



**St Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

**Committee Reports**

**St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**  
**APCM Report**

**Social Committee Report**  
**2023**

Our first events in 2023 were the Soup Lent Lunches. We took responsibility for the lunch in aid of Hospice in the Weald, and we organised 4 other charities to provide teams for their own lunches, Friends of the Holy Land, MAYFACS, Family Support Work and Friends of St. Dunstan's.

The Summer Fair on June 3rd was a huge success, it takes a great deal of organisation, and we couldn't do it without the enormous amount of hard work that Nicky puts in, as well as so many members of congregation and others in the village community.

We held a very convivial Harvest Lunch on October 1st. Once again Sue Wright cooked the main course which was excellent. We have booked her again for this year.

During the Autumn we set up teams to cook supper for the three Hope Explored course evenings.

We were delighted that so many people turned out on 15 October for the Parish Walk and short service, followed by afternoon tea. We aim to be slightly more adventurous next time and have a longer walk, and possibly include some stiles!

The Late Night Shopping Evening on December 1st was very well supported. Having the Church Tower open draws a good crowd in, and we sold plenty of mulled wine.

The following day we held The Christmas Fair. This event also takes a great deal of organisation and hard work. Special thanks must go to Greg Higgins who was amazing at moving the church furniture !

**Maggie Holliday and Renee Bryant**

# St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield

## APCM Report

### ROTHERFIELD DEANERY SYNOD - ANNUAL REPORT 1st April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

The Rotherfield Deanery Synod met three times during the year: Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023; Tuesday 21 November 2023, and Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. In addition, an Autumn Deanery Meeting was held on Thursday 5 October 2023.

#### Deanery News

During the year, the Deanery welcomed Judith Wilkinson to Jarvis Brook; Andrew Goy to Wadhurst, Tidebrook and Stonegate. Nigel Mason retired from Rotherfield and Mark Cross, as did Ashley Evans from Ticehurst and Flimwell. St Mary Magdalene, Cowden was incorporated into the Benefice of Hartfield with Coleman's Hatch and Rotherfield Deanery.

#### Deanery Finance

Each year Diocesan Finance Officers (Lesley Lynn and Catherine Dawkins) together with the Archdeacon (Edward Dowler) request a meeting with Clergy, Churchwardens, Parish Treasurers and Deanery Representatives to explain the Diocesan Budget for the coming year and the Parish Share allocations. A meeting was held, together with Dallington and Uckfield Deaneries, on 5<sup>th</sup> October at All Saints', Crowborough. The Diocese continues to appeal to all Parishes to meet the full Parish Ministry Costs as per their schedule – this allows for any surplus to fund impoverished parishes within the Diocese. St Dunstan's has pledged a 0.1% increased Parish Share for this coming year in line with Deanery recommendation but the amount pledged represents only 90.4% of what the Diocese would like us to pay.

#### Speakers

The June Meeting was held at All Saint's Crowborough and took the form of a supper to welcome new and recently appointed Reps. Speakers, Sarah Thrift (All Saints'), Kat Fisher (Wadhurst) and Kate Dillingham (Hartfield and High Hurstwood), led discussion on the topic '**Growing our Children's, Youth and Families' Ministry**'. The November Meeting was held at St Thomas the Apostle, Groombridge with speakers Judith Wilkinson (Jarvis Brook), Paul Radcliffe (Wadhurst), Steve Rees and Irena Morrison (both All Saints') encouraging '**The support of our older generation with Hope and Love**'. The March Meeting took place at St Mary's Hartfield with Ben Lucas speaking on '**The New Testament**'. 2024 is the Year of the New Testament and Year 2 of a Diocesan 3-year Strategy. 2023 was the Year of the Old Testament and 2025 will be The Year of Faith celebrating the anniversary of 1700 years of the Council of Nicaea and 950 years of Christian mission in the Diocese based in Chichester. Watch this space!

#### Deanery Reps

During the year Denise Packham stepped down for personal reasons and we thank her for her valued contribution. There are currently 2 vacancies for Deanery Reps.

#### Julia Lawrence

**On behalf of the Deanery Synod Representatives**

**St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield  
APCM Report**

**Annual Eco-Church Report**

**2023/24**

“Responding to climate change is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God’s creation.” Justin Welby

St, Dunstan’s has joined the worldwide community of Eco-Church. There are 4000 registered churches in the UK of all denominations.

