

**AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING and  
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING sitting together  
To be held at 7:00pm Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 in St Mark's Church, Wootton Bridge**

**1. VESTRY MEETING**

- 1.1 Prayers
- 1.2 Apologies
- 1.3 Minutes of the last meeting
- 1.4 Election of Churchwardens

**2. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

- 2.1 Minutes of the last APCM

**3. STATUTORY REPORTS**

- 3.1 Electoral Roll
- 3.2 PCC Administrative Information
- 3.3 Treasurer's Report
- 3.4 Churchwardens Report
- 3.5 Deanery Synod Report

**4. REPORTS ON THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

- 4.1 Church Life during 2022
- 4.2 The Bridge Report
- 4.3 St Edmund's Church Building Trust Report
- 4.4 Parish Archivist's Report
- 4.5 Music Report
- 4.6 Pastoral Group Report
- 4.7 The Tuesday Discussion Group Report

**5. WOOTTON APCM CHAIR REPORT**

**6. ELECTIONS**

- 6.1 Election of members of the Parochial Church Council
- 6.2 Election of Sides People

**7. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**9. DATE OF NEXT APCM**

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## **1. VESTRY MEETING**

**Prayers:** David McCulloch

**Present:** Ann Capps, Harry Kirby, David Bennison, David McCulloch, Doreen Gazey, Pauline Kirby, John Terry, Margaret King, Mary Peters, Steve Beynon, Sue Beynon, Bryan Pyner, Hilary Baldwin, Helen Smallwood, Ed Hopper

**Apologies:** Mike Broadsmith, Helen Davison, Rodney Fox

**Absent:** Hilary Spurgeon (at Binstead APCM)

**Minutes of the last Vestry Meeting:** Mary Peters proposed and David Bennison seconded approval of the minutes as later amended. The minutes were approved unanimously.

### **Election of Churchwardens**

Ann Capps was nominated to continue as churchwarden, proposed by Mary Peters, seconded by Mike Broadsmith and re-elected unanimously.

Mary Peters was nominated as churchwarden, proposed by Harry Kirby, seconded by Mike Broadsmith, and elected unanimously.

**This concluded the 2022 Vestry meeting.**

## **2. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**Minutes of the last APCM;** The minutes of the 2021 APCM on 20<sup>th</sup> April had been previously distributed as amended. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Harry Kirby and seconded by Ann Capps. The meeting approved the amended minutes unanimously.

## **3. STATUTORY REPORTS for the year ended 31st December 2021 (except Electoral Roll Report)**

### **3.1 Electoral Roll Report**

There was a full renewal of the Electoral Roll in 2019, which provided the opportunity to re-create our parish contact database in an up-to-date and GDPR compliant form. The Electoral Roll Officer's intention was for the roll to be updated following normal procedures between March and April of 2022. The situation regarding Covid was mild enough to allow for the roll to be updated normally. Since last year, 4 persons have added their names to the Electoral Roll and no deaths or departures from last year's roll were reported. Therefore, the current number on the Roll is 81. The Roll with the updated full details has been given to the GDPR Officer and placed in the safe. Two lists with name only details are displayed in the churches.

*David McCulloch*

The Electoral Roll officer asked Ann Capps if she could ensure that the full details were sent to the GDPR Officer.

### **3.2 PCC - Administrative Information**

St Edmund's church is situated in Church Road, Wootton Bridge. St Mark's Church is in Station Road, Wootton Bridge. They are part of the Diocese of Portsmouth within the Church of England.

The correspondence address during the interregnum is the PCC Secretary's address: The Chalet, Seafarers Rest, St Boniface Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1NP.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with The Charity

Commission.

### **PCC members**

PCC members this year: **14**

**Priest-in-Charge:** vacant

**Church Wardens:** Ann Capps (ex-officio PCC Chair): Mary Peters

**Plurality Readers:** Rodney Fox, Hilary Spurgeon, Arthur Edwards (ex-officio, Arthur Edwards not currently active due to ill-health)

**Rep on Deanery Synod:** David Bennison (ex-officio) - Treasurer

**Rep on Deanery Synod:** John Terry (ex-officio)

**Rep on Deanery Synod:** Ed Hopper (ex-officio)

### **Elected Members:**

Hilary Baldwin (Safeguarding Rep) – Hilary has accepted re-election as a PCC member until 2025.

David McCulloch (Secretary, now also Assistant Treasurer, resigned as a PCC member at the APCM but continue in his appointed roles)

Mike Broadsmith (elected Deputy Churchwarden during 2021, until 2023)

Harry Kirby (PCC Vice-Chair) – Harry has accepted re-election as a PCC member until 2025

Andrew Snow (due to ill health was unable to fulfil the role of a PCC member and resigned during 2021) – no longer on the PCC

Helen Smallwood (until 2023)

Helen Davison (resigned as Treasurer at the end of 2021, appointed Administrator)

Pauline Kirby (until 2024)

Bryan Pyner (until 2024)

Steve Beynon (elected at the APCM until 2025)

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules.

All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

### **Objectives and Activities**

St Edmund's & St Mark's PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, social and ecumenical.

