

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

The Chadbrook Benefice



Annual Report and Financial Statements

**For the year ended 31st December 2023
Parochial Church Council**

**Holy Trinity Church with St Catherine's
Long Melford, Suffolk**

**APCM meeting will be held at St Catherine's Church, Long Melford
on Monday 29th April 2024 at 7.30pm**

Loving God,

once more we thank you for our church
and for the fellowship we share with one another.
We praise you for all whose contribution to our life together
we recognise and acknowledge this day –
all who have served the church over the years,
who have nurtured and encouraged our faith,
who have been part of our continuing life and witness.

We pray for those who offer their services this day:
those who will take on new positions of responsibility –
equip them to fulfil their duties wisely and faithfully;
those who will continue in the office
they have already been undertaking –
give them renewed inspiration and vigour in their work;
those who will stand down from office –
may they know their labours have been appreciated.

Holy Spirit, Lord God, Giver of life,
come to us as a refreshing and strengthening power;
purge out of our lives all that denies your inspiration;
keep us alert to your challenges;
let us be open to your new demands, both in the world and in the church;
give us humility that we may see your vision and, trusting in your power,
commit ourselves to it,
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord

AMEN

Annual Vestry Meeting

Agenda

1. Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last Vestry Meeting held on 10th May 2023
4. Election of Churchwardens for 2024-2025

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING ARE IN ADDENDUM 1

Annual Parochial Meeting

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 10th May 2023
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Electoral Roll Report
5. Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2023 including the Independent Examiners report
6. Report on the Fabric, goods and ornaments of Holy Trinity and St Catherine's churches
7. Group reports and Deanery Synod report (attached)
8. Elections – current vacancies as listed
 - Three lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council – each for three-year terms.
 - One lay representative to the Parochial Church Council – for a 2 year term
 - One lay representative to the Parochial Church Council – for a 1 year term
9. Election of PCC Members
10. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2024
11. Results of Elections, if any
12. Any other business
13. Rectors Report

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING ARE IN ADDENDUM 2

Parochial Church Council 2023

Administrative Information

Holy Trinity Church Long Melford is situated at the northern end of the village green, overlooking the village. St Catherine's, in St Catherine's Road is situated in the heart of the residential area of the village further south. They are part of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The correspondence address is The Rectory, The Green, Long Melford, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9DT.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity requiring registration to the Charity Commission, as a church with an income greater than £100,000. PCC members as this report was prepared are:

Chairman: Rev Matthew Lawson
Church Warden(s)/ vice chair: Cheryl Morgan
Deborah Blake

Church Treasurer: David Walters
PCC Secretary: Linda Goodban

Representative on Diocesan Synod John Watts ex-officio (2023-2026)
David Walters ex-officio (2023-2026)

Assistant Priest Judith Offord
Assistant Priest Henry Heath

Elected Members:

Graham Wegg	2021– 2024
Harry Mee	2022 - 2025
Ian McDonald	2022 - 2025
Judi Moss	2023 - 2026
Chris Badger	2023 - 2026

Co-opted Members: Currently no co-opted members

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 for election to the PCC.

Objectives and Activities

Holy Trinity and St Catherine's PCC has responsibility for co-operating with the Rector in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the church buildings of Holy Trinity and St Catherine's and the Glebe land, Long Melford.

Church Services

Throughout 2023 the following services took place at Holy Trinity Church:

Weddings	3 (limited due to scaffolding for clerestory works)
Christenings / Baptisms	12
Confirmations	8
Funerals	23

Average attendance at Sunday services was 106

Livestreaming of Holy Communion and Evensong continued with several people joining the services online.

Attendance at special services held at Holy Trinity Church were as listed:

Easter Day	220
Clopton Rose	80
Harvest Festival	120
Remembrance	300
Carol Service	275
Crib Service	200
Midnight Mass (Christmas Eve)	200
Christmas Day	130

Elders

There are currently 8 Lay Elders in the Chadbrook Benefice.