Its survey, with its supporting resources, help us to “go green” in all areas of our church life. We work towards awards in Bronze, Silver, and Gold. We are already a Bronze Medal Church, well on the way to Silver and “Going for Gold”!

Our committee of six members work under five headings:

- Worship & Teaching
- Management of Church Buildings
- Management of Church Land
- Community & Global Engagement
- Lifestyle

We also co-operate and liaise with Mayfield Climate Action Group

We are blessed with a large and beautiful churchyard, which is open to everyone. It already has the large Prayer Labyrinth and Community Composting Area. We are putting into plan wild flower areas, an herb garden and strawberry area, bug hotels and bird boxes and a very shallow pond for frogs. A children’s Trail is envisaged , in place by the Summer.

All offers of practical help would be welcomed in this project for the whole community.

**Di Blackden**

# **St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**

## **APCM Report**

### **Health and Safety Report 2023/24**

During the year a group, namely Robin Holliday, Denise Packham, Nicky Higgins, Mike Hand-Bowman and myself have met to review our health and safety procedures and it was clear that best practice had slipped somewhat. As well as checking through existing documents, we have looked at other church models and example policies from Ecclesiastical (insurance) , The Health and Safety Executive, and Chichester Diocese recommendations.

As a result we have re-written a policy for St. Dunstan's which will be put before the PCC for approval at its March 2024 meeting. All areas have been scrutinised including London House and the Churchyard. The Parish Administrator ensures that all regular checks and examinations take place throughout the year, which includes London House.

Alongside the revised policy we have produced a risk assessment form and will be asking those responsible for each area to complete one to return to the Parish Administrator and these will also be reviewed on an annual basis.

Any organisation or individual hiring the church and London House must have their own Health and Safety policy as well as being familiar with that of St. Dunstan's.

Fire Risk assessments are included and even E-safety but for the time being this is not an issue.

The Stewards had a fire evacuation session followed by a practical escape procedure in the church before Christmas and various initiatives were highlighted and or put into practice. Health and Safety Risk Assessments were also carried out for the Christmas Fair, and the Carol Christingle services.

Our collective challenge from now is to fully implement the policy and review it annually.

**Emma Ryder Richardson**

## **St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**

### **APCM Report**

#### **Holy Dusters Report**

**2023/24**

We do a thorough clean every six weeks throughout the year with top ups just before Easter and Christmas. Starting at 9.30 am we are nearly always finished by 11.30 am so it is not too onerous a commitment and we find it is much more rewarding to work in a group.

Unfortunately we are unable to clean above 2 metres and that is only with an extending brush to clear the cobwebs . However, it is very pleasing to smell the polished pews at the end of our session.

At the moment we are trying to make the change to eco-friendly cleaning products to support the Eco-Church initiative led by Di Blackden.

We are a lively and enthusiastic group and enjoy meeting together over a cup of coffee after we have finished a session.

Extra help is always welcome and if anyone would like to join us we shall be pleased to see you.

**Emma Ryder Richardson**

# **St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**

## **APCM Report**

### **St Dunstan's Church Organ Trust Committee Report 2023/24**

The last year has been somewhat challenging with the weather playing a major part in our lives.

We lost our much admired and long enduring Head of Music Andrew Benians. He was replaced by a very young Head of Music, Jack Gonzalez-Harding.

Their methods of playing were quite different. One with huge reverence and the other with huge passion! Unfortunately, the latter soon involved larger bills to keep repairing the organ as and when defects, of which there were many, appeared and needed to be remedied.

To promote and raise the profile of the splendid Walker organ we had two concerts during 2023. One featured Jack GH playing Fantasia in C Minor BWV, by J.S. Bach, and in contrast a Buster Keaton, silent movie with organ accompaniment by Darius Battiwalla.

Unfortunately the latter did not prove a great success and a decision was made not to repeat silent movie accompaniment.

In 2024, we decided to try adding an instrument to our organ concerts to see if this appealed more to audiences than a solo organ recital. Both concerts were performed by Gerard Brooks (organ) with Patsy Gamble (Saxophone) for one and the other with Richard Deacon (Trumpet).

This new series, entitled Organ Plus has proved to be more successful with good numbers attending in the audience and is likely to be repeated.