### **Churches**

The Parish of Wootton benefits from two Church of England Churches. St Edmund's Church in Church Road was built in 1087 and was originally the Manor Church. St Mark's in Station Road was built in 1909 with a large church hall annexe (currently called the Barn and used as an indoor skate park), and a coffee lounge.

### **Worship**

The parish's normal monthly pattern of Sunday Services is:

#### 1st Sunday in month

8am Holy Communion (St Edmund's)

9.30am Sunday Brunch (St Mark's)

#### 3rd Sunday in month

9.30am Morning "All-Age" Worship (St Mark's)

### 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays in month

9.30am Holy Communion with Explorers (St Mark's)

630pm Evensong (St Edmund's). (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays only)

For Sunday Holy Communion services, Common Worship liturgy is used.

The Sunday Brunch is a non-Eucharist café-style family Service which is organised by a small team. It has a different theme each month.

Morning Worship on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday ("All Age Worship") follows the structure of Common Worship, Service of the Word.

Evensong on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays follows the Book of Common Prayer (1662)

The weekday Service at St Edmund's on Wednesdays at 9.30am is said Holy Communion (1662)

"Little Lions" takes place most Wednesdays at 10am at St Mark's during term time. This is now an informal pre-school community outreach group, rather than a service.

### **Fellowship**

The parish is part of the Binstead, Havenstreet and Wootton plurality. This will alter when the Deanery Plan is finalised. The parish is looking towards forming a plurality with East Cowes and Whippingham.

The parish is part of the 'Churches Together in Wootton' covenant. There is currently no "Churches Together in Ryde" organisation.

### **Teaching**

The children's Explorers group meet in the Coffee Lounge during the Holy Communion services on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. Children's activities are also offered when there is a Eucharist on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month. In addition, children's activities take place within the Brunch service on the 1st Sunday of the month, and Morning Worship on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month is a family-friendly service.

Each year, we offer a Confirmation Course for young and mature Christians. The course was offered across the plurality and grouped in an age-appropriate manner, but in 2022 will be offered by the parish as the process of the change in plurality continues.

Wedding preparation is provided prior to the service. It begins with a Wedding Preparation afternoon around February, where couples from all three parishes planning a wedding gathering in Holy Cross Church, Binstead, with the Priest-in-Charge and the Pastoral Team to celebrate with bubbly, nibbles and blessings. The form of the wedding service is discussed as well as the possible options for music, readings, flowers, bells, candles, birds, bands, etc. The 3C's are explored: Communication, Conflict and Commitment in the context of marriage.

Marriage preparation in terms of organising the service for couples follows on an individual basis in the lead-up to their wedding.

Baptism preparation is done with each family. After baptism, new Christians are encouraged to get involved with the church family – through attending Sunday services, Explorers or Brunch, or by taking up voluntary roles.

The Discussion Group which used to meet on Thursdays is now meeting on Tuesday mornings in the Coffee Lounge at St Mark's.

The "Big Mac Talk" is an ongoing course of talks held after the morning service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month. David McCulloch speaks on aspects of the Bible, discussing the authorship, historical context, structure and theological message of Scriptural books.

Questions and discussion between attendees is encouraged. These talks started late in 2020 and are being well received by a regular group of around 15.

All in the Binstead / Havenstreet / Wootton plurality are encouraged to attend the Emmaus Supper at St Peter's Church, Havenstreet. This takes place monthly and provides ongoing study with a meal and fellowship for Christians across the plurality.

## **PCC Secretary's Report 2021**

### **The Post-Covid situation**

From the post-Christmas lockdown, the PCC agreed that the churches should remain closed until March 2021. Eventually St Edmund's was reopened for private prayer and the PCC agreed that a return to church services became possible just before Easter. Until the end of the year, the PCC agreed that some restrictions should remain for social distancing and hygiene reasons, but many of our worship practices and parish activities had returned to near-normal by the end of the year. Occasionally, lack of access to priests meant that the PCC had to plan for alternative worship provision (e.g. there was no Maundy Thursday service) but usually the services returned to the normal pattern by the end of the year. The PCC also agreed the pattern of Christmas services in a time when there were fewer priests available and more services were led by lay worship leaders.

Explorers was the first of the parish's ministries to restart, and the PCC agreed that Pete and Nikki Luther should lead it for a trial period. Holding Explorers once a month was successful and was extended to twice a month later in the year. The PCC approved the restart of Little Lions for young children and their parents in September and the beginning of the Elephant Club for people with dementia. A coffee morning for isolated people and "Mark's Brothers" as a breakfast club for men was also approved to start once a month in the autumn.

### **Finance**

At the beginning of the year, the PCC decided to reduce the Barn rent temporarily because of Covid restrictions on group activities such as skateboarding. This impacted on our income, as well as electricity bill increases. As a result, the PCC agreed to increase the cost of the hire of the church and coffee lounge, to offset these additional costs. Additional payments became necessary for the PCC to approve also as Sarah was asked to do more cleaning, Pete and Nikki Luther were paid monthly for running Explorers, Tracie Wilson was paid a small sum monthly to do accountancy work for the parish, and the quinquennial inspection recommendations required the PCC to agree expenditure for repairs, which were fortunately mostly cosmetic. This repair work will continue in 2022. Nevertheless, the PCC noted that due to the work of the Treasurers, the parish's financial situation markedly improved in 2021. The parish had paid off its share debt from 2020 by July and by the end of the year, the total payment for 2021 had been met.

