

# **The Parish Church of Saint Cuthburga, Wimborne Minster.**



**Reports presented at the Annual Parochial Church Council  
Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2024.**



**APCM Reports for the year 2023 - compiled March 2024**

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### **Rector's Report 2023, Revd Canon Andrew JW Rowland**

Looking back through my diary, Epiphany 2023 manifested itself according to tradition, including our annual welcoming of the Holocaust Memorial Service. January sees all the meetings recommence after the Christmas lull.

I continued to serve as Rural Dean of Wimborne, in addition to my main role as Rector of the United Benefice of Wimborne Minster, The Wimborne Villages and Kingston Lacy and Shapwick. Once again, I give thanks for the (now expanded) clergy team who harmoniously serve the needs of our churches and offer my grateful thanks for their ministry. Particular thanks to Associate Priest, Revd Heather Waldsax, who oversees our liturgy and rotas and to all who regularly lead worship at The Minster, together with Revds Elise and Michael Harding, Canon Nigel Lloyd and Revd Derek Butler. Additionally, we greatly benefit from the ministry of our Lay Worship Leaders: De Ashton and Andrew Patrick, and LPA's led by Anne Pollard - Ministry Team Wimborne.

During 9-10<sup>th</sup> February WOOFYT sessions were offered and Pipe-Up! On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> – all connected with Organ-izing!

Lent passed fairly quietly, except for a rumbustious indoor running of the Pancake Races, at which I did not come last. Organised by Antony Oliver and a substantial team, once again the Minster was packed, and the media's attention 'flipped'.

Early in March, Zahra and I managed a visit to family to The Lebanon for a great family wedding, it acted as an extended 'Refreshment'. Lent Lunches were much appreciated and well attended by peoples from many local churches, at The Methodist

Church. We take turns in hosting, but the Methodist Church is the established and excellent venue. If you have never partaken, you are missing out. Thanks then to the Christian Aid Team, headed by Robert Pearce.

We hosted the Town Council's Mayoral Civic Service on 12<sup>th</sup> March.

The Minster once again facilitated 'Experience Easter' for local school children. This is run in conjunction with our neighbouring parishes and an enthusiastic team of helpers.

Passiontide, Palm Sunday, Holy Week and the Great Triduum followed, led by The Rt Revd Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne. On Good Friday, Bishop, Rector and all tramped up to Pamphill (St Stephen's), gingerly navigating the puddles of 'Wet Wimborne Water Meadows'. At the top of the hill, we discovered Buns in the hedges and had a great outdoor experience in terms of worship, led by Revds. Suzie and Nick. The radio mic would go out of range and yours truly (the Boom operator) struggled to keep up with the pace of colleagues as they moved themselves and us! What a wonderful sunny occasion! Family Fun and worship by St Stephen's Church is the order of the day.

In Mid-April we bade farewell to Parish Secretary Jane, who retired from office duties in order to work alongside her husband at their local Food bank. We organised a luncheon and our sincere and heartfelt thanks were expressed.

I also was pressurised into the onerous task of officiating (in full clerical apparel at the WRS Allendale event – WRS being a key part of civic life, I felt I should support this on your behalf – (The RS stands for Railway Society).

In April and October, the Benefice continued to offer preparation for Holy Matrimony by means of Zoom, with colleague clergy participation – imparting our joint centuries of wisdom. Two key words for the gentlemen, "Yes dear" and, "as you will be making promises to each other – co-promises - this all adds up to compromise – a vital element of marriage".

The Feast of Saint Mark, 25<sup>th</sup> April was quietly marked by The Revd Nick Wells, Assistant Curate, attending interviews for the post of Vicar at Saint Mark's, Talbot Village - at which, happily, he was appointed and so began the ending of his unusual curacy here with us. Unusual, because his three years was greatly punctuated by the COVID-19 Pandemic with all the closures and restrictions. An abiding memory for me will be our joint leading of Evensong from Trinity Chapel, mobile phone perched on a music stand, with all the participants on Zoom, not realising that their every comment could be heard (it was before we all got to grips with it and learned to mute ourselves).

I was invited to several Home groups and enjoyed an evening at Liz Watson's house. I do commend home groups – join one! We are always happy to start more.

On May 19<sup>th</sup> I commenced a long-overdue Sabbatical – I had been due one as we moved to Wimborne. The thirteen weeks passed very rapidly. We managed a few holidays, visits to family (difficult for clergy as we are always busy at Easter, Christmas and weekends etc.). I confess to two special 'spiritual' retreats – one to

North Wales where the abiding 'sign of the spirit' is steam, and another short visit to Islay where the spirit is 40+% proof.

About six weeks of my time was spent in theological study, in the writing and re-writing and expanding of a book first published in 2015 – it will be available after Easter (2024). The research required to write about diverse theological issues (my book is called Christian Concepts), this both fascinates and fuels me. Thank you for all colleagues who enabled this time of sabbatical rest.

I returned to normal duties on 20<sup>th</sup> August, picking-up all the threads and putting my finger back into all the pies! One of my external duties is serving as a trustee of Dorset Historic Churches Trust as the diocesan clergy representative. This requires me to attend a few meetings at Puddletown, and to cycle 20 miles in a morning, on a borrowed bicycle, (thank you Beatrice) for the annual September Ride-n-Stride – and still be as fresh as a daisy on Sunday (for the Patronal). Well done to Team Wimborne – Bruce & Ros, Beatrice, Dinah, Alison & Peter and all the church support teams including Sarah & Sue.

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September many of us joined the Wells family (Nick, Ruth, Esme, Eden & Etienne at St Marks for the licensing. Well done - and as I write we look forward to Marianne Mangham starting her curacy this summer.

Creationtide and Harvest, and Governors' Sundays all passed. Each are moments to celebrate and give thanks for these aspects of our lives that are important 365.

September passed without any Great Dorset Steam Fair, having entered a time of prolonged hiatus due to rising costs and falling gate proceeds. I am redundant as its Chaplain, after many happy years of mud and dust (it was invariably very wet or very dry). The Church Tent is closed and has served its last cuppa and a great outreach ended. I mourn its passing. New life though! We welcomed Ruth Marshall as our new Parish Secretary and the aforementioned Revds.

8<sup>th</sup> October I blessed many dogs, two rabbits, but no cats or parrots this time. I would love to welcome a giraffe – our ceiling is tall enough! Another milestone was the departure of QES Headteacher Katie Boyes and arrival of Simon Firth - I was involved in another round of interviews – which is a role I also fulfil as Rural Dean, in the arrival of all new clergy.

Renowned theologian and speaker Martyn Whittock joined us as a guest preacher on Bible Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> October. Circumstances had already forced us to postpone his visit twice. I trust you enjoy the variety of preachers we can welcome at The Minster. This is an enriching feature of Minster worship, not open to many parish churches.

During the summer our Archdeacon (of Dorset) Antony Macrow-Wood was seconded (permanently) to Salisbury to lead the finance team and we welcomed Archdeacon of Sherborne, Penny Sayer as our Archdeacon, assisted by Canon Lucy Holt (Rector of St James, Poole). AD Penny had previously been instrumental in getting the DAC and external bodies to approve our organ rebuild project in 2022 (pun intended). She has thus proved a good friend and we confidently look to her for help in getting approval for our planned Minster reordering in 2024. I took on the role of being non-executive

Chair of the SDBF Consultancy Company alongside AD Antony and Diocesan Secretary David. That's life! One door closes, another opens.

Remembrance tide was held with all due respect, and I thank Revd Bill French who continues as Chaplain to Wimborne Royal British Legion and as an Assistant priest in the villages.

Our Aspects of Spirituality Course focussed on The Arts – and was well received and much appreciated – thanks once again to Anne King (although the first speaker had to be rapidly sent on her way as the Winter Storms had begun).

Advent is always a busy time for Church Wardens and Clergy with all the extra Carol Services. I personally very much enjoy this season, but it is rather discombobulating to celebrate Christmas just as Advent begins (as early as 1<sup>st</sup> December with the Women's Institute).

And so the year ends with the beginning. In the beginning was the Word.

It is all about Jesus – we are His Church, all that we do is in His name – the name above all names. This series of reports provides evidence of all that members of the parish and community do and I thank you, one and all. If I haven't mentioned you – it's because there is just so much going

The last word is for my beloved wife, Zahra who is always on standby – ready to fill any gap. I am indebted to her. Every blessing – Andrew, Rector

### **Churchwardens' Report, Peter Cook & Bruce Jensen**

2023 began quietly and we once again enjoyed a well-attended "Silent Film Night" with Sam Hanson at the newly rebuilt organ.

Our gratitude goes to the God's Acre team who continue to meet on Mondays and keep the area looking beautiful for those people who use it for an outside meeting place.

A big thank you also goes to the rest of the "Minster Team" Andrew Patrick and Richard Knott for keeping things going and supporting both the Rector and the wardens.

Every few years we have an official inspection by our Archdeacon and on 14th February Archdeacon Anthony duly visited the Minster. We had carefully prepared a folder with all the necessary information and records including details of the accounts an aspect of the inspection of which he was particularly appreciative. I am pleased to say that we passed with flying colours.