As I mentioned earlier, the weather has blighted us all, and unfortunately the organ has not been excluded making maintenance of the instrument an increasing problem.

Rick Sheppard, of Sheppard and Cross, commented on his last tuning visit that humidity levels were extremely high and were causing problems with the organ. There have been problems with several basic stops having to be disconnected as the sliders have stuck as the wood has swollen. It was somewhat embarrassing that Gerard Brooks had to abort one of his solo performances as a slider had stuck halfway! Tuning is also an issue as temperatures in the church building rapidly fluctuate with expansion and contraction of materials causing changes in pitch. Patches of mildew are also evident on the woodwork of the organ console and corrosion on strands of wire on the tracker action.

Once the causes of the problems are identified through assessments by various independent parties, the Organ Trust will be advised on courses of action both short and longer term. It is very likely that any remedial action will be very expensive and may cause the organ to be out of use for periods of time while the work is carried out, particularly if it means that pipework has to be removed to access sliders.

**Mike Hand-Bowman and Chris Harris**

# St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield

## APCM Report

### Safeguarding Report 2023/24

Safeguarding remains at the heart of all we do as a parish. We aim to protect people from harm in all our activities, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults. Above all, we strive to embed Safeguarding into the culture of our church.

We have had no incidents or reports which have had to be investigated or referred on within the last year.

#### **Compliance**

We are in compliance with all relevant guidance outlined by the Diocese. Our Safeguarding policy is adopted from the Diocese of Chichester.

#### **Safer Recruitment**

We continue to use the independent safeguarding charity **thirtyone:eight** (formally known as CCPAS) for Disclosure Barring Service checks (DBS). Any person requiring a DBS check or update should contact the Safeguarding Officer.

All DBS checks can now be made portable through their update service, meaning you no longer require different DBS checks for different institutions. Applicants must register their new DBS with the update service and then they do not need to be renewed. DBS' not registered with the update service will need to be renewed every three years.

#### **Training**

We ensure that all leaders and helpers are trained to the appropriate level. All training courses are online only.

##### **Basic Awareness** (formerly C0)

This is required training for anyone involved in working or volunteering with children and/or vulnerable adults in a church context, and is recommended for anyone else who wants a basic level of safeguarding awareness. It is an essential pre-requisite for the other core training modules.

##### **Foundation** (formerly C1)

This is required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities or has contact in their church role with children and/or vulnerable adults. It is a pre-requisite for Leadership training.

##### **Leadership** (formerly C2)

This is required for anyone who has safeguarding leadership responsibilities or responsibility for leading activities with children and/or vulnerable adults. This course consists of some pre-course work, two online training sessions and reflective work to complete the course. A thorough and thought provoking course.

Everyone is required to refresh their training every three years in order to keep up to date with all the latest safeguarding practices. People are reminded and advised on how to book onto their relative training courses

in good time and should complete their courses as soon as able to do so.

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## **St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**

### **APCM Report**

#### **Safeguarding Report**

**2023/24**

**(Continued)**

Anyone in our Parish, attending St Dunstan's is welcome to complete the Basic Awareness course.

#### **Activities and Practices - Simple Quality Protects (SQP)**

We currently hold Level One of the SQP Assessment.

Simple Quality Protects is the Safeguarding programme launched across the Diocese. It is designed to improve Safeguarding at Parish level and make the achieving of high standards as straight forward as possible. We have assurance from this audit that we are following good practice and we continue to update and introduce new practices and procedures where necessary.

If you have any concerns concerning Safeguarding, please contact the Safeguarding Office directly.

Or alternatively contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team at [safeguarding@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@chichester.anglican.org)

Or directly to our Diocesan Adviser, Colin Perkins on **01273 425030 / 07500 771210**

Our Safeguarding policies can be viewed on our website or in a file at the back of Church.

Alternatively you can contact the Parish Office or the Safeguarding Officer.