The potential appointment of an Assistant Treasurer as a paid role was discussed near the end of the year as the Treasurer (Helen Davison) asked to stand down. David Bennison is willing to become Treasurer from 2022 and David McCulloch offered to be employed as Assistant Treasurer. The PCC agreed to go ahead with this proposal and for an official process to start in January.

### **PCC Officers**

At the start of the year, Helen Davison temporarily became PCC Treasurer again after Andrew Snow resigned due to ill-health. Following the APCM, the current PCC officers were approved for another year. Janette Thomas was appointed the PCC's GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) Officer. In May, the PCC elected Mike Broadsmith unanimously as Deputy Churchwarden to reduce Ann Capps' workload. At the end of the year, since Helen Davison realised she could not continue as Treasurer, the PCC agreed in principle to a paid role of Assistant Treasurer, and appointed David Bennison as Treasurer, effective from January 2022.

### **The Parish Response to the Deanery Plan**

In the spring, the PCC made their first responses to the issues raised by the Deanery Plan, which initially placed the parish of Wootton in an area with East Cowes and Whippingham. The first steps for the PCC were the appointment of representatives to meetings with other key people regarding the interregnum and the next stages of implementing the Deanery Plan. The PCC then agreed the updating of the parish profile to allow other parishes and prospective candidates for the vacancy to know our talents and areas of development as a parish. The PCC then decided to ask Rev Sue Paterson of East Cowes was asked to chair our APCM. The PCC also received a letter from the bishop suspending an appointment to our plurality vacancy until the Deanery Plan came more fully into effect. It therefore agreed that the Secretary should write a response to the Diocesan Registry explaining why we had not yet sent a parish profile.

Following the 2021 APCM, the PCC agreed to form a plurality with East Cowes and Whippingham, because it made sense pastorally and geographically. The PCC agreed that our previous plurality experience with Binstead and Havenstreet should be an advantage in this process. The PCC also agreed to allow East Cowes and Whippingham to see our draft parish profile. The PCC believed that although there were many differences of parish culture between us and East Cowes and Whippingham PCCs, we should show that we are willing to reach out and work with them. After Sue Patterson's resignation (effective Easter 2022), the PCC concluded that it was important to begin the process of moving towards a plurality immediately, as Sue would not be around for long to bring the plan for our area to fruition. Discussions started in the PCC about holding an extraordinary parish meeting. However, this meeting was postponed after a deanery meeting where the Plan was discussed and many concerns were expressed by other parishes of their situation..

Archdeacon Peter Leonard came to the PCC meeting in November to explain the progress of the Deanery Plan and our parish's role within it. He thanked us for what had been done so far and for the progress the parish's lay leadership had made. He recommended against joining the North East Wight process of integration 6 months after the start, because that would be difficult for us as a parish and their area. He recommended that we should look at safeguarding and school ministry for things best done within groups of parishes. Some administrative changes might be necessary in the future in the running of parishes, but the PCC can continue working in the future with other ministers like Readers from our current plurality, even if priests are not always available. Inevitably there will be teething problems with other parishes Wootton has not worked together with before, but these can be overcome by prayerful good will. Following his visit, the PCC agreed that continuing to move towards forming a new plurality was the right way forward.

### **Buildings, Land and Fabric**

Early in the year, the PCC updated and clarified the parish's graveyard policy, and approved a memorial bench for a recently deceased child. The PCC were asked to consider a proposal for a new wall memorial in St Edmund's but this was discovered to be unlikely to be agreed to by the diocese, so the proposal was rejected. The PCC agreed to reorganise the side chapel at St Edmund's which was later tidied.

Following the quinquennial inspection in the early summer, the PCC noted that the interior of St Mark's was fine, but some mostly cosmetic repairs would be needed on the exterior. The PCC agreed also that work should begin on St Edmund's after the report was received. Priority would be given to those works which required a faculty under List B and were affordable.

The PCC began to address complaints from some of our neighbours close to St Edmund's about our use of the copse, bonfires, and dumping spoil from the graveyard there. (Everything done on behalf of the PCC was reasonable). After further correspondence with our neighbours near St Edmund's, the PCC considered that we had fulfilled our

responsibilities. There were legal issues about a hedge that had been planted by a neighbour on the church land's side of a fence. The PCC took legal advice but this was complicated by our legal advisor also working for the neighbour. The conversations with our neighbour moved towards a satisfactory conclusion when her new hedge was discovered to be on the boundary of our land. After a PCC member raised that the road past St Edmund's was a potential access road for a housing development, which would endanger the church, the PCC agreed to ask the diocese to register the road as our property. Later in the summer, further investigations, including discussions between the Deputy Churchwarden and local councillors, were made towards making pinch points on Church Road to prevent future traffic problems.

