns over Omicron, we entered 2022 in a much better position than we had begun 2021.

Nevertheless, the aftermath has left us with serious challenges to confront. If numbers recovered somewhat from the lowest point during Covid, only the Tuesday morning congregation has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Sunday morning attendance remained down, and while this can in part be attributed to Covid (some were frightened of returning, others did not enjoy worship subject to restrictions), it is not the only cause. The Church of England neglected many of its members during the pandemic with its relentless focus on online provision, and doubtless we as a local church failed some people. There is also the reality that when a church loses its own vicar and the clergy are spread more thinly, pastoral care and congregation numbers suffer. With several deaths during the last couple of years, there has been a notable reduction in the size of the electoral roll. Financially, therefore, we are in a difficult position, with reduced income. While we have let the refurbished flat once again, the renovation did come at a cost, albeit one largely absorbed by the Feoffees. The new ministry share demands are high, which places further pressure on the budget, and we are facing the possibility of some major repair work on the Tower. While we need urgently to look at the matter of the pews, which in their current form are inhibiting key parts of our ministry and outreach, we lack both the resources to do anything and a person to drive such a project forward. There are thus considerable challenges to face in the immediate future.

Amidst that, however, let us not lose sight of the positives. A focus on Sunday congregation numbers can blind us to the important outreach and community work being done elsewhere. The resumption of Little Lambs has proved popular, and it has returned to full strength, to the extent that we are struggling with helpers and lack of space. Community breakfasts are now supplemented by popular coffee and cake afternoons once a month, along with Café Church and Women's Breakfasts. Discover History has started again and is once more attracting many people. There is a wider focus and interest, and all those who work so hard to put on these events and reach out to the local community are to be commended and thanked.

The Worcester City West Team finally came into existence on 1 July 2021, after numerous delays and years of frustration. St John's remains a separate parish within the Team, but we must actively look at closer collaboration with the others. This has already happened with St Michael's, as we now share a magazine, and they pay towards office costs. However, we are also looking towards more formal links (including a Joint Council) which will reduce unnecessary duplication of roles and workload, allowing us to concentrate together on our vision and mission in West Worcester in the years ahead. While there are issues which face St John's alone, not least the question of the building and its maintenance/reordering, the question of how best we serve the local community and minister in it is one we need to address on a Team level. This is especially important given the considerable amount of new housing which will be built in the local area in the near future.

There are many people to be thanked for their work in such a challenging year, and I cannot name them all here. However, I must extend my thanks to Gordon and Joy for all they have done as churchwardens, for the job is hard enough without the added pressure of a pandemic, and I am immensely grateful to them for all their support. St John's relies upon the hard work and commitment of so many people, and for that I would like to extend my thanks even if I cannot list everyone. We leave 2021 with considerable challenges, but with hope that we may gradually be able to put the misery of the pandemic behind us, and aware that we have many faithful people willing to work hard on our vision for the future.

Revd Phil Bradford

Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

The PCC met 6 times during the year (May 2021 to May 2022), a short meeting to appoint officers following the APCM in May and 5 ordinary meetings in June, September, and November 2021, January, and March 2022. The meeting in June 2021 was held online, the rest were held in person as Covid restrictions had eased.

In May 2021 the PCC approved expenditure of up to £20K for the work on Flat 1a, Bromyard Road to bring it up to standard to be rented out again.

The Worcester City West Team came into place on 1st July 2021. The Team consists of St John-in-Bedwardine, St Michael's, and St Clement's with St David's.

In September 2021 the PCC voted in favour of the Team asking the bishop for an order under Paragraph 12 of Schedule 3 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, to allow bans to be called in any church in the Team (where applicable). This was granted in January 2022.

In September 2021 Revd Phil Bradford proposed that a Joint PCC be created for the Team, to delegate certain functions and avoid duplication of roles. The PCC were happy to look at this possibility. A proposed scheme, put together by Revd Phil Bradford and Philip Evans was introduced to the PCC in March 2022, whereby each parish will remain separate and the Joint PCC will be made up of proportionate representation from each parish.

During 2021 a Mission Group was formed consisting of a group of 9 people from all 4 parishes.