For Holy week we were blessed with a visit by Bishop Karen who not only took services, but also confirmed some of our young choristers together with Claire's son Oscar. The Bun Walk on Good Friday was blessed with good weather and provided an enjoyable end to the day. For Easter Sunday, CW Peter joined Colin at the organ for an organ duet as the final voluntary after the Eucharist.

Canon Andrew began a three-month sabbatical in May, but just before this began Colin, was taken ill. Thankfully he made a full recovery but while he was recuperating CW Peter organised cover for practices and services and would like to thank in particular, David Warwick, Sean Tucker, Chris Sparkhall and Sam Hanson for helping with the music until Colin's return.

Claire Lehmann our Families and Outreach worker has continued to develop a range of activities and her enthusiasm and energy are a delight to behold. The Forest Garden has become a new attraction for various family-based events and new signage has been erected to show that it is part of the Minster. Claire also arranged a successful Christmas Fayre.

Jackie Morgan, our finance and admin manager has now taken responsibility for most of the admin work previously being overseen by the churchwardens. Our Parish Secretary, Jane, retired in May and was given a celebration dinner at the King's Head. Her successor, Ruth has almost completed a year and is gradually getting to grips with the complex way a major church is run.

Throughout the year, Gordon Edgar, Sarah & Robert Morris, and Beatrice Dopita have spent time on ensuring we provide a good service to those who watch online. Help from anyone interested in joining the "Tech Team" would be warmly welcomed.

The clergy team grew with the addition of Canon Nigel LLOYD and Revd Derek Butler, both of whom bring different skills to the team. This enlarged clergy team will be a great help in managing the services in the villages after the departure of Revd Suzie.

Plans are now being developed to provide toilets, disabled access to the North entrance and an enlarged vestry area. Meetings have taken place with local planning and conservation authorities and the DAC.

The 2020 quinquennial work, delayed by a late report (issued in summer 2021) and a pandemic, is nearly finished. In 2023 there were masonry repairs over the north porch, to the central tower, and to the window in the south transept, as well as other minor repairs. Much work was done to sand and repaint the ferramenta in several windows. While the expensive scaffolding was in place, it was decided to repair and clean the Druitt window in the south transept. The cleaning work was paid for by a generous grant from the Friends.

Anthony Oliver and the sides-people have expertly managed the communal worship and Verger John, and Deputy Verger, Martin have been immensely helpful in all situations giving us advice on various aspects of the Minster, as both of us still continue to learn something almost every week. They have all helped both of us in checking the inventory which is a requirement of churchwardens at this time of year. However, we would appreciate that if any sides-people and PA operators are unable to attend for their duty, they do let verger/churchwardens know in advance. The summer lunch-time series was again very successful, particularly the organ series in August where we were delighted that Colin was well enough to give the final recital.

In the autumn, CW Peter attended the Major Churches Network Conference in Oxford. This was an interesting event but probably more so as it provided the opportunity to meet with clergy and lay workers from other major churches. It seems we all have

similar issues and often struggle with finance. One interesting point that came out of discussions was the fact that one area where many churches find they are recruiting young people was through the music and their choirs.

Inevitably, we have probably left someone out and so profuse apologies to them, whoever they are. Everyone who has given help and advice to the Churchwardens is much appreciated and valued.

Looking forward into 2024 we are hoping to further develop the plans for re-organising parts of the Minster. Another busy and eventful year for your churchwardens, with more to come.

### **Treasurer's Report, Richard Knott**

Financially 2023 was an encouraging year and the outlook is good for at least the next two years. It is a blessing to be able to write that.

The Covid Pandemic had little impact on our Giving and, thanks to more people starting to use the Parish Giving Scheme, the total in real terms remains reasonably constant. We have always known that Regular Giving will never cover all our costs, but it remains a very important part of our income. The cost of gas and electricity that had such a significant effect on our finances recently has eased slightly, so 2024 will not be as bad.

We continue to make it easier for visitors, and others, to contribute electronically and the introduction of QR codes (by Dennis Child) on all the carol service sheets proved much more successful than anticipated. Asking local businesses to contribute has proved less effective (only two did so this year), but we will continue to look for innovative ways to increase our income.

Our healthy financial situation has been made possible by the two benefactors who underwrite the cost of our Family Worker and Deputy Verger. The former was guaranteed for three years, but we expect to receive a grant from the Aldhelm Mission Fund shortly which, together with a recent legacy, will ensure that we can renew this appointment for a further two years. The hope is that we are able to make this a permanent position. There is no doubt that, in the long term, we will rely more and more on such individual generosity (particularly bequests).

With some major projects, such as the organ and lighting, complete, the focus is now very much on the re-ordering of the Minster, to include improved access, toilets, storage and display areas – the latter including both historical artefacts and the story of our mission. One significant addition to the visitor experience will be the restored chime barrel, lifted down from the bell tower three years ago and now nearly ready to return to the Minster. The overall project involves huge amounts of negotiation with local planners, architects, the diocese, various interest groups and others, to say nothing of raising the necessary money, but we are making significant progress, and we expect 2024 to be the year when plans are approved.



Our Parish Share in 2024 is significantly higher than 2023, mainly as a result of our congregation numbers post-Covid dropping less than in many churches, but a new system will be brought in soon which may be fairer. The future remains something of an unknown, but let us be grateful that we are in a good position as I write.

Richard Knott – Hon Treasurer (March 2024)

### **Safeguarding Report, Jane Davidson**

*"To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6 8*

The Minster Safeguarding Policy is reviewed and approved by the PCC annually (July 2024). This incorporates the Church of England "Promoting a Safer Church".

In January 2023 the Archbishops' Council published its response to the publication of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) The recommendations can be found:-

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/IICSA%20-%20Joint%20Response%20to%20Final%20Report%20Recommendations.pdf>

The Diocese Safeguarding Team continue to work towards implementing these recommendations and guiding the churches in carrying them out.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks**

DBS checks are now required every **THREE YEARS NOT FIVE YEARS**. This has increased the workload. There have recently been several difficulties completing these correctly. The Diocese are changing the provider soon in the hope this will become easier. Apologies to those who have experienced such difficulties.

Automatic notification comes from the Diocese to individuals, copied Jane Davidson (Parish Safeguarding Representative PSR) when these are due. All checks are completed online. Jane can assist with these if necessarily. Verification of original documentation needs to be completed for new DBS checks by either Jane or other local verifiers.

As the Minster has a turnover of over £100,000 per annum, PCC members are legally required to have Enhanced Adult and Child DBS check. It is not related to any role a PCC member may carryout but a reflection of the overall responsibility of the day to day running of the Minster and its staff and visitors.

### **Safeguarding Training.**

Safeguarding training is to be renewed every three years. It is expected that all Minster Clergy, PCC members, staff and volunteers complete the required level of Safeguarding Training for their role. The Diocese provide a matrix for the level of training required:-

<https://d3hgrrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/62d6c0328cf55/content/pages/documents/dbS-and-training-matrix-2021-dbfsg.xlsx>

Training is online through the Salisbury Diocese website:-

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org>

A copy of the certificate needs to be sent to Jane Davidson, eventually the Diocese data base will hold this information.

### **Domestic Violence Training.**

PCC members have been asked to complete the Diocese Domestic Violence module online. Again this is not related to specific work carried out but the overall responsibility of the PCC to the congregation and visitors to the Minster.

Jane is available by telephone (07962718724), email [janedavidson1959@gmail.com](mailto:janedavidson1959@gmail.com) (as well as Minster email) or appointment in the Minster; for enquiries, DBS checks and support with online training. De Ashton, acts as Deputy Parish Safeguarding Representative (DPSR) in Jane's absence.

**Thank you** to Ian Grimbley and Richard Thurlow who have worked hard providing photographs and identification lanyards for all our children's workers and chained library volunteers.

**Thank you** to Andrew Kelley who has encouraged the chained library volunteers to wear lanyards and to complete the Basic Safeguarding Module, this is not a requirement of the Diocese, however, the library is seeking to interest more young people and children's groups to visit.

As we are experiencing more visitors, and users of the Minster activities, they are now able to clearly identify the volunteers and helpers.

**Thank you to all the Wimborne Minster volunteers and congregation** for their support in delivering the Safeguarding agenda. It is of great importance to ensure that our congregation and visitors are treated with the respect that Jesus would encourage us to do and we must make sure that historical mistakes are not repeated.

*"I believe that the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults should be the highest priority of all parts of the Church, and that any failings in this area must be immediately reported. There are no excuses for shortcomings"* **Archbishop Justin Welby.**

### **Aspects of Spirituality, Anne King**

The 2003 Aspects of Spirituality series of talks focused on the ways in which the Arts link with spirituality. Our speakers were predominantly members of our various Minster congregations, demonstrating what talent and expertise we have amongst us.

Sadly, our first speaker had to leave before her talk began because a major storm was brewing, and it was decided it would be sensible for her to get home to Yetminster as quickly as possible. Her subject was to have been about how spirituality is manifested in dance and movement, taken from her experience teaching in the UK, Europe and the USA.

Our other presenters spoke about a particular aspect of the Arts. Carol Bruton spoke about her experiences with music and singing with national choirs, with examples and pictures to emphasise the spiritual nature of her relationship with music.

De Ashton read poetry, showing how it reaches into the spirit and expresses experiences and emotions not easy to articulate otherwise.