**Karen Dines**  
**Safeguarding Officer**  
**March 2024**

**07799 417972 / [safeguardingofficer.stdunstans@gmail.com](mailto:safeguardingofficer.stdunstans@gmail.com)**

# St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield

## APCM Report

### Sidesmen Report 2023/24

#### Current Sidesmen for re-appointment :

Denise Packham	Miles and Sue Smith	Stephen and Julia Lawrence
Monica Aitken	Liz Kittermaster	David Whittall
Tim Reid	Emma Ryder Richardson	Robin and Maggie Holliday
Jeremy and Gillie Smither	Ian and Caroline Barbour	Philip James

Sidesmen cover Sunday morning services, Choral evensong and special services for Christmas and Lent/Easter. Their contribution to the smooth running of services is essential but in addition, they offer a friendly welcome to all. I am truly impressed by the caring service given by my colleagues, they show the Love of God in straightforward action.

I am sad to report that Chris Starling has just resigned, not because he really wants to, but because of ill health. I am very grateful to Chris for his service and we wish him well.

At present we continue to be blessed with just sufficient sidesmen for all our services, the most demanding of which is Christingle at which we had 375 people present this year.

We also had summer drinks together – and as a result of the discussion that ensued, we now have a simpler rota, and more recently, a long overdue evacuation practice to ensure they all know the basics and appreciate the very real responsibilities in the event of a fire. I know this got people thinking and as a result, and at short notice, we doubled the sidesmen for Christingle. Over 150 children all clutching naked flames is indeed a risk – mainly to personal safety, so it was not inappropriate to be better prepared than previous years.

What would be most helpful for the upcoming year is to have more notice of the special services and a little more specific planning about what is required, especially for Sidesmen when it comes to lighting the candles of excited children. I think it would be helpful to have a specific plan for Christingle which includes putting additional chairs out ahead of time and not whilst the service is in progress.

I hope during the coming year we may be able to harmonise more with the service schedule and publish rotas in sync every six months, including special services, so I am not hunting at the last minute for volunteers. I have ideas as to how to do that whilst not increasing the load on Sidesmen but rather, reducing it. Our sidesmen typically do many other jobs in church life.

A final big thank you for the service given by our sidesmen, often handling many other responsibilities as well. We do now need at least one more volunteer immediately.

**Philip James**

**St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield  
APCM Report**

**St Dunstan's Churchyard Report  
2023/24**

As everyone will have noticed, the weather has been appalling for the last few years. If it is not constant wetness as we are experiencing at the moment, it is record hot temperatures during the summers.

This makes managing a churchyard the size of ours extremely challenging. In the winter months, the ground is so wet, that it is impossible to get grass cutting equipment to stop sinking into the ground, thus rendering usual seasonal cutting dates useless.

As the weather then heats up and gets warmer and warmer, everything in the churchyard starts to grow at an absolutely absurd rate, and almost impossible to keep up with.

This has been a challenge for Jeff our gardener and to date this year he has not yet been able to manage one single cut, nor start on necessary removal of weeds and thorns. It is hoped that as we enter March, the weather will start to change for the better and work can begin to get the churchyard into a more manageable condition.

Working parties will shortly begin and I anticipate them starting in April and then monthly through until October.

Towards the end of last year we commissioned a safety survey of the churchyard's trees. The results of this were very encouraging and showed that only two trees needed urgent remedial work. This work has been awarded to Ace Total Tree Works and it will be carried out at the beginning of April.

The Eco Group are starting to make changes to the churchyard with the compost area having been given a new lease of life, and bug hotels starting to appear. A very small pond is anticipated, and eco hunts for children to spot areas of interest around the churchyard will appear at some time soon.

**Mike Hand-Bowman.  
March 2024.**

**St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**  
**APCM Report**

**Bellringers' Report**  
**2023/24**

The Bellringing team called the congregation to every Sunday service and Evensong in 2023. The commitment to come out in heat and ice has been impressive.

The clock however has been less than consistent, making it necessary to disable the chimes for weeks on end until it could be professionally repaired. We managed to damage the hammer on the 8 leaving the village with the puzzle to what hour it was, as the rest of the quarters carried on working, this we managed to repair 'in house.'

The community film 'The Quest for the holy grail' has visited to film or record the bells in the tower throughout the summer and autumn.

We rang 'Coronation changes' on Saturday 6th May for the coronation of King Charles III. 48 changes rung continually throughout the country.

Both Churchwardens visited us on a Tuesday practice night and the tower has been open to visitors during the church fete and Christmas high street late night shopping and lights on evening, prior to which the Mayfield beavers came up and looked around.