Following the APCM in May 2021 the PCC had 15 members, leaving one vacancy. The PCC currently has one Deanery Synod Representative, leaving 2 vacancies. Deanery Synod Representatives are elected for a 3-year term. The next 3-year term starts in 2023, but representatives can be elected for the final year of the current term.

During 2021 there was 1 wedding and 6 baptisms. These all took place in the last 4 months of the year when Covid restrictions has eased. There were 12 funerals held in church and 5 funerals were held at Worcester Crematorium for St John's Parish. There was also 1 burial of ashes held at St John's Cemetery.

The PCC operates through a number of formal sub-committees and other groups/teams. Membership of the committees etc (except the Standing Committee) is not restricted to members of the PCC.

When planning our activities, the PCC is aware of, and takes into account the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance to charities concerned with the advancement of religion. The specific activities are reported throughout this document.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.) Safeguarding information is clearly visible on the front page of the website. The safeguarding policy was reviewed and reapproved in March 2022.

Each meeting opened with a prayer and closed with all saying 'The Grace'.

A summary of the minutes of each PCC meeting is placed upon the main church notice board and is published in the magazine.

Liz Edwards – PCC Secretary

REPORTS FROM CHURCH COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Standing Committee Annual Report May 2021 to May 2022

Every PCC has a Standing Committee with the power to act for the PCC between PCC meetings (as required by the Church Representation Rules).

At St John's, this function is most often exercised in relation to employment matters (which are explicitly delegated by the PCC to the Standing Committee), church maintenance and management of the parish properties.

A report of Standing Committee decisions and actions is provided to each PCC meeting.

Graham Evans

Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding continues with various updates being made all the time. DBS checks now need to be done every three years instead of five years. These are now done online, and the procedure is much quicker, with results usually coming back within 10 days. Thank you to all those who have recently had renewals carried out. All ALM's and people with a lead role in a group are having to take in-depth safeguarding training. They have had to submit written pieces of work and I know some people have found it daunting. However, after completing it I think most people have learnt from the experience. Thank you to all those who have completed the course.

We have continued to work through the parish dashboard. The regulations for appointing people into roles paid or voluntary now have to be carried out. This can sometimes be very time consuming but needed to ensure that any appointments can be as safe as we can possibly make them. It is often difficult to get the balance right with all the checks, job descriptions, references etc. that we have to get for a new role. However, we can see how important it is and we hope those of you involved in these procedures bear with us.

As always, at St Johns we take safeguarding seriously and rely on the congregation continuing to be vigilant and report anything they are concerned about regarding the safety of vulnerable children and adults. Even with all the necessary checks taken there could be individuals who can beat the checking system. It is therefore important that all those in the congregation remain vigilant and report anything they have a concern about with reference to safeguarding. Safeguarding concerns everyone.

Thank you for your support.

Jane Askew

Events Team Report

Following the dreadful years of the pandemic the team have started to bring back people into the church with the Good Old Days talks. These talks by Paul and Helen Harding from Discover History have always been very popular and we hoped that starting them again would help get people out and about again post-pandemic. The first talk was planned for October 2021 and was about the Home Guard in Worcester during WW2. We were extremely happy to see about 40 people turn up to enjoy the talk and have the now-traditional tea and cakes during the half time. Since then, the numbers have slowly increased, and we are getting about 60 attendees now at the talks. The team took the decision to charge £4 for the talk and refreshments and that has ensured that they have been able to cover the costs and make donations into church funds.

Paul has entertained us with a variety of talks in the last 6 months including:

- Guy Fawkes
- Victorian Christmas
- Frost Fayres
- Valentine's Day
- Holidays in the 1950s and 60s

A full programme is now underway for the coming year, and we hope that more people will join us as they feel able to.

The team tried to organise a Coach Trip towards the end of 2021 but with the conditions put on us by the coach company at the time and the lack of appetite from the previous coach trippers it eventually had to be cancelled. However, 2 trips are planned already for this year, one to Weston-Super-Mare and one to Oxford, which will incorporate a talk from Paul Harding on the way down. We have more people signed up for these trips and are therefore hopeful that they will become regular events again taking those people that find travel more difficult these days to places that they would not otherwise be able to visit.