Charlotte Blyth	Richard Blyth
Christine Smith	Malcolm Brunwin
Linda Goodban	Tim Harbord
Ian McDonald	Kevin Powell

Elders support the ministry team in Worship, services and in the wider community.

They also visit parishioners in their homes, at The Willows Lawshall, Melford Court and Steeds Meadow (both of Long Melford), where they offer a combination of home communion, private prayer, a short private service and companionship.

If you would like a home visit for any of this type of support please contact a member of the ministry team.

Parochial Church Council – Review of the Year

2023 was an interesting and challenging year. It was wonderful to welcome Deborah Blake to be my co-churchwarden and we are working well together and supporting each other. The main challenge this year was the repair of the clerestory and involved many meetings with architects, scaffolders and builders throughout the year. Bat surveys had to be carried out before the work could commence and fortunately no protected bat species were found.

The scaffolding was erected in May and a small committee was formed to explore the idea of celebrating the scaffolding and the work being carried out to encourage visitors to come to the church even though it was under repair. Various exhibitions under the banner of 'Does God Matter' were set up for visitors to enjoy and learn about the church and the various uses of scaffolding through the ages. To mark the start of two weekends when extra activities were available, Lynda Badger kindly organised a cannon on the Green.

There were 2 days set aside for tours of the scaffolding led by the architect, Simon Marks. These were very popular and those that took part were fascinated by the work going on and the views of the church from such a vantage point. In September we had a 'Hymns and Pimms' evening which was also very popular and something we are looking to do again in the future. Setting up for services throughout the work was interesting and we had to be quite inventive sometimes. My thanks go to every single person involved in anything to do with the church during this time.

The scaffolding was taken down in November. We are looking forward to the visitors who came to the church to see the work going on coming back to see the finished result. Although I didn't think the work would have any great effect on the church, I have been surprised by the amount of light that the windows let in and how the work has lightened up the clerestory.

Deborah and I attended the churchwardens training in July where we met Edmund Harris from the DAC who talked about the faculty system. He is a great addition to the diocesan team and has proved very helpful to us during the recent burglaries.

The altar kneelers have been replaced and a new contactless machine has been installed which is very successful. The Art exhibition was held in the Lady Chapel during July and August. The most recent tenant of Convallaria left at the end of the year and we have recently had new tenants move in.

Our thanks go to Graham Wegg, who as assistant churchwarden has organised and supervised the power upgrade which was completed in October. Graham has also organised a rail to the rear of the altar for the sacristans and the redecorating of the toilet. He also supervises Command Pest control who also clean gutters as well as helping us to keep pests from the church. New pigeon controls are going to be installed in the porch to try and deter them taking up residence there.

Sadly in October we were victims to a burglary where offenders tried to enter unsuccessfully the church via the Lily Crucifix window in the Clopton Chapel, then attempted the door near to the vestry. They cut through the light in the porch and eventually jemmied their way in via the main door and stole the 16c collection box which wouldn't have contained as much as £100. However the damage caused has taken a lot of hours to sort out, including organising a faculty for the repair of the window (which is to be authorised), the repair of the door and the changing of the locks, distributing new keys to those that needed them, liaising with the police and insurers. Fortunately the collection box was found by the police in a ditch and David Hamand is organising its repair.

Deborah, Graham and I have weekly meetings with Matthew via Zoom to discuss any church issues and plan for any forthcoming events.

St Catherine's Church

St Catherine's continued to be the venue for the successful Connect mother and toddler group (once a week) and Fusion youth group (once a month) during term times. St Catherine's is also used for most PCC meetings, prayer breakfasts and Lent lunches (which recommenced in 2023 for the first time since the pandemic).

In June 2023 Suffolk Libraries' Long Melford branch, rendered homeless by the closure of the Royal British Legion building, began renting space at St Catherine's on an initially informal basis. It is open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Saturday mornings. After a few teething problems at the start concerning storage issues and the moving of furniture (pews, tables and chairs), the arrangement settled down to run pretty smoothly for the rest of the year. The library is a good fit as there is considerable overlap between users of Connect, Fusion, and the library. The library also acted as a warm space during the winter.