The PCC renewed the contract with Carisbrooke Castle Museum to hold silver connected with the parish. The PCC also agreed to build a speed hump on the drive at St Mark's to reduce the speed of those driving towards the car park. This project is scheduled for 2022. Towards the end of the year, the PCC noted the discovery of a previously unknown brick-lined grave at St Edmund's. This was agreed to be made safe and further investigations made in 2022. The PCC agreed to use technology in the future to clarify burial plots in parts of St Edmund's graveyard.

Near the end of the year, the PCC approved Mike Broadsmith as the St Edmund's Building Fund Trust's representative on the PCC. In November, Eric and Wendy Griffiths proposed doing work on the copse and land opposite St Edmund's to make it a more attractive place and a benefit for the whole community. The PCC agreed to invite them to talk about their plans at the start of 2022.

*David McCulloch*

### **Financial Review and Reserves Policy**

The annual accounts for 2021 in the required format are appended to this report. It is the PCC's policy to budget for the ensuing year and to maintain sufficient cash reserves to cover the inevitable peaks of expenditure. Wherever possible, the Council seeks to set-aside funds (both restricted and designated) to meet the cost of large items of expenditure. The PCC Treasurer keeps the requirement for cash reserves under review and reports as necessary to the PCC.

### **3.3 Treasurer's Report**

This report supplements the financial review, which forms part of the PCC's statutory Annual Report and the Annual Accounts on which the review is based. All receipts and payments are managed and recorded by David Bennison and myself, and regular financial reports are made to the PCC. Our paperwork and accounts each year are reviewed by an Independent Examiner.

Income received this year was very similar to that of last year – still understandably reduced from pre-Covid levels. Receipts from plate collections, hall hire, and wedding/funeral fees have all started to rise once more, which is reassuring. Bridge advertisers were contacted late this year, so most income from them will be received next year.

Some increased expenditure this year was seen in hall running costs (due to additional cleaning requirements) and the cost of our youthwork provision but much greater reductions were seen in spending in most other areas, giving a total of £7000 less than last year. Overall, this meant our Income and Expenditure figures were nearly aligned!

Last year we were unable to pay £8000 of our Parish Share, but we paid in full this year, and managed to reduce this debt to £1000 by the end of 2021. This was a very positive outcome and puts us in a much stronger position going into 2022.

We are particularly grateful to all who have supported our parish this year by continuing to

make regular monthly payments and donations, to all who hire The Barn, church, and coffee lounge at St Marks, and to all who have worked to keep our costs low – especially our many volunteers. Lastly, a thank you to all whose prayers have been underpinning what we as a parish continue to do.

*Helen Davison*

David Bennison discussed the statement of financial activities (SOFA) for the parish which was available on the website. Essentially the financial situation was promising and we were able to pay our full parish share in 2021. The parish carried over a small surplus into 2022. The parish no longer had to hold money in reserve to pay back the Bridge advertisers in 2021 as very few asked to be repaid despite no physical Bridges being available. The parish's financial situation is much rosier in comparison than some other local parishes. The Treasurer believes that the parish could do much more in terms of fundraising, except in terms of fundraising from the St Edmund's Trust Fund (as noted by Doreen Gazey). Harry Kirby asked how our healthy finances came about and David Bennison suggested that the main reason is that our parishioners and donors are generous. There is a concern however that many regular givers are elderly. Ed Hopper raised the issue of our small reserves and David Bennison replied that we have historically had few reserves, although having a greater reserve would naturally be desirable.

David Bennison proposed that the APCM received the accounts and David McCulloch seconded, this proposal was approved unanimously.

### **3.4 Churchwarden's Fabric Report**

#### **ST EDMUND'S**

The quinquennial inspection gave no urgent repairs but a list of maintenance items. All asterisked items have been completed by Stephen Capps. The front door was renovated and looks splendid.\*

Graveyard and hedge maintenance at St Edmund's continued.\*

A brick-lined grave was discovered during routine maintenance with a large hole opening up once ivy had been removed from an old tree stump. It was double depth so that one coffin could be put on top of another resting on wooden bearers. When the grave was first found there was very little in it, just a small amount of earth. The County Archivist and County Archaeologist were informed. On further inspection a small amount of skull was discovered in one corner. The grave belongs to James List, who we believe died in 1832. We have gained permission from the Chancellor of the diocese to make the grave temporarily safe pending our tracing James List's descendants, with the agreement of the Archdeacon and the County Archaeologist. \* This is an ongoing situation which the PCC continue to work at complete resolution.

The rose-bed continues to look lovely thanks to Linda and Tony Redfern. Tom King continues to do splendid work with the Garden of Remembrance and we are very grateful for his many years of work for the parish.

The cleaning team of Linda, Cecily and Angela have been wonderful dealing with a very difficult year.

We are very grateful to Helen Davison and those who help her keep St Edmund's open for private prayer. This task was made more difficult with Covid cleaning regulations.

Mike Broadsmith does a wonderful job looking after all the paperwork and regulations that goes with the graveyards.

Thanks go to all those involved with the Friends of St Edmund's and the St Edmund's Church Building Trust, especially Doreen Gazey, for their support for works at St Edmund's.