Colin Nash

Pastoral Care Group

Over the past year as rules regarding the pandemic have eased and people are beginning to return to worship the pastoral care team has continued to offer support to members of the congregation who are ill and unable to attend church by phoning and sending cards to ensure our thoughts are with them, sadly we are unable to visit at present.

Thanks go to our clergy, church wardens and members of the congregation who continue to offer support and contact the team when necessary.

We hope to start visiting Teme Court and Regent Care Homes in our area to offer residents some contact with the church, to start with there will be Bible readings and hymns and later communion when it is safe to do so.

Healing services will hopefully re-commence this month. The service will be held around the font and is slightly less formal. Prayers and different ways of praying are being experienced by those who attend.

Sadly, Jenny English, who has led our short meditation, is unable to continue. I take this opportunity to say thank you for all the beautiful thoughts and words Jenny has brought to each service. Time will be given at the end of the service for those requesting private prayers. Tea and biscuits will be served after the service.

The prayer tree will have the prayer leaves changed regularly, removed leaves with messages on are prayed for before being destroyed.

Pastoral care team are: Sylvia Render, Sue Bale, Sue Hussell, Janet and Walter Hart, and Ruth Reeves.

Sylvia Render

Report from the Charities Committee

The Charity Committee has not met since the beginning of the Covid Pandemic.

We have, however, given small amounts of financial aid to individuals experiencing difficulties over this period.

The Committee has comprised of:

Sarah Cottrill (Chair); Margaret Rutter (Treasurer); Beth Broadway (Secretary); Luise Horrocks; Margaret Morris; Barbara Willis; Graham Willis.

During the last few months Margaret has resigned with immediate effect and I have announced my intention to stand down as Chair. After nearly eight years in this post, I feel it is time to let somebody else take the role. I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their work and their concern for those we have tried to help over the years.

Revd Sarah Cottrill

Friends of St John-in-Bedwardine

It has continued to be difficult with the restrictions that Covid has placed on everyone for social events. However, we were able to have our usual spot at Christopher Whitehead School Christmas Event and managed to raise some much-needed funds. It was good to catch up with the St Johns community. We have also had a table at the church's fundraising events and hope to do so again in the future. With restrictions easing, when the church arranges more events, we will be able to promote The Friends and gain new members.

The amount the Friends have raised this year is included in the overall financial report.

The aim of the Friends is to have financial assistance from those who are not members of the congregation but feel the church building is important to them, perhaps for the history of the actual place or a memory of times when the church has been used by themselves or family members. Therefore, all funds raised through the Friends are used to support, financially, the upkeep of the building,

Although we have said it is for people outside the church, we would also welcome members of the congregation to become a Friend. An old historic building such as St Johns is, can never have too many Friends.

Sue Bale

Communications

Our website, <https://www.stjohninbedwardine.co.uk/>, continues to grow with new users visiting on a regular basis. In the last year we had some 5,600 users, which is up from the 3,000 we had the last time I reported. The more information we can put out on the website then the more users we will get coming to read what we have to say and are doing. The access to our website is inextricably linked to our use of our Facebook page as well, as by putting information on Facebook but linking it to a main story on the website draws people in.

Facebook is really becoming key to getting our message out to the local community, <https://www.facebook.com/stjohninbedwardine>. Our posts regularly reach 300 people, but we have had some notable posts, such as Sandra Nash's photo of the Cathedral rising above the fog that reached nearly 3,000 people and the recent Easter Craft Activities and the Lions Ukrainian Appeal that both reached 2,200 people. Since we had some interaction with people on the WR2 Residents Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/995802520837333>, I have been using this as a secondary outlet for our information and stories. Many more people access this page, and it has proved quite useful in getting our information shared with the local community.

We still use our A Church Near You website, <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/18634/>, as a means of sharing information with those people who do not know what churches are nearby, it tells them what is going on in their local churches.

I am always keen to get items that need to be advertised on our various communications channels, but as I cannot know what is going on all the time, I do need people to let me know what they are doing and want to be advertised. We do know that the use of Facebook does increase the spread of our information.