Cheryl Morgan and Deborah Blake
Church Wardens

CHURCH REPORTS

Treasurer's report to 2024 APCM

The 2023 approved and examined accounts, with front sheet and Independent Examiner's Statement, have been on display in both churches over a month, and can be downloaded from the Church website. It is not my practice to go through these in any detail at the APCM because they have been presented and explained in full to the PCC, but please take a look at them and get back to me with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Because of the major essential work on the clerestory, our reserves restricted to preservation and general restoration were completely spent out in 2023. We therefore had to use some of our unrestricted general fund to cover this, and there will be some final further costs in 2024. Overall, there was a deficit of £32,780 in the general fund in 2023. As well as the direct restoration costs, the presence of the scaffolding had an indirect adverse financial impact in terms of a reduction in revenue from weddings, shop takings and visitor donations. This financial situation needs to be tackled and our revenue needs to increase in 2024 if we are to avoid future cuts in our excellent ministry and mission activities. I am confident that our Church and community here at Holy Trinity with St. Catherine's Long Melford are capable of dealing with this financial challenge, and we need to do that if we are to be faithful to the memory of those who grew and maintained this Church before us, and to future generations.

I have now completed 9 years as PCC Treasurer and have been saying for some time that it would be good for all concerned if I were to work with a deputy who would eventually take on my role, it is not a good thing to be regarded as indispensable! I am delighted to say that in recent months Chris Badger has become such a deputy and although I intend to remain as an ex-officio member of the PCC and to keep an interest in Church finance at a parish and wider level, I do not intend to be PCC Treasurer after this APCM. I commend Chris to the PCC and the wider parish and he might well eventually decide to handle our finances in his way, just as I did things in very much my own way after I took over in 2015.

As well as eagerly welcoming Chris, I am extremely grateful to David Tweed, Ron Davies and Theresa Munford for the essential work they continue to do and the highly efficient way in which they cheerfully carry it out. We are also very grateful to our examiner Neil Pearson for his highly professional and helpful work at no charge, and I propose that we request him to continue in that role.

David Walters, Honorary Treasurer

REVISION OF ELECTORAL ROLL AS AT 22ND MARCH 2024

In the past year we have sadly lost; Bill Haldane, Joan West and John Steward

We are happy to have welcomed; June Squirrel, Peter Dickinson,
Rosalind Dickinson, Karen Straight,
Terence Straight, Jean Johnson and Sharon Risley

The Electoral Roll stands at 177, 144 inside the parish and 33 outside

Mary MacDonald
Church Electoral Roll Officer

Fabric Report including Stained Glass Windows Report

38 Clerestory Windows and the East Window: After a minor fall of stone from a clerestory window and a detailed survey of the windows by the Church Architect, Simon Marks of Purcell Architects, which was appended to the Quinquennial Review of the Church Fabric, the PCC on 15/9/21 considered a number of options for addressing the repairs and working arrangements to allow the church to operate as far as possible during the works. Significant issues included:

- Agreement to tackle all repairs needed to the windows, not just the most urgent, partly because scaffolding would be required throughout the nave.
- List B consent had been secured from the Diocesan Advisory Committee.
- There was a risk of bats being present in the church; ascertaining the species, the nature of their use of the church and possible mitigation measures required the appointment of specialist ecologists.
- Possible timetables were considered.

Purcell Architects were responsible for the specification and supervision of the works throughout the programme. They prepared a list of suitably qualified and experienced contractors to be invited to tender. They agreed with the Church that the works be undertaken in two phases: firstly the east end of the nave, the chancel and the east window and secondly the west end of the nave. Four firms were invited to tender, two were shortlisted and interviewed by Purcell and the Church and Bakers of Danbury Heritage Ltd were appointed as lead contractor with sub-contractors responsible for glazing and scaffolding.

Based on the tenders received a cost envelope was presented to the PCC on 14/12/22, net of VAT, of about £145,000; this net cost to the PCC was based on the following considerations:

1. It assumed the Church is successful in securing DCMS grant to cover the VAT of £31,750 (approx).
2. It assumed receipt of £15,000 from the Friends, the figure they have volunteered.