Beatrice Dopita talked about sculpture, and about photography, and showed examples of how this conveys the spiritual nature of both people and places; and Minna Harvey spoke about religious triptychs, with examples and descriptions of how they are made.

Our final speaker was Claire Lehmann talking about how crafts can convey spiritual messages to children.

The talks were very uplifting and it was good to share the spirituality of producing, and enjoying, the various art forms.

This year, the audience sat at the back of the Minster in a semicircle around the speaker, which suited the format and enabled everyone to see and hear the presentations more easily.

The underlying theme of all the Aspects of Spirituality I have organised over the past few years has been *Led by the Spirit*. This has driven and informed the subjects dealt with, and the work of organising and preparing each session.

I am most grateful to the help received from all our speakers; practical help serving refreshments; selling tickets, advertising and promoting the talks, setting up the audio-visual and so on. A special thank you to Leonie and Richard Thurlow for all their help and support.

2023 was the last Aspects of Spirituality I shall run, and I am very pleased that Heather Butler will be taking over.

### **Audio Visual Team, Bruce Jensen**

This year the AV team has continued to broadcast the Sunday 9:30 services weekly, as well as some weddings, funerals, and other special services. The ability to broadcast services has continued to widen our reach, Parishioners who are unable to attend Sunday services can watch the broadcast live or watch later, as is convenient. Relatives in Brazil or Australia who are unable to attend a wedding or a funeral in the Minster can tune in to the service on the internet.

The AV system in place is not ideal: technology has moved on since it was installed. We are exploring ways to improve the system, hoping to eliminate the video lag and improve camera control. Thanks to Revd Derek Butler for lending his expertise to this project. It is ever our ambition to expand the team, hopefully to include more young people. We are happy to say that Oscar Lowbridge was on camera for several sessions this year – our thanks to him for all his help in the Minster. My profound thanks to Beatrice Dopita, Gordon Edgar, and Sarah & Robert Morris, for their dedication to the AV team.

## **Barclay House Group, Anne Pollard**

The Barclay House Group meet regularly for Bible Study, having used over the past year, the Pilgrim series of study, which we have found very helpful, taking it in turns to lead the session. The Group meet socially too for a Christmas meal and other occasions. We support financially a young lad, Ehshan from Nepal, and hear regularly from him about his progress.

## **Captain of the Bell Tower, David Warwick.**

2023 was a year of positive progress for the band at Wimborne Minster Sunday ringing has followed the previously established pattern of general ringing in the morning for the parish Eucharist and Quarter peals for Evensong. Methods have ranged from call changes on twelve Grandsire Erin and Steadman Cinques and Bristol, Cambridge, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Maximus. 46 quarters were successful of which 35 were either Cinques or Maximus - making Wimborne the leading 12-bell quarter peal tower in the country by a significant margin. Three of our teenagers scored their first quarters, and there were many other firsts achieved through the year.



Three local band peals were successfully rung - Spliced Stedman Cinques and Bristol Maximus at Easter, Yorkshire Maximus on Coronation Day, and Bristol Maximus at Christmas.

Wimborne won the Guild six-bell striking competition, came second in the Guild 8- bell competition and 4th out of 11 in the southwest 12-bell behind team from Bristol and Exeter.

We held open days to demonstrate ringing at the Minster Fair in June and again for Heritage Week in September. Both occasions attracted a good range of visitors to hear about the history of bells and ringing at Wimborne.

Social events were the Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday, a skittles match against the Churchwardens team, pre-Christmas drinks and mince pies and the New Year's Eve supper before ringing in 2024.



A highlight of the year was the Red Kite Outing based in Aston Clinton - a two-day event brilliantly organised by Alan and Kathy Bentley.



The photographs show the bands ringing Ben Avery and Ewan Ayers first 8-bell quarter, Ester's first quarter, the SW 12-bell striking competition band at Trowbridge and the Coronation peal band about to enjoy well-earned refreshment.

### **Chained Library, Judith Monds**

Looking back on the year 2023, we realise that it has been a very busy year for us all. I am happy to tell you of several amazing things, including the rise of visitor numbers and new volunteers. It seems we will now be able to open the Chained Library on one Saturday morning each month. We have tried to do this before, and it has been a bit hit and miss sometimes. Now it looks as if it might be a permanent fixture. One of the things that people came to see was the book loaned to us by Dorchester about families in Wimborne although it was not very easy to read. It was partly in English of Oliver Cromwell's time only reverting to Latin when King Charles II took back the throne. This year we have acquired a number of Bibles given by our Rector, including early Geneva and King James Bibles, and several books given by the Quakers as their Meeting Place was closing. They were very pleased that we would care for them, and they have found some further books which they would like us to display as well. We shall need a new cabinet to accommodate everything folks!!!

The Chained Library had a very busy and interesting time during 2023. We saw 7,917 visitors, and they were all very generous. £3,068.09 in donations, some with the new electronic device and some with old fashioned cash.

As well as seeing visitors we have produced a new Library Booklet full of exciting facts and figures and lots of illustrations from on our library shelves. It has proved to be a popular edition and can be found in the Minster shop, Gulliver's Bookshop, and the Museum and we are looking into The Model Town and The Allendale Centre who may also be interested in displaying the booklet.

Last year many of our visitors came to see the handwritten book on loan to us from Dorchester Museum who have suggested that another book may be lent this year.

We have, thankfully, got a number of new volunteer librarians this year too, so 2024 looks like being a superb year.

Grateful thanks to all involved with the Library and the Minster staff and good wishes for the team in 2024.



## **Children & Families Outreach Worker, Claire Lehmann**

### **(Including Messy Church & Forest Garden)**

Children's, youth and Families Ministry and outreach work has continued to grow at the Minster over the past year through a programme of regular and seasonal events. I'm very grateful to the 15 lovely volunteers who regularly assist by leading craft activities, preparing refreshments and welcoming families.

The Forest Garden continues to be popular in all weathers with Forest Garden toddlers running on Tuesdays and our home Education group running on alternate Fridays. Our home Education group is now our largest group with 20 children aged 2-13 regularly attending. Muddy Church, which runs one Saturday a month, is also becoming increasingly popular. In the Forest Garden based groups we largely follow the ' Muddy Church education programme ' which introduces the main events in the Christian calendar, the basis of the Christian faith and an understanding of what it means to be a Christian. The programme has been designed for children and families who do not attend Church regularly and has been well received. Alongside this, a monthly Messy Church is held in the Minster is regularly attended by 20-30 children. Hosting this group within the church building has proved very beneficial in supporting families to feel comfortable in an environment they are not familiar with. On Mondays a successful Forest Garden group for children with special educational needs runs throughout the year and is supported by Dorset Children's Foundation.

Until Christmas families attending Minster Praise were able to participate in 'Creation Station'. This has been replaced by ' Kids in the Crypt ' which has been enjoyed by families attending.

An increasing number of families have begun to visit the Minster to use the play area during the week. This has led to many meaningful conversations with local families that have then attended groups and events.

During school holidays, there are a range of seasonal events offered that include Forest Garden sessions, craft activities and ' movies at the Minster'. These sessions are promoted to local schools and are very popular. Last Summer 75 people joined our ' big day out ' which was a trip to Monkey world supported by the friends of Wimborne Minster. We also welcomed Dorset Born theatre into the Minster to perform a ' Shipwreck ' story as a conclusion to our Summer Holidays 'Pirate' theme, which was inspired by local Pirate and Church Warden, Issac Gulliver.

Trails within the Minster have proved popular and themes this year have included Reindeers, Corgis and Pirate Treasure. Over the Summer Holidays 300 children completed the Pirate themed trail. The trails have proved successful in engaging with families and have led to families attending Muddy Church, Forest Garden toddlers and Seasonal services.

Clothes and Toys swaps have supported families to access items they may need at no cost.

This year we opened the Forest Garden for the Folk festival, where families were able to participate in making seed bombs, crafts and den building. The Minster also hosted

a drummer in the Minster which was very popular and encouraged many visitors to explore the Minster. We also participated in October's Eco Fayre by opening the Forest Garden and providing recycling- based crafts for local families. There was also a ' People in the bible ' themed messy church as part of the Wimborne Book Festival. We have begun to introduce a range of social activities for those attending services and those with no connection to the Minster. This has included craft sessions, skittles evenings, bring and share lunches and a Christmas themed Cream tea with Christmas Quiz.

In December we held a Christmas Craft Fayre with an adult wreath making workshop and children's crafts. This event was attended by 20 local stall holders and approximately 270 members of the public with 23 participating in an affordable Wreath making workshop and 30 joining a Children's Christmas craft workshop. On Christmas Eve 400 people attended the Crib service with children receiving a copy of the Nativity story.

Family Events including a Christmas walk and Remembrance Service themed Messy Church have been held in Pamphill and Witchampton.

Support has continued to be provided to the Choristers by leading their Sunday school activities during the 9-30 service and by organising their social events. In the past year the Choristers have enjoyed bowling, alpaca walking, pottery painting and pizza nights. In October a Choristers taster morning and pizza lunch was held and gave children the opportunity to explore what it is like to be a Chorister at the Wimborne Minster.

Support continues to be provided to Wimborne Minster Dementia Friends and there is weekly engagement with Pamphill school through an Art club targeted at children receiving pupil premium. On Fridays chaplaincy is provided to students at Queen Elizabeths School. As needed support is also provided to 2 by 2 toddler group and the Oasis Bereavement group.