Colin Nash

Churchyard

Things have gone very well during the last year in the churchyard. Following some comments on the WR2 Residents Facebook page a couple of keen local gardeners approached me and volunteered to help, which together with a Ukrainian gentleman who started helping me once we opened after the pandemic means that there are regularly a team of 4 working in the churchyard on a Tuesday morning. This has allowed us to get on with some of the tasks that I just could not tackle on my own.

Some of the tasks that we have managed to do include:

- We have cleared all the weeds from in front of the gravestones, laid weed suppressant membrane and covered it with bark chippings, this has made a great difference as the area looks much tidier and we do not have to spend time, each month weeding it.
- We have done similar around the fallen tree, the ivy-covered elephant sculpture, but just need to get some more bark to finish covering. Some trees, shrubs and other plants have been planted through the membrane to improve that area.
- We have really had a clear up of the future wildflower 'meadow', getting rid of as much of the grass as we can to allow the wildflower seeds to grow and gain a hold before the grass overtakes the area. This area we will need to keep on top of.
- At the east end of the church, where the old Yew tree fell down a couple of years ago, we have planted some shrubs to create a small shrubbery there.
- We had a good clear out of the conservation area during the spring and have plans to plant up some more wildlife-friendly shrubs and trees there.

Our future plans include planting some trees as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative, extending the wildflowers all the way to the road, and increasing the size of the Rose Garden in the corner by the gravestones. I would really like to get some proper noticeboards to tell people about the churchyard, but they are expensive, so I need a plan to raise the funds for them!

I would like to thank everyone who has donated time or money towards the work in the churchyard, especially my helpers, Jacqui Adams, Angie Wall, and Alex Koval. I do not think a week goes past when we are working out there that someone does not stop to say how much they enjoy coming into the churchyard and how good it looks. It is a real boost to us all for the work we put in.

I have now finished researching the burials in the churchyard up to the date the 'New' churchyard closed in October 1878. I have now identified around 9,600 burials that took place in the church and are therefore interred in the churchyard. This is an incredible number and one of the reasons that the soil is so high compared to the local roads and pavements.

Colin Nash

St. John's Flower Arranging Team Report

Due to Covid this last year has still been rather strange, wearing masks etc., but the vaccination scheme has made it possible to continue each week.

All members of the team have been very faithful, and we enjoy meeting to keep the church looking cheerful!

Needless to say, the cost of flowers has risen, and their availability is not as before. I never dreamt we would have to use lilies at Christmas, as carnations etc were not available anywhere. The growers had serious problems with floods etc!

We are trying to use 'oasis' as carefully as possible – it is biodegradable, but still not ideal. Hopefully a good substitute will come on the market very soon.

I thank all who have supported us so generously over the year, and the extra ladies who come to help at festival times. We continue to meet 10-12 on Friday mornings and welcome any visitors.

Eileen Cantrill

Children's Worship

A short report will be given verbally at the APCM by Amy Rees.

Little Lambs

A short report will be given verbally at the APCM by Amy Rees.

West Worcester Churches Young Adults Group

Young Adults is a fun social group for those aged 18 to 40 who worship in the Worcester City West Team of Churches.

With 2021 starting in lockdown and ending with restrictions there were few opportunities for face-to-face get togethers. We continue to be a group of friends but there have been few 'formal' events as we all seem to be so busy, but we are keen to restart meeting up again.

New members are always welcome and attendance at events is not compulsory. Just pop along to what interests you! And members are always welcome to suggest ideas!

For more information:

Speak to any one of us

Regular updates about events are posted on our Facebook page
www.facebook.com/groups/westworcesteryoungadults/

Contact us via email at young.adults@westworchesterchurches.org.uk

Organisers: Beth Broadway, Philip Evans, and Alice Evans

Annual Report of Music Group

Another strange year - only getting back to normal(ish) in 2022.

We have resumed our normal pattern of supporting the All-Age Worship, usually on second Sundays, but the Healing Services have not resumed and, once again, the Procession of Witness on Good Friday was cancelled - but this year that was done in favour of the amazing presentation organised by the Cathedral on Good Friday instead.