## **ST MARK'S**

Quinquennial inspection showed no urgent repairs but a list of routine maintenance items. The Little Lions playground was extended with new fencing.\*

Repairs to the car park were made in August.\*

An upcycled altar rail from St Edmund's shed has been turned in to a wonderful bookcase for the coffee lounge.\*

Bollards have been made to protect the cladding from cars accidentally rolling into the west wall of the skateboard school.\*

Redecoration and repair of windows, door, eaves and fascia board on the north side has been done.\*

The Vestry has been redecorated, insulated, shelving has been installed as well as a new door to the loft.\*

Electrical vestry has been painted and new shelves installed.\*

The parquet floor in the church has been repaired and varnished where the font had stood.\*

Notice board from the Rectory has been repaired and placed at the beginning of the drive.\*

\* The parish repair bill would be huge if it wasn't for Stephen Capps giving his time and talents to the churches. We are enormously grateful to and for him.

Ongoing work following the quinquennial inspection will take place on repairs as labour and finance is available.

*Ann Capps*

Ann Capps offered thanks for the many small contributions given by many people, but especially the huge work done by Steven Capps. Tom King was also thanked individually. Harry Kirby thanked Ann Capps for her coordination of work on the fabric.

### **3.5 Deanery Synod Report**

David Bennison had little further to add as the synod had discussed matters relating to the Deanery Plan. Ed Hopper is planning on having discussions with the new bishop (Bishop Jonathan).

## **4. Reports on the Life of the Church**

### **4.1 Church Life**

2021 was another year when we couldn't hug each other and, for a lot of the year, we couldn't sing in church. St Mark's congregation got round this by going outside to sing the last hymn – it was such a joy!

Covid regulations affected the whole of 2021 and congregations had to book to come to services and then sit socially-distanced, masked and use hand sanitizer. Communion could be taken in one kind only. Brunch changed its format to keep everyone safe.

The summer months allowed us to restart Little Lions, the parent/carer and toddler group. Margaret King started socially distanced coffee mornings to enable those who had been shielding for so long to come to a safe space and enjoy each other's company. Harry Kirby started the Marks Brothers Bacon Butty Group and a team of people started The Elephant Club, a social space for people living with memory problems. It is lovely to see more people join these groups each month.

In October, the government changed the rules of numbers attending weddings as a new wave of Covid started and we had a wedding at St Edmunds arranged at 48 hours' notice! The original date would have fallen after the new restrictions came into being.

At the end of November, we held a 'Thanksgiving Supper' to thank all the people who support the work of the parish but who don't necessarily come to services. More than 70 people came and it was a very successful evening appreciated by all those who were there.

A surge in Covid cases meant the PCC felt it wasn't safe to hold the Christingle service on Christmas Eve and a shortage of priests on the Island meant that only Christmas Day Holy Communion could be celebrated in the parish. Meanwhile, just to make life more complicated, the ongoing saga of the Island re-organisation continued, plus the interregnum. Through all of this, we have seen God at work in our parish with people being willing to take on all sorts of roles to keep us going through the interregnum. We must thank Rev Sandie Osborne and Rev Len Fox for their continued support – we wouldn't have got through 2021 without them.

*Ann Capps - Churchwarden*

Up to 100 more people are connected to the parish than are on the Electoral Roll and Ann Capps thanked them all for their contribution. Currently there are 11 vacancies from 18 benefices on the Island, so the situation of having no regular priest available is becoming more acute to more churchgoers on the Island. Margaret King asked for physical help to enable her to restart the coffee morning for vulnerable people. The meeting agreed that there was a need for the coffee morning and the continuation of the Marks' Brothers club.

#### **4.2 The Bridge Magazine Report**

David Bennison commented on the Bridge. The magazine is being issued as usual with 10 numbers in 2021. Many favourable comments had been received from those who received it, and reading of the magazine appears to be widespread. David Bennison recorded thanks to Warwick Hammerton for his physical production of the Bridge.

#### **4.3 St Edmund's Building Trust Report**

There were no meetings of the Trust in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic, nor did the annual St Edmund's Open Weekend take place. Despite Covid lockdowns continuing into 2021, work on St Edmund's has continued, and the church was used for services once pandemic rules were eased.

**Projects financed and completed at St Edmund's in 2021:** The repair to exterior stonework was completed, as was the upgrading of the electrical system.

**Fundraising:** Due to the pandemic, fund raising efforts had to be put on hold until the 2021 Open Weekend. £614 was raised.

The carol evening at St Mark's raised £174. Our thanks go to Wight Sax who gave their time free of charge, and to David McCulloch and Lynn Peppitt who organised the event.

The Friends have raised nearly £800 from events, with more planned for 2022. Most members have made generous donations in addition to the basic membership fee of £5. Sales of cards, calendars and misc items have continued and brought in further income.

**The Open Weekend:** Nearly 100 people attended over the 3 days. Volunteers were recruited to assist with hosting the Open Weekend. I would like to record my grateful thanks to those who assisted. Materials for display were contributed by the Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust and The People's Trust for Endangered Species. Local photographers Viv Loveless, Danny Watson made our pictures of local flora and fauna available. The church was beautifully decorated with flowers donated by members of the local community, arranged by Ann Joliffe, Mary Shaw and Elizabeth Tucker. Many complimentary comments have been made about the 2021 event; some saying it was the best display in the history of the event.