3 people have started to learn to ring this year, but we have lost 2 learners to family commitments. We rang for 3 weddings, 1 renewal of vows, a confirmation service and a memorial service. The bells were rung for Easter, half muffled for Remembrance Sunday and all Christmas services.

**Vanessa Kolberg**  
**Tower Captain**

## **St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**

### **APCM Report**

#### **Sunday Club Report**

**2023/2024**

Our numbers in Sunday Club remain about the same. Some of our older members are now happy to go into church with their parents for the whole service. As this happens we do get other members coming in – it just seems to work and keeps us at about the same number. Although not huge numbers it is a lovely little group. Sometimes we get 1 and other times up to 7 but if they all came at the same time we could have 8! As there is sport and sometimes homework on Sunday mornings we are very lucky to have SOME children coming. With children aged 3 and under we ask a parent to stay with them. If any child is nervous about staying a parent/guardian is always welcome to stay in with them until they feel confident. There are always 2 adults on duty who are DBS checked. The lessons follow the readings in church so that whatever is said or the words of the hymns are familiar when we join the rest of the congregation at the Peace.

We are in London House every Sunday (except Christmas Day) where our sessions are friendly, suitable for children to understand, fun by doing whatever we can to help them to understand the Bible stories – it may be a game, discussion, craft, word searches or relevant puzzles or using visuals such as Godly Play figures etc. A variety of books and websites are used and anything to get the message across. As adults we all enjoy it too and doing the lessons is also enjoyable and sometimes educational. We join the rest of the congregation in church at the Peace and then we all receive either a Blessing or Holy Communion. Fr Michael and I are keen for the children to go to the front to tell the congregation what they have been doing but at the moment none of the children feel confident enough to do it.

Each week Julia puts a piece about Sunday Club on the e-news saying the time, what we are doing that week, a relevant picture and a prayer. Thanks to Julia for the above, the sides people for coming to tell us when it is time to go into church: to Alison, Karen and Geoff for all your help and support: to Fr Michael for his support and to Rachel and Julia for the odd times when we have needed them to stand in.

**Margaret Neve**

# St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield

## APCM Report

### St. Dunstan's Flower Guild 2023/24

We still have our 13 members, plus our one member who lives partly in Austria and hope our two newest members who joined last year are still enjoying being with us.

Our events change very little from year to year, apart from weddings, funerals and royal occasions.

Decorating the '**Pedestal**' (previously called the 'Sanctuary Vase') is done every fourteen days, except during Lent and Advent. On **Mothering Sunday**, we create fifty posies of spring flowers handed out to the ladies attending church on the Sunday. At **Easter**, with Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Saturday, our arrangements include lilies - as a special tradition at this time of year is the collecting of 'Lily Money'. Lilies are bought with the donations given in envelopes with the names of deceased relatives and loved ones on the outside and incorporated into the arrangements in their memory, while a list of all the names is put on the altar.

This year we had the **Coronation of King Charles III** on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Father Michael had obtained permission to show the event live in the church. The Guild arranged flowers in keeping with the king's theme celebrating natural and wildflowers and the English countryside, with bunting and branches embellished with blossom amongst the pews and had a copy of the crown on display.

**Harvest Festival** saw generous parishioners once again provide us with vines to use as decoration, hops were given by the Wicker family and Andrew Firrell kindly gave us some maize. The arch in the church porch was decorated with hops and rosehips, while sunflowers, pumpkins and fruit added colour inside the church.

**Remembrance Sunday** had the annual displays of artificial poppies and **Advent** the simple adornment of the five candles with ivy. Carol Concerts and **Christmas** followed with a great array of locally provided greenery for the Guild's arrangements; bay, ivy, holly, yew and branches of fir donated from Sussex Christmas Trees outside Five Ashes.

We also had a stall at the **Church Summer Fete** and **Christmas Market**.

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December the **statue of St. Dunstan**, commissioned by one of our members, Linda Plentl, and hand carved in Austria, was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Nicholas Reade in memory of Sheila Humphrey for all she did for the church and as our late chairman of the Flower Guild for so long. Another special guest in attendance was Father John Caperon, a great friend of Sheila's.