Members of the Music Group also contributed to the World Day of Prayer, this year hosted by Our Lady Queen of Peace church and supported by people from that parish along with Anglican, Methodist and Free Church congregations on the Westside

We have welcomed a new recruit to our ranks, I won't name him here, but he knows who he is, and he is very welcome indeed!

So, we are getting back to normal, and it seems that our days of pre-recording material for on-line services instead of in-church worship are all behind us now.

Peter Yates

Organist and Choirmaster's Report

I began as Organist and Choirmaster in October 2011 when I inherited a small but dedicated choir of five voices. We now have fourteen regular members. My main aim from the outset has been to build up the choir both in numbers and in the amount and range of music that they sing. In this way they provide a lead and support to the congregational singing whilst offering choral music in worship. We are a friendly group, and I am always delighted to hear from singers interested in joining the choir.

Sadly, due to the pandemic, the choir was not allowed to sing for much of the year. In August 2021 we began choir practices again. We met in the north aisle because this provided more space and better ventilation than the Blakefield Room, our normal rehearsal space, would have done. In September 2021 we began singing for services again, spreading ourselves around the chancel and into the sanctuary in order to maintain safe distance from each other.

I have been playing the organ for most services. Earlier in the year singing was not allowed and this ruled out hymns and other vocal music. Music still played an important part in our worship, and I enjoyed providing rather more organ music than usual. From September we saw the joyful return of congregational and choral singing.

I thank the clergy, the choir, and the people of St John-in-Bedwardine for their friendship and support.

John Brierley - Organist & Choirmaster

Community Breakfast Report

We were able to have our first Community Breakfast for nearly 2 years on December 4th, 2021. On that occasion we served 66 full English Breakfasts. Rob and James provided us with a lovely breakfast and the leftovers provided a large Bacon and Sausage dish for the Worcester Street Cafe. Eggs went to make cake for the History talks.

Our next Breakfast was held on 19th March 2022, and we served 103 breakfasts.

This is always a free event but those who participate are very generous and we have always covered our costs and had a float ready for the next breakfast.

My thanks go to so many people who come and help serve and chat to the visitors, which is so important at this event. The guides were a real asset to the team, working together and helping with the process of serving so many people. Thank you.

Jenny English

Bell ringers' Report

As the world starts to return to some semblance of normality, we are thrilled to report that St John's Clangers have bucked the trend among the bell ringing fraternity.

Far from losing ringers, The Clangers have not only retained all of theirs, but had an influx of ringers keen to help us from our local district.

Our thanks go out to the Worcester and District Bell Ringing Association for their support and help. They have assured our return to confident ringing and ensured the more experienced ringers have had their opportunity to increase their skill set whilst encouraging our younger ringers to spread their wings and visit other towers for some extra practice.

We have had several requests from bands around the country to visit the tower and try their hands at ringing what is a lovely ring of eight bells. We have accommodated requests that are feasible, whilst being mindful of our neighbours.

The outlook for The Clangers is positive and strong, with a great pride in the comradeship and friendship that has been built over the last 5 years.

As Tower Captain I would like to thank the whole team for their kind support over what has been a difficult time.

Tracey Ward -Tower Captain

Women's Breakfast Meeting Report

Women's breakfast re started in September 2021. Numbers were low at the beginning but have gradually got back to pre-pandemic levels.

We have had some encouraging and inspiring speakers from diocesan clergy and our own members, including Revd Diane Cooksey, our Area Dean, who shared her journey to ordination. Ellen Little told us about the Worcester Street Cafe, Patricia Fenner gave us the background to the 2022 World Day of Prayer and Revd Sarah Cottrill gave us an introduction to other faiths and their festivals.

Thanks to Sally Mills for providing her usual delicious, cooked breakfast, Anne Everett for preparing the room and waiting on tables and to other members for helping with washing up and tidying after the breakfast.

We continue to meet on the second Saturday of the month at 9am in the Blakefield Room. Do consider joining us.

Margaret Rutter

Café Church Report

Margaret and I re started cafe church in July 2021 and we have had some thought-provoking Thought for the day speakers.

Rob Little shared with us in October about how the Worcester Street Cafe managed to feed the homeless during the Lock down and keep all the helpers safe.