**Friends' Annual Newsletter:** This was printed in house; as many copies as possible were distributed by email, some were sent out by post, and others hand-delivered.

**Membership:** A new membership list has been created since the Open Weekend by Lynn Peppitt, Mary Shaw and myself, and is now in operation. Lynn Peppitt has been running the membership list since September 2021 with input from Doreen. She will hand this over to Mary Shaw on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

The Trust currently has 77 members. I have email addresses for a large percentage of the members. It is hoped that before long we will have most of the membership on email, which will benefit the Trust by reducing costs and increasing efficiency. A monthly account spreadsheet is being used which shows the membership renewal payments and donations. The cash and cheques are banked monthly.

To comply with GDPR the membership records are kept on a password protected computer and a paper copy is kept in a locked filing cabinet. Those donations that are eligible for Gift Aid are passed to the Treasurer to enable him to claim additional money.

**Trustees:** The Trust welcomed 3 new Trustees: Lynn Peppitt, who is currently Administrator; Linda Pitcher, representing the Wootton Bridge Parish Council; and Mike Broadsmith, representing the Parochial Church Council. The board of Trustees is now in full compliance with the Trust Deed, with 5 Trustees.

*Doreen Gazey (Secretary)*

David Bennison commented as the Trust Chair that he only needs to make a short report this year. As with so much else, COVID and lockdown curtailed activities for most of 2020 and much of 2021. As the biggest impact was on the Trust's fundraising events (including the cancellation of the Open Weekend in 2020), funds became depleted, and it is only now beginning to build back up to the level of reserves needed to support whatever maintenance work the PCC needs to put in hand. The successful Open Weekend in August 2021 was a very visible sign that the work of the Friends continues and will be further developed in future. Fortunately, the life of St Edmund's has continued through most of the period of the pandemic. With a few changes (including the use of face coverings and hand sanitisers), worship now follows its customary pattern, even though we have been without a parish priest for over a year now. The church is still open every day for visitors and private prayer. So the intentions of the founding members, a quarter of a century ago, that St Edmund's should remain active and well used have been maintained in difficult times.

While little building maintenance has been done during the period, this is more due to the fact that relatively little needed to be done than to any problems due to the pandemic. Particular mention should be made of the work of refinishing the main church door - quite a major task - undertaken by Stephen Capps. Not only is the door now looking its best, but it gives a clear indication that the church is cared for, even before you enter the building.

The routine quinquennial inspection of the church building took place late in 2021. Nothing of immediate concern was identified in the Report, but there is now a list of jobs, large and small, to be done in the coming years. With the generosity of the Friends and visitors, we hope to be able to support as much as possible of this work as it progresses.

The Trust has recently taken the opportunity to strengthen the governance of the St Edmund's Church Building Trust (the charity of which the Friends of St Edmund's are part). Essentially this has involved going back to the principles of the Trust Deed (which remains unchanged), strengthening the Trustee body, and defining more clearly the formal relationship between the Trust and the Friends. From the point of view of our members, the main point is probably that we have now established that the Trust can support work in the churchyard as well as on the church building.

Finally, this report must, once again, record thanks to generous donors and all who have done so much to keep the work of the Trust alive during difficult times. Particular mention should be made of our Treasurer David Poore, and of our new Trustee Lynn Peppitt. And, of course, we must again pay tribute to the continuing indefatigable work of Doreen Gazey as Secretary, Organiser and Parish Archivist. With the support and kindness we continue to receive, we can continue to play our part in caring for the beautiful, holy and special place that is St Edmund's

*David Bennison (Chairman)*

David commented that generous donations have ensured that ongoing contributions can continue to the parish for work on St Edmund's fabric.

#### **4.4 Parish Archivist's Report**

I have been responsible for the parish archive now since 1995, and since then I have been able to draw on the archives for a variety of uses over the years.

Over the last 2 years I have produced and sold a history of Wootton Common about which very little had previously been known. My grateful thanks goes to John Castle for producing an artist's impression of the tin church present at that time, based on a full contemporary news report.

There seems to be a renewed interest in family and local history, probably because of lockdown. Many of the queries now come to me via the Parish website or Facebook.

Apart from drawing on the archive for the Annual Open Weekend, enquiries have included family history, including requests to help locate a family member, locations of burials, house history, and tracing postcards/images of specific places in Wootton. I was also asked to review a recently written book. I am also frequently requested to give a "guided tour" of St Edmund's.

I have also recently been able to assist the PCC by researching the background to a grave in the churchyard. Having located more records in the last few months, I am hoping to update the index to the burials registers.

This form of outreach I believe increases interest in our local history and creates good will, and I hope others will be willing to "take up the baton" in the future.

*Doreen Gazey*

Doreen commented further that visiting couples are very grateful for her work which regularly connected visiting people back to Wootton.