3. It assumed no further contribution from grants; however the PCC agreed to set up a small group to secure specific grants for these works with a target of £25-30,000.
4. The cost included provision for a Principal CDM Designer, who provided a safety plan for the works and for ecologists to conduct bat surveys and monitoring.

In May 2023 scaffolding was erected on the north and south sides of the nave and chancel, access to the church being limited during this stage. Phase 1 works were undertaken from May to September. This process was repeated from October to December for Phase 2. The contractors were clear of the site ahead of schedule and in time for the church to be prepared for Christmas.

Staged payments were made to the contractor in accordance with detailed certificates of the works completed, the certificates being prepared by the architect and presented to the Church.

Outcome

The 38 clerestory windows and the east window have been restored in accordance with the specification set out in the Appendix to the Quinquennial Review. The final completion certificate was issued on 15/02/2024

The DCMS grant in relation to VAT payments is being requested by the Treasurer and Harry Mee. To date a grant of £23,686 has been received. The Friends have contributed £15,000. The final outlays by the PCC are:

Bakers and their sub-contractors:	£118,205, plus retention to be paid (amount unknown)
Purcell Architects:	£14,075 paid to date, plus likely final charge
Wharton, ecologists re bat surveys and monitoring:	£7,552
Other outlays:	£ 3,478
Total	£143,310

Overall the total paid by the PCC will be about the same as the cost envelope agreed by the PCC, with Bakers having charged less than the contract sum and the ecologists having provided more services and charged more.

Stained Glass Fund - Report on the Medieval Stained Glass Restoration

Members will have noticed that three of the eight medieval windows have now been restored at a total cost of approximately £300,000. We are very pleased to be nearly half way through the restoration without any money coming from the PCC's General Fund.

One window was funded by Bernie Hood in memory of his wife and the others funded largely by contributions from the Friends of Long Melford Church Building Trust, topped up with money raised by the church stained glass fundraising group.

The fundraising group continues to build awareness of the need for further restoration and to raise money. In the past year we had a successful Open Gardens Day, Festive Melford, and 2 safari suppers – all of which were great fun and good money spinners. At present the amount in the Stained Glass Restricted Fund, raised by the stained glass fundraising group, is approximately £70,000 (hopefully soon to be augmented by an additional £20k VAT reclaim).

We are holding a Quiz night at the Village Hall on 26 April and will again be hosting Open Gardens at Mansel Hall as well as Festive Melford (if it goes ahead this year – which at the moment is in some doubt). We have also ordered more stained glass related merchandise for the church shop ahead of the visit by the Clopton Association of America in June this year.

Other fundraising activities are under active consideration.

We are hoping that the Friends have enough money to pay for another window. However this needs to be confirmed, for which we need a quotation from Canterbury Glass Studios. We are unfortunately yet to receive this despite months of chasing. We have been happy with the quality of work of Canterbury, but they seem to be somewhat disorganized at the moment, and very slow in responding to us despite a previous commitment to provide a quote. We are restricted in the manner of restoration, but I do not believe we are restricted as to the provider. The PCC should consider whether it is worth seeking a quote from another potential supplier such as Auravisions, who seem to have done a good job on the clerestory glass.

Our thanks to everyone who has contributed to our fund and attended our events. We enjoy doing it, but need your support.

Sally McDonald 1 April 2024

CHILDREN IN CHURCH

Family & Children, Community Outreach and 4o'clock Community

Connect continues to be an important part of our community, reaching many parents, carers and grandparents and the babies and toddlers in their charge. Each half-term we update our records to account for new members and those who have not attended in a while, and each half-term, we have around 50 adults and approximately 70 under 4's. Two years ago we joined Lightwave after incorporating prayers with our volunteers. After an hour or so of play and crafts, we have a story, songs and get the parachute out, before a child friendly prayer to all join in, and a resounding AMEN!

As we get to know the adults attending our group we start to notice when something is wrong and find that they often confide in us. I've found that most are very grateful if I offer to pray for them, or with them.