Melanie Bedford came and talked about her work with the deaf, how she was trained, and how she facilitates the deaf to access health care, legal help, and many other situations that for those of us who hear take for granted.

John Pound shared with us about the Wedgwood family and how he was involved with many others in helping to save the Wedgwood Museum. It resulted in all of us saying it would be a good place for a trip.

Those who come or drop into cafe Church do enjoy their Danish and coffee on a Saturday morning.

If you would like to try a different sort of church do come and join us on the 4th Saturday of the month.

Jenny English and Margaret Rutter

Parish Magazine Report

Once again, the Parish Magazine did not stop during the pandemic lockdowns. Operations are now back to usual with a mix of subscriptions (delivered and collected from church) and sales at church. Our thanks to the delivery team. As editors we work hard to get the magazine out on time each month, and we appreciate the work of the team to get all copies delivered promptly.

Our monthly print run is currently 160, with about going 120 through subscriptions and the remainder through sales at church (at St John's and St Michael's). Financially, the magazine (through sales and advertising) more than covers its costs and makes a net contribution to the church's income.

The magazine is a valuable form of outreach and communication to the church family, and we encourage all to promote the magazine if ever they get an opportunity. Our call for someone to help promote the magazine has not yet been answered, so we repeat it here!

Can you spare a small amount of time to help The Parish Magazine? We need someone who can give some thought to getting more people to receive the magazine - and put that thought into practice.

One idea, for example, is to promote the magazine at events running in church. Watch out for forthcoming events. Liaise with the event organiser in good time and make sure that there are magazines and subscription forms out with some signage in a place that will be noticed at the event. Perhaps get an announcement made sometimes. For more ideas, over to you!!

We don't envisage this as a huge time commitment, and it's not something that has to be done on any particular occasion, so it's totally flexible. Our magazine is both a form of outreach and helps the churches financially, so this role will support the mission of our churches in two important ways!

To follow up, please contact the editors via parishmagazine@wcw.church, give us a ring (428667) or speak to us in church.

We have nearly completed the exercise to move all yearly magazine subscription renewals to start in September (i.e., ending with the July/August edition of the magazine). **A plea to subscribers - please pay promptly when you get a renewal notice.**

A big thank you to all our writers, distributors, and administrators (advertising and subscriptions). If you would like to help out with any aspect - please let us know!

Graham and Sue Evans, joint magazine editors

Fourth Friday Friendship Group Report

This group was one of the many victims of the Covid Pandemic and was forced to stop for two years!

Everybody concerned missed the monthly gatherings and were delighted to resume them in January this year. We caught up with each other's news, had fun and collected £30 for Mary's Meals – a charity which provides school meals in some of the world's poorest communities, where hunger and poverty prevent children from gaining an education. Just to make our return perfect, during January another organization was matching all donations to this charity – so we actually made £60 for them!

February's meeting raised £40 for Alzheimer's Society but family circumstances meant I had to cancel our meal in March. However, we were back in business in April and raised £25 for St Paul's Hostel.

Raising money for charity is, of course, a good thing to do but it is not the main purpose of Fourth Friday Friendship. The group was formed to provide friendship and fun and we have an abundance of these! We enjoy a lot of chat over a cup of tea or coffee, a two-course meal, and then huge amounts of laughter over a variety of board and card games. Anybody is welcome to come along, although I do ask to be told who is coming for catering purposes. Please speak to me if you would like to join us for our next meeting on May 27th.

Revd Sarah Cottrill

REPORT ON THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

The Churchwardens are happy to advance verbatim a report from our Estates Manager, Brian Askew, as the substance of their own official report.

We would add that we have reviewed the church terrier and can confirm that there has been no change in 2021 to the inventory of church ornaments.

Once again, we offer our thanks to Brian for his efforts in ensuring that our buildings are maintained in good order.

We would also again like to thank Colin Nash and his team for their work in maintaining and enhancing our churchyard.