#### **4.5. Music and Worship Report**

In normal circumstances, the choir sing regularly at the two Eucharistic morning services in St Mark's on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month. I was glad to welcome John Terry more regularly into the choir near the beginning of the year. However, it was clear before the end of the year that John's health was proving a burden to him in singing and attending regular choir practices, and by mutual agreement he stopped singing regularly in the choir before Christmas. Currently the choir numbers five regular members.

Choir practices were regular on Thursday evenings for much of the year, but again due to outbreaks of Covid, we had to shelve choir practices for a few months in 2021. We had our normal choir practices break after Christmas and Easter, chiefly to give the Music Director a rest! The choir also took a month off practising in August. In addition to my role as choir director, I play the electronic organ at Evensong at St Edmund's on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month, and play the hymns at the Brunch service and All Age Worship at St Mark's. As every year, I would like to thank the choir for their ongoing commitment and support. I would also like to thank the churchwardens and PCC during the interregnum for their ongoing encouragement and generosity through all the prevailing difficulties that we had to face.

As we all know, parish life in 2021 was still seriously affected by the Covid pandemic, and this applied not least to worship and music. Although there was only a month or so of lockdown at the beginning of the year, some impact on our parish's worship continued. The congregation was gradually allowed to return to singing the hymns, although the social distancing and mask wearing required for public worship still made singing difficult. I would like to thank the congregation for the effort they made in worship, despite all the inevitable difficulties. As 2021 wore on, restrictions on worship were gradually removed, and by the

end of the year anthems during the distribution of Holy Communion were again permitted. The choir and organist continued to provide hymns and music and our “inspiring worship” were a great boost to us all as the pandemic continued to have a physical and psychological impact.

The occasional lack of clerical availability also had an impact on what forms our worship took during 2021. There was also an occasional miscommunication regarding what the visiting priest expected in terms of readings and music. I will work towards the resolution of this issue as we move towards a new form of working in a potential new plurality in 2022. We continued the practice of the annual Carol Service on the Sunday before Christmas in the morning in place of All Age Worship. Having this service at St Mark’s allowed for greater access to it from families and the elderly. We welcomed three more occasional members of the choir for this service, and we also had an important contribution on the flute from the youngest member of the Hopper family! Thanks go to them, and particularly to the choir for their practising this service from the end of September. As always, the carol service is a particular worship highlight for me. The worship planning group also developed a new form of worship on Good Friday, which tried to be more reflective in nature, through a combination of readings, prayer, moments of reflection and music. I am glad to belong to this group, which enables the planning of worship to be a collaborative effort.

St Mark’s also hosted a musical evening of carols and Christmas music in December to raise money for the Friends of St Edmund’s Trust, and it was well attended. Our friends from Wight Sax and the choir came together to lead the music.

The pipe organ at St Edmund’s was hardly used at all in 2021, chiefly because the congregation at Evensong has dropped, and sometimes the organist also had to lead the singing. Playing this role would not have been possible from the organ loft. I would like to ensure in the coming year that the organ at St Edmund’s has its ongoing maintenance ensured, as its use at funerals and weddings will probably return to something like normal in 2022. Due to my other commitments, I was only able to play at one funeral in 2021.

Perhaps the issues raised by the pandemic in the last two years has reminded us all of the value of regular worship giving us a consistent pattern to our lives as Christians. It was noticeable how much people seemed to enjoy our worship more when we returned to singing and praying together in greater numbers in our churches. I am grateful to the opportunity the parish provided for playing a role in supporting worship during this “extraordinary time.”

*David McCulloch - Organist*

Doreen Gazey and Pauline Kirby commented how much choral singing contributed to our worship and how much that was appreciated. The meeting suggested that we could have a service where people choose and sing their favourite hymns and songs and David McCulloch agreed to look further into this proposal. Harry Kirby commented that there was a great sense of unity, purpose and joy when we worship together with music on Sunday mornings.

#### **4.6. Pastoral Report**

Behind the scenes, the pastoral team was busy trying to keep in contact with most of our congregation through emails, phone or visiting. When asked, Yvonne Gilbert will send appropriate cards and messages to those who are unwell or in need of extra prayer support. As a team of much valued friends, we try and arrange lifts to church services and social events. The team also offer transport to appointments, picking up prescriptions or doing some light shopping.

Sadly, the short-lived Tuesday coffee morning had to stop, as Margaret King was unable to erect the tables and move the chairs alone. She also needed help to unlock and lock up. Please contact Margaret on 882417 if you think you can help with this either on the first or third Tuesday of the month between 9.30am and 12pm. The coffee morning was becoming

pastorally very valuable, especially for those that live alone.

A spin off from the coffee morning has been the “Marks’ Brothers” Bacon Butty social group, which is going from strength to strength and has become a much valued “male only” time. Well done to Harry Kirby and his team. John Terry’s Bible study group is also very popular and has seen a growth in attendance.

By request of the care home, we now have a parish team going into Solent Grange to lead a hymn and prayer service which is much appreciated by the residents. The distribution of Holy Communion has now also restarted due to the lifting of Covid restrictions.

The main focus of the team is to bring to the housebound and isolated a friendly smile, messages of news and commitment to pray, with reassurance that they are not forgotten.

If you have any pastoral need, or think we can support you, please contact any team member.