We have been told many times what a vital part Connect plays in the lives of our parents. They know they have a safe place where they will not be judged; where they can relax, have a cuppa and know that they are not alone.

Being inspired by the pioneering attitude one of our Connect disciples, I have been encouraged to offer private prayer after Connect to anyone who wants it. Knowing this, when one of our little boys was seriously ill in hospital, 2 mums approached me and asked if we could pray together as a whole group for his recovery, and his family. I'm pleased to say he has recovered and his own mum was so grateful.

But what happens after the children move on?

One way I maintain connections is through **Diddy Disciples**. Once a week I visit the nursery and the reception classes at Long Melford Primary School. There I tell a Bible story through actions and songs. Of course many of these pupils were once at Connect so know me and are comfortable to join in. Photos and a run-down of my visit are then shared with the parents, so the profile of the church in the school community is sustained.





I am also invited into school to help bring their RE to life and share my viewpoint as a Christian. One way is through **workshops**. A child is more engaged and retains information if they are involved in their learning. At Pentecost, the pupils used the crafts they had made to help illustrate the story in an assembly for the rest of the school. Each craft represented the wind rushing in, flames appearing over the disciple's heads, speaking in tongues and the Holy Spirit.

I was also asked to explain what the cross means to me. After the workshop, I could explain my relationship with the cross- and the sadness, the hope and the joy it evokes. Each child was given their own holding cross from the Holy Land to treasure. Workshops are not confined to just school. The staff and pupils love coming to Church to enhance the curriculum in the Emmanuel

Project. You can see Reverend Lawson performing a mock baptism, while the other half of the class are making doves to represent the Holy Spirit. The other photo shows the children watching Jesus ascend which was part of a Messy Church style

workshop to help the children understand the Apostle's Creed.

The whole school join us at Church 4 times a year for **celebrations**- Harvest, Easter, Christmas and Leavers. Also for special events, such as the Coronation. Most of these services are prepared and led by the children themselves, and the Church is packed with parents and grand-parents who wish to share in the festivities.

We are also beginning to build strong connections with the primary school at Lawshall, whose church has recently joined our benefice. Each time we visit, the children are excited to see Reverend Lawson or myself and look forward to assemblies and worship, whether in school, or next door at the Church. This year I was able to lead assembly for Lawshall's SIAM's inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) where the inspector was extremely impressed with the Christian ethos, values and learning. As Long Melford and Lawshall often want their big Church celebrations on the same day at the same time, Matthew and I also now take it turns at each church so as to meet the needs of both schools.

We continue to hold **Messy Church** every other month; sometimes in school and sometimes at Church. We see old friends from toddler group, members of our congregation and other parents familiar to us through the pupils visits to church or workshops. For Messys at Church we don't always have the numbers we get in school, but we do have a hard core of families and are able to build relationships. After a school service, one Messy Dad asked me about reading the Bible: " I think I need a little faith in my life" he stated. He was so pleased to receive his own Bible which I was able to present to him after the Crib Service. He has promised to read it and eventually pass it on to another new enquirer into faith. Please pray for him on his journey.

We also hold Messy church in the community: this year at the village hall as part of the Christmas Fayre where children can tell the story of the Nativity through crafts. These free activities and warm

atmosphere are a great way to promote God's love as well as the Church, and what is happening. Similarly, in 2023 we took Messy Church to the village fete where the theme was the miracles of Jesus.

As I have mentioned, we have started to get a hardcore of families attending Messy church. We found that 4 o'clock was a good time for families to attend Church events, especially if food and refreshments were provided. Thus the **4 o'clock Community** took root. When we started Shine informal worship we thought it might be a place for parents and youth but have found that the age is very varied. A number of our messy families do attend but we have also gained a new congregation.

At the heart of our 4 o'clock services is **community**. That is what is growing and that is its strength. Aably led and developed by Nicky Lawson, the 4 o'clock community has quickly become a staple of our church and of many people's lives. Each week is different, and the worship is in one place. Things we have done are: fireworks and hot dogs, pub socials and Wild Church in many forms. It is church, but not as you know it! And we have had our first 4 o'clock confirmation.