Gordon Templeton and Joy Job, Churchwardens, March 2022

ESTATES MANAGER'S REPORT FOR 2021

- 2021 was an improvement over 2020 but there were still regulations which meant that the church usage was far less than it normally would have been. Again, the priority was to ensure that the building remained safe and that nothing was festering which could cause long term damage.
- The main item, which occupied a lot of people's time, during the year was the refurbishment of the flat above the Parish Office. Following the death of our previous tenant, Charles Burnett, an inspection of the flat was carried out by church officials and a representative from Andrew Grant – our letting agent. Due to the poor condition of the flat it became clear that the only option was to do a full refurbishment – kitchen, bathroom, boiler, decoration, flooring etc. There then followed a protracted period of trying to get quotes but, eventually, a Redditch based company did the work and some £20.000+ later we had a flat that we could re-let. A new tenant moved in just before Christmas and all seems to be going well.
- All our fire safety equipment and gas safety checks were carried out without any issues. We also had our lightning conductor tested – luckily without any issues as that can be very expensive. The only outstanding safety check is the portable appliance testing (PAT) of the non-IT items. Everyone is playing catch-up, so it is difficult to get contractors to come in for very small jobs.

- John Slater inspected the bells, and associated equipment, in March, and found no issues of concern. Due to inactivity the bells had only been inspected annually instead of the normal six months.
- The disabled toilet has an ongoing damp problem (on the north wall) due to a poor arrangement of lead and coping stones on the flat roof. We have carried out a couple of modifications to try and improve the situation. The facing lead has been redressed to steer rainwater away from the north wall – rather than directing it down the wall - and the wall itself has been treated with a water repellent spray. So far, the signs are good – but it's a bit too early to claim a total success.
- The five-year inspection of the Church's fixed electrical system was eventually carried out, following a year's delay, and passed without any issues being raised.
- All the equipment in the kitchen is 15+ years old and the dishwasher is showing its age. My catering experts tell me it has been on its last legs for a few years. However, we keep patching it up, but a replacement will inevitably soon be required.
- As mentioned for a few years, the exterior stonework on the tower needs some serious restoration. We must make sure that this work isn't forgotten and engage with the buildings team at the Diocese to determine a way forward.

Brian Askew, Estates Manager, March 2022

Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod 2021-22

This report is a synopsis of the work of the re-formed Deanery Synod for the Worcester Area for the year 2021.

Our first meeting was in March and was opened by the new Area Dean, Revd. Diane Cooksey. Our zoom meeting showed 63 active screens including members from the former deaneries of Martley and Worcester West, Worcester East, and the Saltway Team (part of the Droitwich Deanery). We were given instruction by the two Archdeacons and Bishop Martin as to their expectations and Diane Cooksey was commissioned.

Our June meeting was again held on Zoom with Alison Maddocks in her new role as 'Dean of Smaller Churches' speaking to us. We were told that the current definition of a 'smaller church' is based on an Electoral Roll of 20 or less. The 2018 figures are in use at this moment.

The September meeting was supposed to be 'face to face' and incorporate a Deanery Service to be held at All Saints in the Deansway. Unfortunately, there were misunderstandings about attendance, so turnout was low. As it was, those few that attended enjoyed the experience.

November's meeting was again back on Zoom. John Preston the Diocesan Secretary dealt with the financial health of the Diocese and explained in detail why certain decisions are being taken on our behalf.

A Deanery Questionnaire was prepared by the Leadership Team and most churches, though not all, have replied to that. Analysis of those answers is taking place at the time of writing this summary and some of that evidence and examples will be used at the Diocesan 'Open Conversations 3' due to be held throughout 2022.

Deanery Synod always used to be referred to something along the lines of a 'group of people in a meeting waiting to go home' and many felt that it had lost its way in the greater scheme of things. By reducing the number of Deaneries and increasing the sizes to now include both Rural and Urban Churches there is a strong chance that your church can, by using the stronger voice of an expanded group, have a meaningful input into the Worcester Diocese. I urge you to make sure that your Representatives regularly report back to you and that you also ensure that your views and wishes go back, via them, into the melting pot.

Paul Fulbrook (Worcester Area Deanery Secretary – February 2022)

Via Margaret Rutter



St John's Church, Worcester
www.stjohninbedwardine.co.uk

Annual Reports booklet for St John-in-Bedwardine, May 2022