David Bennison - John Terry - Yvonne Gilbert - Hilary Baldwin or Margaret King (Coordinator).

*Margaret King*

John Terry commented that there was an ongoing desire to enable some isolated or ill people to come to services and he tries to follow up on vulnerable people he has heard about.

Margaret King thanked Ann Capps for being the hub through which pastoral activity takes place in the parish.

#### **4.7 Tuesday Discussion Group Report**

The group started with an Advent course as the rest of 2021 had been filled with lockdowns or high Covid levels in society at large. Several new members have joined us and we value our Thursday morning discussions on our faith. The group gives us the opportunity to explore questions that affect our lives.

*John Terry*

John Terry commented that there were Lent and Advent groups planned for the future.

Groups are normally between 6-8 people. Sourcebooks are being used as take-offs for discussion.

#### **4.8 Safeguarding Report**

No safeguarding incidents have thankfully been reported.

All current PCC members have a current DBS certificate apart from Bryan Pyner who has completed the initial application, but the Safeguarding Officer has not been able to see him recently, so his application is still pending, and also John Terry.

The diocesan safeguarding team have provided a list of what training we have undertaken in relation to safeguarding. Unfortunately, the list shows that we are not as a PCC trained up to the required standard, with only Hilary currently up to date on all safeguarding requirements. Ann Capps and David McCulloch both currently hold foundation level certificates in safeguarding. All other previous training recorded is now well out of date. No details of individuals’ training are kept by the diocese, so we cannot ask them for information.

The matrix attached to the PCC minutes for March shows the training required for all.

Hilary Baldwin has established a safeguarding action plan for the parish by using the parish dashboard facility which has been accepted by the diocesan safeguarding team. As the PCC progresses with the training our dashboard page will be updated.

The PCC has decided that after the APCM and the membership of the PCC has been clarified that a safeguarding officer from the dioceses will come and help us with training in person.

Whippingham parish would be happy to join us as part of a new plurality training session, although they were disappointed that Wootton would need a delay until at least May.

I would like to stress that it is essential that the PCC members have up to date training. In the future, DBS certificates will need renewal every three years rather than five as at present. I

will start working on this task in April.

*Hilary Baldwin – Safeguarding Officer*

Hilary Baldwin commented that after the APCM, the new PCC will be required to take a set of qualifications to be compliant with diocesan policy. A face to face session can be led later in 2022 by a diocesan safeguarding representative if we request it. Hilary is required to update a list for those people who need to complete modules, which can be completed online. Ed Hopper encouraged the new PCC to do modules asap in their own time. Hilary Baldwin has sent a link to Ann Capps to enable people to complete the work online, especially those who are guiding Confirmation candidates, as this training is urgent.

## **5. Chair Report**

Harry Kirby commented about how the parish has flourished during challenging times, particularly keeping St Edmund's open most of the time when permitted during Covid. Ann Capps was thanked for her gifts of challenging and inspiring the parish with her leadership. Harry believes that we are a close church family, and we are building our parish life together. He is convinced that we are a parish of love and community spirit. Doreen Gazey commented that our mutual service is a major characteristic of our church life.

Harry summarised the ongoing development of the Deanery Plan. At first when meetings began, East Cowes and Whippingham representatives told us that Wootton only had debts to offer other parishes. It was clear that Wootton had different parish characteristics from East Cowes and Whippingham because of our tradition of strong lay ministry and leadership. The first impressions of a plurality between the three parishes were negative but these are being resolved by ongoing highly positive meetings. Maintaining a certain independence but working collaboratively has been found to be a mandate for the future together. Last week a meeting has been held with the Area Dean and he agrees with our logic for forming a new plurality. The Area Dean is going to meet the Bishop and will feedback to us asap. East Cowes and Whippingham parishes are looking for new ways of working which are acknowledged to be not fully in accordance with church rules. But it has been agreed that if our strategy was clearly wrong the Area Dean would tell us; otherwise we should be pragmatic and seek the best way of working together in a new plurality. The meeting noted that we could support attendance to services at East Cowes and Whippingham by providing lifts for people. The three parishes have started putting together a common format for parish profiles and are working together to agree a covering document.

John Terry commented that if the plurality is successful, we will be able to go to each other's services as a different diet of service whenever we wish.

## **6. Elections**

**PCC member:** Steven Beynon was proposed by Harry Kirby and seconded by David Bennison to act as a PCC member. The meeting approved the election unanimously.

**Sidespeople:** John Terry is acting currently as a Sidesperson at 930am Eucharist services at St Mark's offering booklets and a friendly welcome. David Bennison proposed and Ann Capps seconded his election as a Sidesperson, and the meeting elected him unanimously.

## **7. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

The PCC intends to appoint Jill Traill for another year. She is the Treasurer of East Cowes and if we work as a plurality she would not be able to continue as our examiner. But we would still like to re-appoint her for another year. David Bennison proposed that the PCC should be delegated to find an alternative person if Jill is unable to examine the 2022

accounts.

**8. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**9. Date of Next APCM**

The Secretary announced that the next APCM was scheduled for **26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7pm at St Mark's.**