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**St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield  
APCM Report**

**St. Dunstan's Flower Guild  
2023/24  
(continued)**

The Guild is becoming involved in the Eco Church movement. Independently we talked about reducing our use of floral foam at our AGM in 2023 – the RHS banned its use at Chelsea and Hampton Court flower shows in 2021. As floral foam uses micro-plastics it is currently non-recyclable and takes thousands of years to fully degrade. We already obtain a lot of our flowers locally and use seasonal foliage – our members providing it from their own gardens for free. In addition, we combine artificial and dried flowers to supplement fresh flowers due to cost. So, in 2024 we are going to try using chicken wire, pin heads or other methods as used years ago.

**Nina Sanderson  
Chairwoman**

# St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield

## APCM Report

### Stewardship and Regular Giving 2023/24

Thanks to the generous support of Parishioners past and present we enjoy a rich and unique programme of Anglican Worship in Mayfield and Five Ashes.

This generosity ensures:

1. We enjoy leadership and guidance of our own dedicated ecclesiastical team comprising Father Michael Asquith and Deacon Di Blackden.
2. We support their ministry via our Parish Administrator Nicky Higgins (working three mornings per week).
3. Our worship was enhanced by the musical work of our Choir under the leadership of our Director of Music – Jack Gonzalez Harding.
4. We maintain our Grade 1 listed church and Parish Rooms in London House to ensure they remain relevant and dynamic venues to support our worship and community life both now and in the future.

Because we value these things, we work hard to ensure we have the financial resources to pay for them. We all have our part to play in achieving these goals whether it be through the giving of our time or our money.

The COVID Pandemic, the demographic of our congregation and the Cost of Living Crisis saw income levels fall in 2022 whilst Parish overheads increased.

As in 2022 the Church Wardens, supported by the PCC, wrote to every person on the Parish Electoral Roll in December 2023 to:

1. Brief them as to the Church's financial position
2. Seek additional support either by way of:
  - a. Regular Giving ([Parish Giving Scheme](#))
  - b. One off support
  - c. Legacy giving

I am pleased to report this letter engendered material additional one-off support and it is hoped this will go some way towards making up our income shortfall.

It is our plan to keep all members of the Electoral Roll fully apprised of our financial position in order we remain well placed to deliver our Mission in Mayfield.

**Stephen Blurton**  
**Stewardship Officer – March 2024**



# **St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**

## **APCM Report**

### **Growth Report** **2023/24**

In 2022 eight people from St Dunstan's began to take part in a diocesan course, "Great is Thy faithfulness" partnering with the parishes of Dallington, Bodle Street and Warbleton which asks us to review our church life and to consider ways we can grow; in spirituality, in service and in numbers. With a mixture of zoom meetings and face to face this continued through the first half of 2023. The course is split into a number of areas as follows: Collaborative Ministry, Church culture, Worship, Teaching, Mission, Growing the church younger, Welcome and Community Involvement.

Following on from this "Hope explored" was held last September over three Wednesday evenings in the scout and guide hall. Each evening began with sharing a meal together before we watched a 'video' and then discussed what we had seen. This was attended by some 15 people from our church.

In considering how we welcome people and share all that happens associated with our church, a board was placed outside the church to advertise when the church is open. We believe this has brought in more people who pop into the church during the daytime, perhaps to light a prayer or leave a prayer request (on our new prayer board). Further display boards have been placed inside the church showing some of what happens at St Dunstan's and we hope there will come a time when these will be prominent whoever is using the church for services, concerts, events etc. Our porch noticeboards have been re-ordered; indeed there will be further changes this coming summer as we look to make greater use of the racks in front of the Glubb window.

Thoughts were also focussed on acquiring glass doors for the church meaning that during services we can keep the wooden doors open to make our welcome warmer to visitors and those worshipping with us for the first time – an idea that has now been mentioned at the PCC meeting and the Architect has been asked to come up with some suggestions.

**Fr Michael Asquith**

## **St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**

### **APCM Report**

#### **Choir Report**

**2023/24**

In 2023 St. Dunstan's choir reached remarkable new heights whilst also facing uncertainties. Yet the year has proved that the choir is capable and willing to bring our music making above and beyond that which one might expect.