Now for **Fusion Youth Group**: we meet once a month for fun, games and challenges. It is often chaos, but is so important to offer a safe environment for our young people to get together and be recognized and valued. Also to build relationships and know there is someone there who will not judge but will listen when needed. Each month we have between 18 and 25 youngsters, ages ranging from the last year of primary school (and thus developing the connections we've made) all through secondary. Many are also well known to us from family services.

Regarding the main Church services, we now have the (pleasing) challenge of needing to set up a programme (similar to when we ran Base camp) to accommodate children once more.

Towards the end of the 2023 we were approached by one or two people from traditional services and from 4 o'clocks Shine and Messy Church, about confirmation classes. Reverend Lawson had also been asked about baptism for a youth. Thus, it was decided to hold **Youth Alpha confirmation classes** for any one with questions about faith, or who wished to explore faith further. We are delighted that on Easter Day 2024, seven young people and one of our Connect mums were confirmed or baptised by Bishop Mike.

Let's give thanks to God.

Other important events in St Edmundsbury Diocese 2023 – April 2024

- Involved in lay ministry commissions and renewal service in Cathedral (September '23)
- Part of Growing new team, including residential weekend (October '23)
- Safeguarding Leadership Training (November '23)- look out for new posters and a copy of the C of E Safeguarding policy. These must be shared with congregation in due course.
- Creating questions and on interview panel for the soon to opened, Little Saplings Nursery in Lawshall (December '23/January '24)
- Speaker at Growing Younger meeting, re-Connect and Diddy Disciples (February '24)
- Bishop's Synod -gave presentation on children's work in Chadbrook Benefice (March '24)

Pam Tonks
Family and Youth Worker

Deanery Synod report to APCM May 2024.

The Synod meets every three months in various churches in the Deanery. Simon White, who has chaired the meetings in a very efficient manner is still referred to as “acting” Rural Dean. We are updated on financial matters by David Walters (Deanery Organiser). News around the Deanery is announced and discussed and we are also briefed about Diocesan and National Synod decisions,

Topics presented this year have included:

“Love Rural” a community set up to unite and help people in need and to help those scattered in the countryside. Also the organisation has brought younger people in our villages, The cost-of-living crisis and its affect on the church community and what actions we need to take. It was concluded that any actions that the church could take eg food banks, financial advice etc. would be productive.

The March Synod covered the topic “Signs of Growing in God in our Schools” presented by clergy and lay members. After this Bill Box (husband of the Reverend Tricia Box of Little Cornard) on his work in secondary schools, mainly Thomas Gainsborough.

Other news includes the merging of All Saints and St Gregory’s Sudbury which is now formally proceeding. A draft Deanery Plan has also been produced.

The Lay Chair is shortly to step down and we are short of other Deanery Officers. David and I have noticed that the quality of our Synod meetings has improved significantly and it is vital that this continues to enhance communication and understanding in the Deanery. Hopefully there will be more volunteers to help with this work.

David W and myself are at present the PCC members and there is one vacancy. It is vital that the organisation continues to make a significant contribution to our Deanery.

John Watts (Deanery Synod Member) April 2024,

Big Bells and Hand Bells

2023 started off fairly quiet in the Tower with every indication it would remain low key throughout the year, primarily due to lack of weddings and events as a result of scaffolding in the main body of the Church whilst repairs were carried out to the clerestory windows.

However this proved not to be the case. There were of course all our usual weekly and Festival services to ring for and only 3 weddings requiring bells, but we also had 3 separate groups of visiting ringers to the tower (various levels of ability) and of course we also had the Coronation weekend events where bells rang out in celebration of King Charles III coronation, a very welcome and joyous event with hope and encouragement for the future following the passing of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022.

As with the ringing for the death of the Queen, and declaration of the King in 2022, we once again encouraged our younger ringers to participate in ringing for the Coronation alongside our regular ringers in May 2023. Their excitement and enthusiasm for this was infectious and Theresa and I very much wanted to feed their hunger for more.