Looking forward to this year, our new ' Kids in the Crypt ' Sunday school has been enjoyed by families and our Easter trail has just been launched. You may have seen the bunnies and chicks currently in the Minster. On Easter Sunday Minster Praise will be having an Easter Eggtravaganza themed Service which will include music, and 'egg quiz', crafts, refreshments and an Easter Egg hunt.

### **Children's Society, Anne King**

The Children's Society continues its work at the Minster through holding coffee mornings at Church House, distributing the House Boxes for people to fill with small change, and focussing attention on the plight of our young people. Mental health problems, poverty, social media, and social isolation due to Covid and its aftermath have made young people's lives difficult. The Children's Society is always happy to speak about its work in churches throughout the Deanery to help publicise important initiatives such as *Look Closer*, designed to help us all recognise young people who may be being groomed for County Lines drug trafficking, or modern slavery and other forms of exploitation, which are increasingly widespread.

## **Choir Report - Colin Davey.**

Very early in the year, the choir sang at a special service to mark the Coronation of Charles III. This was the first time we've combined the choristers and sopranos since the latter became a regular part of our musical offering. Unfortunately, this service was also the first without Colin Davey for a period of several months, as he began his recovery from a cardiac arrest in May.

Several people are owed thanks for their efforts in keeping the music going at this time – in particular Peter Cook, who coordinated everything; Matt Burt who kept rehearsals and services running, and a host of organists and conductors including David Warwick, Sean Tucker and Chris Sparkhall.

In June Ben Morris gave the inaugural recital on the rebuilt organ. Sadly, the Musical Heritage Trust evensong planned for the end of the summer term had to be abandoned due to Colin's health.

The autumn term followed a more familiar pattern. We are delighted to have added some very capable help to the music team – Liz Green, who is helping to coach the choristers in their Tuesday practices, and Matthew Kelley, who has been increasingly involved accompanying and, on occasion, conducting choral services.

We combined choristers and sopranos again for the Advent Carol service, allowing an adventurous and flexible approach to the music, which also included handbells drawn from the Minster's bell ringers. The sopranos also sang at the midnight communion service on Christmas Eve for the second time, and we're delighted that this group has now started to include increasing numbers of returning former choristers.

Retaining boys as their voices change has been a significant issue in recent years, and we're delighted that two choristers have now made the move successfully and are already making a significant contribution to the sound of the gentlemen. Thanks go to Peter Cook who has been helping these singers in Tuesday practices. We will also be welcoming our first contralto after Easter; while she has confirmed that she's happy to be a gentleman, we have been exploring other more inclusive ways to describe our lower voices!

We are still awaiting new cassocks but have taken the step of introducing cravats for all singers. This gives a degree of uniformity across the choir and avoids contentious grey areas when singers move between sections! As always, Ros Jensen does a fantastic job of managing the robes, and we also extend our thanks to Penny who has made a set of cravats for the adult singers. In addition, Peter Gibson's tireless work as librarian is invaluable.

Minster Voices continues to make a valued contribution to worship, singing when the Minster Choir is unavailable; many thanks particularly to Liz Watson who does an excellent job of organising them.



## **Choristers' Sunday School, Heather Davey**

The Sunday School continues to meet on the occasions when the choristers sing at the 9.30am Eucharist. As some of our older members have now gone to university, we meet in one group, usually between ten and twelve young people in total, ranging in age from nine to fifteen. Activities are planned around the lectionary readings, and might include games, crafts, baking, and discussion.

Sunday School leaders often use the 'Roots' online resources (a subscription-based service), tailoring the activities to the needs of the groups. However, at times, it is more appropriate to look at the music sung by the choristers during the services and to make the link between their specific role in the church and the wider Christian community.

## **Diocesan Synod Report, Rector**

There was no parish representative to Diocesan Synod. As Rural Dean of Wimborne I attend and thus am able to offer this report.

Diocesan Synod meets three times per year. The Bishop offers an address and through this, leads and guides Synod, and thus the diocese. He reports on discussions and decisions at Bishop's Council.

A major piece of work was refreshing the diocesan vision, which under former bishop Nick had the strap-line 'Pray, Serve, Grow'. The new vision is summed up in 'Making Jesus Christ Known'.

Wimborne's Lay Chair, and Bishop's Council Member, Mrs Gillian Clarke, has acted as Lay Chair of the Diocese these past six years but is stepping down this summer. Through her we have been 'close to the action'. Our sincere thanks to Gillian – she was part of the six-person team who oversaw the appointment of Bishop Stephen. +Stephen has settled into post and some key decisions delayed by the pandemic and interregnum have now been taken. One of these was to sell Church House at Salisbury and remove (reduced) staff to the Diocesan Education Centre at Wilton. Another decision has been to transfer the Archdeacon of Dorset to oversee finances. Thus, the Archdeacon of Sherborne now serves the whole of Dorset. A principal concern is the present difficult state of the diocesan finances. An unsustainable deficit of c£1million has arisen, in spite of moves to cut costs. The deficit has been financed by using reserves, which are now depleted.

The major cost for the diocese is the cost of ministry which if divided by the number of stipendiary equivalent posts adds up to c£75,000 per post. In short, the cost of ministry is financed by a system of Share Request to parishes – a levy based on attendance, with some adjustment for the perceived relative means of each parish.

Synod has approved (from 2025) a revised Share Request to take into account the deployment of stipendiary clergy within a parish (or benefice for a group of parishes like ours). This will make up 40% of the Request and the balance of 60% based on numbers of active supporters. Any change from 2024 Request (and previous years) will be tapered in over four years to enable time for 'adjustment'. A key problem is that many parishes do not meet the full Request. It is inevitable that unless diocesan

finances improve quickly stipendiary clergy numbers will fall. Indeed, in our benefice of three parishes (Minster and six village churches) we are already 'adjusting' our cost base by not replacing Rev'd Suzie Allen. I foresee church continuing to move towards a non-stipendiary and lay-led model. Simply put, there will be less paid clergy in the future.

Synod bade farewell to Joy Tubbs (Lay Canon) who retired from the post of Director of Education, (Salisbury uniquely has the largest proportion of Church Foundation Schools to oversee).

Synod hears reports from various mission-based activities – some are financed through Grants awarded by application to The Church Commissioners. N.B. +Stephen has recently been asked to act as Deputy Chair of The Church Commissioners (effectively Chair).

Synod now includes representatives from The Channel Islands.

I would very much appreciate a parishioner to volunteer to attend and serve on Diocesan Synod and write this report from a Lay perspective next year, please.

### **Deanery Synod Report, Anne King**

Some of the Deanery Synod meetings over the past year have been on Zoom and some face-to-face. The meetings on Zoom have given us the opportunity to discuss issues in plenary sessions, and in smaller, break-out groups, which has been helpful in getting other parish's perspectives on and ideas on the issues that face us. The face-to-face meetings have also been valuable in helping us get to know one another better and share experiences and challenges in our discipleship.

Focus has been, as always, on finances and looking for ways in which we can fund the church's work, especially encompassing new technology.

The Wimborne Deanery Action Plan has been developed and discussed under the headings of Vocation and Discipleship, Children and Young People, Resources and Giving (time and talents as well as money), Care for the Environment, Reaching out to New Communities, Music and Worship and South Sudan. Sheila Soper reported on her recent visit to South Sudan.

This year has also seen the new Bishop of Salisbury installed, and his visit to the Deanery.

At the last Deanery Synod meeting in March 2023, the need to ensure that finances were sufficient to enable us to pursue our mission was stressed. There was also a presentation by the new Diocesan Lay Ministry Development Officer, Karen Hutchinson, with LLPs, LWLs, (including De Ashton) LPAs and Churchwardens talking about their roles. Karen emphasised the need to get more people involved in lay ministry, and that the best way of recruiting them is to approach individuals with the right skills directly.

### **Emmaus House Group, Anne King.**

The Emmaus House Group welcomed four new members during the course of the year. They have added new dimensions and fresh perspectives to our studies through the year. We have looked at subject ranging from Homelessness, the Pilgrim Series of Group Study booklets from the diocese, and the Prophetic Voice of the Church looking at the radical nature of the gospel in various countries.

Discussing these, often difficult, subjects in the Emmaus group has supported us, helped each of us to learn, share knowledge and ideas and understand more about Christian discipleship.

### **Fabric Committee Report, Peter Cook**

The Fabric Committee has met regularly over the year and Jackie Morgan our Finance and Administration Manager is now a regular member of the committee.

The digital organ was removed to Church House and new signage to match other Minster signage was erected in the Forest Garden. The fence was also repaired and re-painted.

The old flue from Church House boiler came down in high winds and the roof was duly repaired.

The faculty for replacing the clock rewinders was granted on August 29. Our new contractors, Cumbria Clocks, will have a maintenance contract to look after the clock mechanism.

The boiler pump failed in the autumn and was replaced and the electrical work needed for the new clock rewinders was also completed.

A substantial amount of work was carried out for the 2020 Quinquennial inspection. There were masonry repairs over the north porch, to the central tower, and to the window in the south transept, as well as other minor repairs, mostly on the east wall of the church. Much work was done to sand and repaint the ferramenta in the South transept (interior & exterior) and the window in the east wall of the north transept. The 'groundwork' was carried out by Ellis & Co, whereas the exterior tower repairs ('rope work') was by Sally Strachey Historic Conservation.