Under the direction of Jack Gonzalez-Harding the year saw the choir sing weekday Evensong twice at Westminster Abbey in August, no mean feat for any choir, let alone one the size of ours. The premise of "not just a parish church choir" was emphasised by the Canon Precentor in her public welcoming as "St. Dunstan's *Parish* Church Choir". The standard which the choir had attained impressed those attending Evensong in a world renowned liturgical building and its psalm singing was particularly lauded by members of the clergy who commented on the poise and passion of our singing. The whole choir, be they 8 or 80 years old, shared a remarkable experience, an inspiration to the next generation of musicians and worshippers.

Other highlights included the return to singing Evensong regularly at St. Dunstan's, which drew in non-regular attenders from the area. A well attended Advent Carol Service, was a highlight of the liturgical year. Under the direction of Jack, the massed performance of Handel's "Messiah" was another significant milestone with a sell out audience and members of the Junior Choir joining to make it a memorable occasion for them. Although the task may have seemed daunting to some, everyone worked hard, came to all the rehearsals and committed themselves to an outstanding performance which was carried out with professional aplomb. The Christmas season ended with a memorable midnight mass on Christmas Eve and a lively rendition of William Mathias' "Sir Christemas" on Christmas morning, marking the successful conclusion of Jack's tenure as Director of Music.

The announcement of his departure was disheartening for everybody but given our firm base, the choir has been able to continue under the direction of our loyal peripatetic choir masters David Force, Chris Harris and Terry Steele. We have successfully contributed to the continuing musical reputation of St. Dunstan's, chosen and rehearsed music for Easter and look forward to the appointment of a new Director of Music in the year to come.

I was very pleased to be invited to take the regular Wednesday evening rehearsals and sincere thanks go to the support I have been given and the much appreciated administrative help from Jenny Whittle that is essential in choir management. Blessed with a longstanding musical tradition, St. Dunstan's, Mayfield holds an important place in the British choral tradition and the talent and determination of the choir should never be underestimated. We look forward to a promising future.

The thanks of the choir go to Father Michael and all who support us through attendance and encouragement.

**Thomas Hawkey-Soar**

# **St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield**

## **APCM Report**

### **Fabric Committee Report** **2023/24**

The fabric Committee did not meet during 2023 as there were no ongoing projects requiring their attention and management.

Tony Woodliffe resigned as Secretary to the Committee in 2023. The Church Wardens and PCC would like to record their thanks to Tony for his important work supporting the maintenance of our Church over many years.

Our Architect is John Bailey of Thomas Ford and Partners.

#### **London House**

The building is in a good state of repair.

With effect from February 2023 MAYFACS rent the ground floor rooms for their offices whilst the new Village Hall is developed. The arrangement is working well and it is good to see the facility busy once more.

The front door and railings were re-decorated during the year. A leak in the basement was also repaired and the floor joists underneath the broom cupboard renewed.

The first floor long leasehold flat is sold subject to contract, and it is anticipated a new owner will move in during H1 2024.

#### **St Dunstan's Church**

The last Quinquennial report was completed in June 2020. This reported the building to be in good order. Ahead of the next report which is due in Spring 2025 we are pleased to report this remains the case.

Following a spate of lead thefts from local churches a roof alarm system was installed on the South and North Aisle roofs. The system provides the twin benefits of:

1. protection against theft, and,
2. ensure the Church insurers will cover the cost of repairing any damage in the event of an incident.

The system cost £4,150 + VAT to install. The cost was covered by:

1. A generous donation from a member of the congregation
2. A grant from LPOW to cover the VAT
3. A grant from Benefact, the parent of our insurers Ecclesiastical for 50% of the pre VAT cost.

Continued/...

**St. Dunstan's Church, Mayfield  
APCM Report**

**Fabric Committee Report  
2023/24  
(Continued)**

Whilst leaks around the Glubb window area and North Aisle roof were identified in 2022; the problem has proven intermittent, and a decision made to monitor the position for the time being.

The Friends of St Dunstan's agreed to fund the restoration Aynsombe Memorial on the South Aisle by the main entrance doors. During 2024 we will apply for a Faculty from the Diocese to undertake this work.

The PCC are exploring the possibility for the installation of glass doors at the main entrance of the Church. The aim is to make the Church feel more welcoming and inviting to those outside the building whilst not rendering the interior subject to excessive heat loss during the winter months.

This project is in its early stages and will be progressed during 2024 and into 2025.

**Stephen Blurton  
March 2024**