While the scaffolding was put up to repair the stonework, some major faults were found in the Druitt window in the South Transept. Of the two opening panes in the window, one was wedged open permanently one inch, and the other was damaged and in dire need of repair. There were other faults elsewhere. It was decided to take advantage of the very expensive scaffolding to repair the window. It was also found the window was quite dirty. A generous grant from the Friends of Wimborne Minster allowed us to keep the scaffolding in place for an extra two weeks and have the window cleaned. This work was carried out by Stonecroft Stained Glass of Bridport.

New car park passes were rolled out from the autumn and now contain vehicle registration so that they cannot be passed from one vehicle to another. The tree on

the east corner of the Minster Green has been removed and one of the trees on the south side which was also dying has been removed.

We have duly considered a revision of the Health & Safety Policy and Jackie Morgan had produced a revised version by the end of the year which would then be taken forward to the PCC in 2024.

A consistent agenda item has been plans to re-order parts of the Minster. These have developed over time allowing us to consider a number of options and explore as many possibilities as we can. Plans have been submitted to the local planning authority, conservation authority and the DAC. Our thanks are due to Andrew Patrick for his extensive work on this project.

### **Flower Ladies of the Minster, Jackie Wharfe**

Easter, Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas, see all the Flower Ladies of the Minster pulling together to create the decorations we all enjoy.

This year we also had the Coronation of King Charles II, which we celebrated in flowers. The Friends of Wimborne Minster kindly paid for the floral plaque which contained over 1000 blooms depicting the cypher of King Charles II. We had 7 Weddings and 1 Blessing. We provided flowers for 3 of the weddings.

The ladies made and sold posies/arrangements at the folk festival. Making £186. We are allowed £3,000 each January. At the end of December we had been billed £3,106.65. This sum is entirely due to the care, time and effort that the ladies have given this year, and does not include the donations of flowers, secateurs, chicken wire. Numerous things which would considerably add to our bill.

I anticipate having to review the costing of wedding flowers again during the year, as they definitely are not getting cheaper. I once again respectfully ask for an increase in our allowance.

Much time and effort goes into planning and preparations before the arrangements are finished.

Volunteers who come to help and serve much needed refreshments are greatly appreciated.

Grateful thanks to you all.

### **Friends of Wimborne Minster Report, Peter Cook**

The Friends of Wimborne Minster is a registered charitable incorporated organisation originally set up in 1945 to support the Minster with regard to its buildings and its mission.

2023 proved to be a year when everything began to return to normal and the Friends were able to hold their usual events once more. The Valentine Coffee Morning raised £102 which was a little disappointing, but nevertheless it proved to be an enjoyable event. John Hughes our PR Trustee arranged a trip to Romsey which was quite popular, but clashed with another event so we made a small loss, but it was a very enjoyable and sunny day, and we were well looked after by the staff at the Abbey.

John also arranged a visit, using cars to Edmondsham House and a garden visit both of which proved popular. The preacher for the AGM Evensong was the Venerable Anthony Macrow- Wood with our Curate Revd Nick Wells officiating at the service which was followed by the traditional Cream Tea.

Members of the Events Team provided tea for the annual visit of Laudemus in August as well as refreshments for the Cuthburga Lecture, "The Bankes at the Minster" given this year by Andrew Williams. In early September, members enjoyed the annual Coffee Morning at Dean's Court with Sir William in attendance.

The Secretary attended the bi-annual conference for Friends of Cathedrals, Abbeys and Major Churches at Hereford. It was an interesting event with talks by The Canon Chancellor, Revd James Pacey, Ivo Darnley (12th Earl of Darnley) MD of Rathbone Brothers (Founded 1742), who gave a talk on investments. Canon Barry Forrester who spoke about the New Cathedrals' Measure and Quentin Letts who gave a personal and amusing view of the Church of England today.

The final event of the year was the November Tea Party which again was very popular with some music entertainment provided by De Ashton (Trustee), Dinah Ingle-Finch and the Secretary.

The Minster's Family and Outreach worker, Claire Lehmann organised a Christmas Craft Fayre and the Friends had a stall which raised £164.

Fund raising produces a modest amount on a regular basis from lectures and teas. Membership fees have continued to be collected and with careful management of our investments we find ourselves still in a position to make grants. Overall, we are still in a healthy position and have no doubts about continuing to operate according to our constitution requirements.

During the year grants were awarded for:

- ☐ New Cinctures
- ☐ Piano Cover (Minster Piano)
- ☐ Floral Carpet (Coronation)
- ☐ New Choir Robes
- ☐ New Desk copy of the Book of Common Prayer
- ☐ Chorister & families visit to Monkey World
- ☐ Cleaning of South Transept Window
- ☐ Christ Story books for Crib Service

At 31 December 2023 total funds carried forward came to £383,921.36 which included restricted funds of £167,914.09.

## **"God's Acre", Judy Burrows**

Last year we had problems with the drought. Not so this year. It has definitely been welly-boot weather.

Our plan is to have both cultivated and wildlife areas, always keeping in mind the needs of our fellow creatures. We think the nest boxes are in use and we keep up the feeding as much as possible, but it does disappear very quickly. We have been told by a gentleman who has been in the Acre in the evening that he has seen some hedgehogs under the shed.

We also try to keep the long border and church house bed looking attractive.

I'm sure you have noticed that the limes backing the car park have been pollarded. It has made such a difference as there is now so much more light.

We think the display of spring flowers is better than ever and are now waiting for the bluebells. As everywhere, there are rather too many of the Spanish type so we will get rid of some of them to make room for the others.

We are grateful to Laurie Turner who provides us with excellent photographs for the notice board. Do have a look at it. Also, to Jamie the Gardener who takes away all our rubbish.

We know there are many people who enjoy sitting in the Acre contemplatively. One gentleman is a frequent visitor and sits for hours.

We would still welcome any help. We are not young!!

## **Lay Worship Leaders & Minster Praise**

During 2023, the Minster's Lay Worship Leaders, De Ashton and Andrew Patrick, have been sharing with clergy in the leading of Minster Praise, the informal worship at 11:00 each Sunday. The congregation for this relaxed, all-age service continues to grow, often including couples seeking marriage and families arranging Baptism of Infants. The service benefits from the craft and directed play provided by Claire Lehmann, the Minster's Family Outreach Worker.

Until his Ordination and departure for St. Mark's Talbot Village, Revd Nick Wells led the worship team. Loyal musicians, Rosemary Protheroe, Sue Tipping and Dinah Ingle-Finch assist, for which we are very grateful, and when they take a week off, the new resource 'isingworship' (a set of pre-recorded backing tracks for worship songs) takes over. Occasional visiting musicians are also warmly thanked for their participation.

Revd Derek Butler has taken a more active role since Revd Nick's departure, regularly leading worship and supporting us in the use of technology with which he is more familiar, for which we are very grateful.

A major element of the service is the refreshment offered beforehand and afterwards (and during worship, for anyone who needs it!), and we are grateful to the volunteers

who make the numerous walks to the Vestry scullery to fill flasks, provide cakes and biscuits and keep the shop area tidy.

Andrew and De would ask for prayer support for Minster Praise and the other aspects of Lay Worship ministry, such as being present at Outreach opportunities like the Minster Green Fair and the family activities run by Claire. They would also invite anyone who feels the urge to be more actively involved in Minster Praise to have a word and explore how they might contribute.

### **Lay Pastoral Assistants, Anne Pollard**

There are 11 Pastoral Assistants at present who visit the sick, take Home Communion, keep in touch with those who are unable to get to Church anymore and new members of the congregation. Communion is taken regularly to Streets Meadow. The Oasis Group is run by the LPA's who do a fantastic job providing so much for the bereaved. The LPA's meet with the Rector at intervals during the year.

### **Lunch and Chat, Anne Pollard**

We continue to meet for a homemade soup and cake lunch each Friday at 12 noon to 1pm in Church House. We have a very faithful team of helpers and are so grateful to all those who make the soup and the cakes. The Oasis Group join us each week, with members of the congregation and those who are just passing by, it is a friendly time and a good opportunity to get to know one another. All the proceeds go to the Sudan Medical Link and on special occasions to Yambio for Sheila Soper.

The Lunch & Chat Team

### **MARS Trust, Anne King.**

The Mars Trust is gradually growing the number of schools where it carries out workshops. The need to help young people develop relationship skills is more important than ever.

Across its workshops, MARS takes students through how to build good relationships with others from family and friends to romantic and work relationships.

To enable this valuable work to grow, MARS needs people to help facilitate the workshops, usually working with small groups of around 8 students, to help them work through the exercises the MARS presenter gives them. Those already involved find this a rewarding and useful way of helping young people.

MARS also needs prayers to support its work.

### **Minster Environment Group, (MEG) Alison Francis**

MEG monitors Minster activities with the aim of improving and reducing the church's environmental impact. We recognise that the world is changing fast and it is important to support action to reduce global warming and maintain biodiversity.

We care because it is God's creation, not ours, and as a church we are committed to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of our planet.

### **MEG Activities in 2023:**

- Promoting implementation of the Minster Environment Policy
- Continuing to monitor temperatures and energy usage in the Minster and Church House. This showed that total CO2 emissions had reduced to their lowest ever level. This was due to less usage of gas during the winter months. However, electricity consumption had increased.
- Fair Trade Fortnight was held in March. There were events on the Green and services in the Minster.
- A Climate Service was held in September.
- MEG was involved in the Planet Wimborne Green Festival in October, hosting the Fair on the Green and providing refreshments in the Minster. There was a week of events with a focus on sustainability talks and activities.
- Donate IT was held on two occasions when IT items are collected for repair or recycling and donated where there is a need.
- MEG continues to be involved in activities in the town such as Win on Waste and the Repair Shop
- MEG joined with the God's Acre team to hold a RSPB Bird Watch in God's Acre in January.

### **Minster Re-ordering Plans, Andrew Patrick: Lay Worship Leader & Deputy Church Warden**

Our vision for the Minster is a centre for Mission and Worship - both traditional and "fresh expressions" - supported by use as a centre of musical excellence, a resource for the community and beyond, and a visitor destination with an imaginative and exciting interpretation of our spiritual and architectural heritage. To that end we have already opened up the Rear Nave, rebuilt the Organ, and installed new lighting, power, and audio-vision systems.

To help achieve the vision we also need: toilets for public use, a safe and welcoming entrance easy to use with buggies small children or walking sticks, enough space for the choir and their music, a "tea and cake" server, with proper plumbing, a quiet chapel accessible to everyone, imaginative interpretation for visitors, and more storage to enable us to declutter this very important building.

We are currently working on the basis of needing to invest £ 1 M or more for these important additional works. The Diocese are actively planning to replace the existing Rectory with a new one soon, so sale of the existing Rectory by the Governors of the Minster could enable them to provide core funding.

Following feasibility studies commissioned from award-winning B2Architects in Autumn 2022, the Minster community were consulted on a range of options drawn up by B2 in Spring 2023. The outcome is that we are currently proposing:

- Refurbishing the Porch, with glazed inner doors, with vibrant stained glass over, leading to safe steps and an access ramp
- Installing a proper Servedy and re-configuring the Shop
- Expanding storage in the North Transept
- Installing a dais to make the Nave Altar more visible in traditional services



- Creating a quiet Chapel of Prayer and Remembrance in the South Transept
- Gradually developing an imaginative Heritage Zone in the east end, and
- A larger vestry Block to provide toilets and adequate Choir accommodation.

B2 have created three alternative “broad-brush” ideas for a new Vestry Block:

- single – storey with flat roof, just about giving us the minimum extra floorspace we need, but encroaching into the church yard;
- single storey with pitched roof: ground floor toilets plus Vestry for dual use of Clergy and Choir, with music and other storage in the attic, just about giving us the minimum extra space we need.
- two-storey, giving us more floorspace than the other options: the windows on the south side of Trinity Chapel would not be blocked, but back-lit with lighting carefully designed to make their stained glass stand out;

We will need a Faculty from Salisbury Diocese for all these works. The decision to on that will be made by the Chancellor of the Diocese, advised by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). We cannot appeal against that decision. For an enlarged Vestry Block, we will also need Planning Permission from Dorset Council. The decision on that can be made by Planning Officers, or a Councillor can ask for it to be decided by the Planning Committee, who take the Officer’s advice into account but can over-rule it. If refused, we can appeal for the decision to be made by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Therefore, in October we made a Pre-Application submission to Dorset Council for their advice. A Planning Officer and Conservation Officer visited in early January. They sent us their advice on 12 March. In principle they support the demolition and rebuilding of the Vestry Block, However, the officers do not support a new block big enough to give us the minimum floor space we need.

In October we also made a Pre-Application submission to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). Archdeacon Penny Sayers and DAC advisory Architect Chris Romaine visited on 6 March. Their written advice is (at the beginning of April) still awaited, but is expected to be broadly positive. We were glad to learn that the Chancellor is keen on enabling Churches to engage in Mission.

English Heritage and other conservation groups which are statutory consultees also need to be informally consulted at this stage, so B2 Architects are organising that. At the beginning of April, it is hoped a site visit or visits will take place between 12 and 4pm on Wednesday 17 April. Archdeacon Penny Sayer plans to attend again for all or part of this.

It is thus likely to be May - or even June - before we have formal feedback from the DAC, and English Heritage and other conservation consultees, in addition to that received from Dorset Council. Consultation will thus have taken seven – eight months instead of the three originally envisaged, which is very frustrating.

When we do eventually have all the feedback we will need to review where we go from there. Do we stick to “Plan A” and persuade the Planning Committee – or failing that and Inspector – to over-rule any Officer’s recommendation to refuse planning permission for a bigger Vestry Block? Or do we seek to identify a “Plan B” not needing

Planning Permission? Even if we stick to "Plan A" we may well need to sketch out alternative plans to demonstrate that "Plan A" is the best.

The Minster community will be consulted. Indeed, there will need to be a formal consultation stage before formally submitting a Faculty application. Meanwhile, PCC on 21 March noted that it is essential that everyone continues to pray about this project.

### **Minster Tour Guides, Gordon Edgar**

Minster Guides function in several ways. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> October I try to ensure that during the working week, morning and afternoon, a Guide is available to welcome our casual visitors and to share something of the Christian Witness that has taken place over the 1300 years of the Minsters existence. However, Guiding is not just that. We also share both its architectural heritage and share stories associated with characters of times past. I am grateful for the time and effort the Guides put in and the welcome they give to visitors. They are a fantastic team to work with.

We accept booked tours where the number of guests can vary between 10 and 50. We break down large groups into groups of around 10 which means for a large group I may have to call on the services of up to four other guides in addition to the Guide who is already on duty. In my report for the 2023 APCM I commented that in 2022 the number of booked tours was down compared with 2021. In 2023 the number of booked tours increased and already 2024 has started well with some large group tours already having taken place. Hopefully, this trend will continue.

Covid brought about many changes. One of the positive changes appears to be that Wimborne is becoming a more frequent stop-off place for people travelling along the south coast. Some travellers are booking small group tours in the Minster as part of their break. By small group I mean anything from 2 to 8. I hope this is an area that we, as Guides, can develop - although the downside is that we only get a day or so notice of the intended visit and visits may take place out of the Guiding Season.

Welcoming Brownie, Beaver Scout and other uniformed groups continues to be a joy. We must be doing something right, as we not only have groups returning for a second or even third visit but also other groups making a booking because they have heard of the welcome and experience, we give. I thank my colleagues for giving up their evenings to facilitate these visits. I must also thank both Peter and David for giving up their time so that our young guests can experience something of our beautiful organ. Since January 2024 two groups have visited and currently there are two more groups booked.

What of 2024? I think for the Guides it is going to be an exciting year. In addition to the above it is likely that the Guides will be involved in two or three community events. This will not only bring more people into the Minster but also demonstrate how central to the town the Minster is. I hope that during August we will be able to re-start the '1300 years in an hour' programme and thanks to the enthusiasm of my guiding colleagues we have been able to allocate Guides to be in the Minster during most lunch times during the working week.

Please notice the word 'most.' There are still slots available. Guiding is a fabulous way to meet people and to share with them all the Minster offers. I would love to welcome more individuals to train as Guides. Please do not worry about the knowledge base. We will help you with that. We will support you and not ask you to go 'solo' in a Guide slot until you feel ready. Please come and join us. Our three new recruits from last season are still part of the team so Guiding must be attractive!

### **Mothers' Union, Di Hiscock**

In 2023 the Mothers' Union had a busy year. Every 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month we joined the 11.30 Communion Service in the Minster after meeting for coffee beforehand.

Our main meetings, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month in Church House, included speakers, Communion, discussions, craft and a party! We were also invited to a Coronation Party, through Claire Lehmann, at Moyles Court School which was thoroughly enjoyed.

In early December we went to West Moors for a MU Deanery Carol Service followed by tea and cake, which gave us the opportunity to talk to members of other branches.

We continue to support our Diocesan projects. We took welcome packs of groceries/toys/treats to the MU Holiday Home at Rockley Sands. Donations of toiletries, cleaning materials, toys and Tesco vouchers were taken to Salisbury Cathedral for a service to support '16 Days Activism against Gender Violence'. A coffee morning helped raise money for these and for the Overseas Fund.

We ended the year with a Focus Sunday when the Salisbury Diocesan MU Chaplain Revd. Jayne Tyrer came to preach at the 9.30 service in the Minster and we followed it with a shared lunch. She was inspiring and as a result we will enrol 4 new members into our Branch which is very encouraging!

Our Diocesan theme continues to be 'Transformation Now' and we are continuing to think of how the Mothers' Union can play its part in the world today. Prayer underpins all that we do and we look forward in faith and confidence to the future of the Mothers' Union here and worldwide.

### **Oasis, Sue Hatherley**

Our aim is to offer support when people are feeling low after bereavement.

The main meeting is a Bring and Share lunch on the first Thursday in the month, followed by a speaker, discussion or activity.

On most Friday mornings people can also gather informally for coffee in the Methodist Centre between 11.00 and 12.00, with a leader present. Members find that sharing experiences over coffee or a meal is worthwhile.

Individual support is offered in small groups when needed, and members themselves organise a monthly Sunday lunch locally.

Since the pandemic our membership has remained around 30, so fortunately volunteer Vicki has recruited Maggie Topliss as another invaluable general helper.

Highlights of the year: a garden visit, with tea and cake, to Manor Farm Hampreston, guided by owners Guy and Anne Trehane; Peter Rufus from Helpful Hounds brought Raffa- a retriever- to demonstrate these dogs' skills in helping people with special needs; Heather Lowe shared her experiences of volunteering for Wimborne Food Supply at the Allendale Centre; an art workshop exploring water-colours with artist Jenny Hawke from Swanage.

Very sadly this talented lady died later last year. However, after her own husband died, she published an illustrated book entitled 'A Landscape of Grief ' which many of our members have found helpful. I still have some copies if anyone is interested.

### **Open the Book, De Ashton & Sheila Soper**

The backdrop is up; above it a scene, it may be a barley-field, is projected on the wall. Eight or ten Year 4 pupils have been kitted out in tunics and equipped with baskets, swords or fishing nets; on the floor or on benches the whole of Wimborne First School waits expectantly. 'Open the Book' is about to present another captivating episode from the wealth of stories and lessons which is The Bible. 'Open the Book' is the Bible Society initiative through which volunteer Christians take Bible stories into schools. Members of the Minster participate alongside members of St John's, Wimborne and other local churches to dramatise the stories for Wimborne First School. During 2023 we have performed 19 stories for the whole school, fortnightly on Wednesdays. We are allowed to store props (including quails), scenery (including a cardboard prison) and costumes (including beards) in a cupboard at the school.

There are new Bible Society resource materials to be used from January 2024 and several members have received face-to-face training on how these fit the schools' curriculum and inclusion requirements. A revamped website supports members, who are now required to pay for these resources, but church grants cover this. We have a prominent presence on the 'Open the Book' Facebook page, which shows that our ingenuity is appreciated. It is a great privilege - and great fun - to share with the children their Bible heritage. Many thanks are due to our organiser, Sheila Soper, and our technical wizard, Kevin Metcalfe, as well as the Headteacher Mrs Sarah Hartley and all the staff, including the catering team whose routine is disturbed by our presence.

We also rely on prayer support from all the congregations. We are grateful to past members who have retired or taken on other commitments and would be glad to hear from anyone interested in a 'taster'. Safeguarding procedures are firmly in place.

### **Parish Magazine, Rosalind Jensen & Andrew Kelley Co-editors.**

We would like to thank all of our contributors over the last year. We have tried to cover the varied events that have occurred within the Minster over the last twelve

months and hopefully reported on the activities of a wide range of groups both within the Minster and those which are associated with it. Regular contributors include God's Acre and Wilding Wimborne, the crossword writer and volunteers from the Chained Library. We also value the support of the clergy and the vergers. The Minster also subscribes to *Parish Pump* which is a website which supplies articles and news items which we can adapt to suit our content. We are also grateful to all our advertisers, whether they are regulars or occasional. We have managed to attract a number of new advertisers over the last year which does mean we just about break even. If you use the services of any of our advertisers, please mention the magazine.

Our printers Shadow Design, in Moordown, continue to do a superb job for us at a competitive price. We currently produce three hundred copies and the magazine is also available on the parish website where you can also find back copies. We hope in the coming months to make sure that copies of the magazine are also delivered to the village churches.

We would like to encourage more contributions from the anyone who worships at the Minster and the various groups within our community. If you think it is interesting, please write it up and send it in with accompanying photos if possible. We do appreciate advance notice of events, so that the diary is as accurate as possible. You will find the submission deadline in each edition. Finally, if you have enjoyed reading the magazine please pass it on to family and friends.

### **Peter House Group, Liz Watson**

We have met regularly in members' houses this last year and have mainly used bible-based course books. For a change, however, we listened in advance to some of the Archbishop's interviews on BBC Sounds and then discussed them at meetings, which was both fascinating and revealing.

We have continued the practice of each of us preparing, in advance, one or two answers to questions for the session. This focuses our minds, helps our overall understanding of the topic, and also relieves pressure on that week's leader.

More than anything, we all continue to appreciate and enjoy the fellowship, friendship and support within our group.

### **Photography, Beatrice Dopita**

I have followed the Christian year at the Minster with my camera and tried to record the wide range of activities that make the Minster a lively church serving the people of Wimborne and fulfilling its role, within Wimborne and the wider community, as the third great church of the Salisbury diocese.

Several of these photos have been published on social media, on the diocesan website, in the Parish Magazine and in local newspapers and magazines. I am also building an archive of pictures for our proposed Minster Visitor Centre.

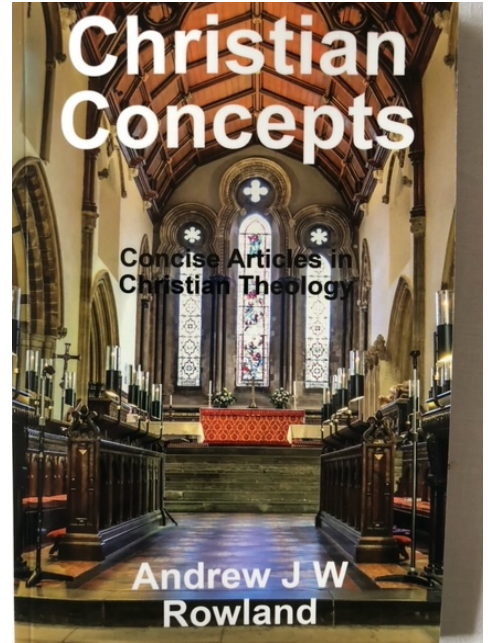




Photos of the Choir celebrate the Minster's musical heritage and encourage young people to discover ways of developing their musical talents. We support choristers with singing tuition and music lessons including the Salisbury diocese 'Pipe-Up' scheme for young organists.



Canon Andrew wrote a book, during his three month sabbatical in 2023, for which I was honoured to be asked to take the photographs.



The highlight of our Palm Sunday and Easter celebrations in 2023 was the confirmation of some of our Choristers, by the Bishop of Sherborne, at the Dawn Eucharist.





The Coronation of King Charles inspired Jackie Wharfe and the Minster Flower ladies to fill the church with amazing floral tributes.



The Minster's Lunch and Chat group asked me to come and see their activities – they invite anyone who would enjoy the friendship and conviviality of a simple lunch to join them on a Friday morning at 12.00.

If there are any of your activities at the Minster that you would like me to photograph – please let me know.



The Rector has encouraged the Town Council to mark civic occasions at the Minster and I have photographed everything from the Remembrance Day's commemorations to the Rector's participation in the town's Christmas celebrations.

I was there, at the annual skittles match (the Clergy & Churchwardens v the Bell-ringers) when a high score from Churchwarden Bruce enabled the clergy Team to retain the trophy 'Morris the Bear' for another year!



Photos as a focus for spiritual meditation are something that I work on as part of the pre-service livestream of the Parish Eucharist on YouTube (when I'm on AV duty) and I sometimes use photographs in this way for other services like the Taizé services and The Women's World Day of Prayer.



Thanks to fellow photographers, Nigel LLOYD and Colin Feltham and Anon, who helped me get the DHCT 'Ride and Stride' cyclists' photo when I was in Brittany.

### **Publicity Officer's Report, Anthony Oliver**

Life has more or less returned to normal after the COVID years and we have been able to continue with the usual run of Events.

Contact has been maintained with all the local media both printed versions and radio stations. We have had the usual support from the monthly Wimborne Around Guides, the Dorset View and Viewpoint, the Daily Echo and to a lesser extent the Wimborne Directory.

The fortnightly New Stour and Avon Magazine is also good at including the various news items sent to them and we even made the front cover picture on one edition. We get less TV coverage but the recent Pancake Race was seen on the Meridian local News.

The three-monthly Allendale News has ceased publication but the ever faithful Parish Magazine always tries to mention everything sent to them.

The Salisbury Diocesan Grapevine has changed from the way events used to be publicised so although a copy of the Parish Magazine is sent to them digitally as requested each month little if anything appears to be reported on our events.

We still have had some national coverage from both our Daily Telegraph Photographer and the Bournemouth News Agency.

It is important also to keep the Minster website well informed of planned events and I am grateful to all those who send me photographs of Minster Events for possible publication.

The most essential is to keep the Minster in the public eye so as to ensure it is seen as a lively and active Church.



## **Refresh House Group Trisha Knott**

After finishing our epic journey through Acts, along with Paul the Apostle – the first time we have tackled an entire book of the Bible – we decided to try something a bit different. Our next study was called 'Spot the Difference' by Nick Fawcett. This featured five ways in which being a Christian could – or maybe should – make a difference to our lives. Then we proceeded to try a study from Proverbs, which, although containing much wisdom, turned out to be a bit of a Marmite book. Currently on safer ground, we have turned back to the Lord's Prayer, using the Church of England Pilgrim Course and may continue with another book in this series. As ever, a lot of the value of the group has been in the ways we have been able to support each other through various ups and downs, both by practical means and through prayer.

## **Saint Margaret & St Anthony's Chapel, Sue Robertson & Dinah Ingle Finch**

The Chapel of St Margaret and St Anthony is to be found adjacent to Wimborne Hospital, on the corner of Cowgrove Road, and next to the Almshouse community. It was a leper chapel in the Middle Ages, and is still used for worship today.

St Margaret's, as it is known locally, is not officially part of the Wimborne Minster Benefice. It once formed part of the Kingston Lacy Estate, but was separated into a private trust when the National Trust took ownership of the Bankes estate. It is now overseen by St Margaret's and Stones Charity, with the worship being led by Minster Clergy.

Before lockdown, weekly BCP Holy Communion Services were held on Fridays. Sadly, Covid 19 enforced the Chapel's closure for more than two years.

In July 2022 the chapel was again open for worship, with regular Holy Communion services now being held on the third Thursday of every month at 11am, led by a rota of the Minster Clergy.

Services are now based on Common Worship and usually include three hymns appropriate to the liturgical season or any relevant festival. Musical accompaniment is provided by our musicians on piano and flute. We also have an excellent harmonium, which is sometimes played in the services. It originated in America in the early 1900's and has become a well-loved part of the fabric of the church. Due to the closing of Holt Church, the Chapel has benefited from a few more copies of the Red service booklets.

Once again this year, services have included our usual Harvest Festival, Remembrance Service and Christmas Celebration with Carols. On such occasions the chapel is suitably prepared and decorated by a small team of volunteers prior to the services. Our special thanks go to Verger Martin for his willing expertise and care in mending one of the Kings from our Nativity set, which had become damaged. These delightful papier mache figures stand about 16" tall, and were originally seen in Bournemouth Beales shop window Christmas displays. John Old very kindly purchased and donated them to the chapel.

After each service, tea, coffee and biscuits are provided to give the congregation opportunity to enjoy chat and fellowship. We thank the clergy for joining us afterwards too, for they have some entertaining, poignant or pertinent comments to share.

In addition to the regular services, St Margaret's hosted the September Historic Churches Trust Cycle Ride (Ride and Stride), welcoming dozens of admiring visitors into this ancient building - some for the first time.

The Chapel is also used by other groups. The Almshouse community are planning to use the chapel as a venue for their social and charity events in the summer months. Sensitively, in their own words, they are "... always mindful that the Chapel is a place of worship..." The Franciscan Tertiary Group also hold their meetings in the Chapel every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month.

Thanks to the new heating system and the diligence of Pauline, the key holder, St Margaret's is a warm and inviting place to worship. We always welcome new faces to this beautiful, special chapel, so do feel free to come along and join us on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month, 11am.

### **Servers Report, Christine Feltham.**

With Covid now well behind us it is pleasing that we have been able to return to the traditional altar serving teams. During 2023 we were delighted to welcome some new members but more would be welcome to relieve the need for some to serve on successive weeks.

I should like to offer my grateful thanks to all members past and present you have provided wonderful support to this aspect of worship at the Minster. Finally, I must add that after having been "Head Server" for over 20 years I feel it is time to hand on the roll and I have offered my resignation to the Rector.

### **Sidespersons Report, Anthony Oliver**

The plea as I write this report is to ask anyone who might be interested in acting as a Sidesperson to contact me so that I can let them know what is involved. Numbers have fallen so replacements would be welcome as this will help individuals not having to be on duty so often. The only requirement for being a Sidesperson is to be on the Minsters Electoral Roll.

We have also now resumed the taking up of the Elements at the 9.30am Parish Eucharist so anyone who would like to be part of this team should also let me know.

Thank you again to all those on the Sidespersons Team who faithfully carry out their duties Sunday by Sunday and at other times during the year when required. Thank you also to those who have retired, your services have been very much appreciated. It is the warm and friendly welcome given to both regular members of the congregation and visitors alike that is such an important part of the Sidespersons duties.

## **Social Media, Ian Grimbly**

### **(Social Media and Online Media, Username @TheMinster1)**

The use of social media is often misunderstood, as it's not a standalone thing that runs in isolation. It's most people's first point of access to their internet content, along with Google.

A brief update on our progress since the last APCM. As previously said, using social media we can measure our interactions with our "audience".

There are now three Minster Facebook Pages, The Minster, Minster Families and Minster Makes Music.

Over the last year The Minster Page has seen an increase of Page "Likes" of 45 to 932, with a 96 increase for Page Followers to 1063. The breakdown is 75% ladies and 25% gentlemen.

The Minster Families Facebook Page, set up and run by Claire, currently has 488 likes and 698 followers. Over 95% of which appear to be local mums aged 25-45. So, congratulations to Claire on her success with the Minster Families Page. It's an absolutely brilliant achievement in the time she has been with us.

The Minster Makes Music Page, for the music foundation appeal has 389 Likes and 394 Followers. Although at present the Page is largely dormant. Page Likes are individuals who show interest in the receiving updates on the Minster. The figure for numbers "Following" our Page includes not just individuals but also organisations, schools & companies, which is why it is higher.

There is now a donations QR code on the Minster Facebook Page. Although, as it is a generic code it's not possible to attribute donations to the Page.

During the year Claire has continued to develop the Minster Families Page and The Minster's Page to contact her families and to interact with them. Martin is continuing to add content about the daily life and activities of the Minster.

Our Twitter Feed has lost some Followers falling from 295 to 289, but this is a different more activist media. One key benefit of the Twitter Feed was it's appearing on the Minster's website Homepage, although isn't functioning at present.

The Minster's "A Church Near You" Page statistics yields the following information: -

|      | Views this week | This month | This year |
|------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| 2022 | 131             | 673        | 9,804     |
| 2023 | 185             | 676        | 11,350    |
| 2024 | 468             | 1,365      | 17,734    |

As you can see the ACNY Page, the Church of England's own social media, continues to enjoy increasing attention.

### **Stewardship and Gift Aid Secretary, Dennis Child**

A very big thank you to all those who have kindly increased their giving following my letter at the end of last year. The new amounts are now feeding through and we should achieve the budget set for this year.

There are now just a handful of people to update their gift aid declarations and I will be contacting them direct to achieve this. The amounts that you give are vital in helping the Minster to achieve its objectives and provide the environment that is both spiritual and welcoming to all.

The various contactless machines that you now see around the Minster are also adding much needed additional income for us. Since the first machine was installed in 2019 the sum total given to the Minster is just over £25K and last year alone we received £14.5K. A staggering sum particularly when you consider that this period includes the time during the pandemic. When we installed one of the two CollecTins that we now have in the Chained Library it increased our income from this area by over £100pw. All this goes to show how valuable contactless giving has now become as cash in society declines. It also means that our many visitors are using these machines and being generous with their donations.

We have been fortunate to obtain an upright standalone contactless giving pedestal, free of charge thanks to the generosity of the Diocese, to deploy in the Minster entrance where it will be very visible and very easy to use. This will arrive sometime in April. Our overall goal is to continue to increase our "external income" from various sources for the overall benefit of the Minster.

### **Two by Two Toddler Group, Ruth Edgar**

The Two by Two group provide a weekly session in Church House where children (0-5) and carers can play and relax. We meet from 9.30am to 11.00am on a Thursday morning in term time.

Since the last report numbers have settled to between 9 and 12 families each week. There is a regular group of mothers with one or two children born since the onset of the pandemic and in recent weeks we have also had some childminders and grandparents with their charges.

Claire, our families worker, comes to our group from time to time. She has been able to meet the mums regularly and talk about Minster activities in which they may be interested such as the Forest Garden.

We must also thank Ruth, for receiving enquiries for the group and the clergy, who provide termly services in church for us.

Finally, a big 'thank-you' must go to our coffee ladies, who attend whatever the weather. As always offers to be a coffee lady and to help with coffee once a month are always welcome. It will require a DBS check and safeguarding training, which can be done on-line.

### **Wellsprings House Group, De Ashton**

There are ten members of our group, meeting fortnightly in each others' homes and, weather permitting, gardens. We keep in touch through a WhatsApp group, which enables us to encourage and support one another, as well as email and telephone for the less 'tech-y'. At least four of us take turns to lead sessions.

We began 2023 by studying the book of Micah, finding him to be a challenging prophet in his zeal for justice. We then took the Beatitudes from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 5, considering their 'counter-cultural' nature and how we are called to be salt and light in the world. This long study, with a couple of free-standing sessions, brought us to Advent when we adopted the BRF book 'Image of the Invisible' by Amy Scott Robinson. Her studies of the Bible's many metaphors for God as creator, owner, family member and artefact have stimulated our understanding and led us into 2024.

We gain a great deal of personal support from our fellowship and thoroughly recommend being members of such a group. Just add cake!

### **Wimborne Minster Musical Heritage Trust, Peter Cook (Secretary & Treasurer).**

The trust was established in early 2020 to manage the finance of the Minster Makes Music Appeal. It is a non-membership charitable incorporated organisation. The five original trustees have been joined by Canon Nigel LLOYD, as an additional trustee.

We met 4 times during the year and have overseen grants to pay for an organ scholar and a singing teacher to help with coaching the young choristers. The Opening recital for the organ was given by Ben Morris (Assistant Director Music at York Minster) an event which made a small profit. The Summer Series of Organ Recitals in August raised £1334.49 for the funds. During the latter part of the year, we began planning for a re-launch for the Minster Makes Music Appeal for the Music Foundation aspect of the appeal which we hope will take place in the Spring 2024. Cheques for the appeal should be made payable to: Wimborne Minster Musical Heritage Trust.