During the summer holidays we started a 'summer school' for young ringers, meeting every Tuesday evening and had 10 young people take up the challenge, ages ranging from 7 to 12. We had not intended these sessions to continue once school term resumed, but such was the enthusiasm and commitment of the young ringers, we made the decision to continue with weekly practice sessions.

By the end of the year all our young ringers had made great progress, and we now have 12 in number, with 7 older children (11 and 12 year olds) now also ringing with our adult team on a Wednesday evening

Health issues have hit a couple of our adult ringers, restricting their attendance at practice and for events. In October Sylvia Nunn had a severe back issue which kept her out of the tower for the remainder of the year. And following the Christmas service rings, Daniel Piper injured his shoulder and is currently unable to ring. We are mightily relieved that Neither injuries were caused as a result of ringing!

As always I offer a heartfelt vote of thanks to my team, Theresa for all her support as my deputy, to David, Alan, Craig, Daniel and Danny for their hard work maintaining the bells so we can continue with ringing and practice sessions and not least of all to ALL my ringers, adult and junior, for all your dedication, commitment and hard work in providing bells for services, events and pleasure at Holy Trinity

Linda Goodban
Tower Captain, Holy Trinity Church

Hand Bells

We finished 2022 on a high with the group performing once again at Little Welnetham candlelit Carol Service just before Christmas and returned to ringing after our well-deserved Christmas break in February 2023 with ever decreasing numbers but feeling well-motivated with a few new tunes to try and learn.

Practices and progress were always dependent on numbers available and with numbers decreasing, and some of the team not available every week due to other commitments, progress became very limited and the opportunity to perform in public reduced, particularly during summer months with performances limited to indoors as the sounds of the handbells does not travel well outside.

In July we took our summer break and sadly, after much consideration, Linda and I made the decision not to return to handbells due to other commitments with the big bells. With no one to lead the group, the band of handbell ringers sadly closed.

Theresa Munford
Hand bells

FRIENDS OF LONG MELFORD CHURCH BUILDING TRUST REPORT

It hardly seems possible that another year has passed since we last wrote the newsletter and sent it to you.

MEDIEVAL WINDOWS. We are pleased that the three windows, pictured above, have now been re-installed in the Church after having been cleaned, repaired and protected with iso-thermal glazing by Canterbury Cathedral Glass Studio. Now there is a protective clear glass outside to protect them from the weather, accidental damage or vandalism, the actual stained glass has been set back into the opening with space between the two that allows air to flow preventing condensation building up. The total cost of this was circa £281,000 of which we, The Friends, have donated to the PCC £200,000 from the William B. Clopton Fund and other earmarked donations for the windows. In total there are eight windows, so still five more to do; we should have sufficient funds to cover one of these.

CLERESTORY. The PCC began work on replacing the iron glazing supports and repairing the damaged masonry earlier this year, which meant the Church interior and exterior was festooned with scaffolding for many weeks, but it is down in time for Christmas. The Friends donated £15,000 towards this work.

CLOPTON FAMILY ASSOCIATION. As reported in newsletters the planned CFA reunion in 2020 had to be cancelled owing to the Covid pandemic. Planning is going ahead for a reunion in Long Melford next year June 2024. The first reunion in Long Melford was in 1984, so this will also be the RUBY ANNIVERSARY of the CFA meeting in Long Melford.

As in previous years our Chairman took part in the Clopton Rose Ceremony, when the “rent of one red rose” is presented to the Clopton Family by the Mayor of Hadleigh. In 2024 this will be held during the reunion partly when the CFA visit Hadleigh and at the Sunday morning service in Holy Trinity Church.

CLOPTON CHAPEL FUND. We also administer another fund donated by William B. Clopton for repair and maintenance of the Clopton Chantry Chapel. Below a photo of the LILY CRUCIFIX WINDOW which is in the east window of the Chapel, this is probably the oldest glass in Holy Trinity Church.

John Watts
Hon. Chairman

Richard Michette
Hon. Secretary

ADDENDUM 1

Minutes of the Annual Parishioners Vestry Meeting of Holy Trinity Church with St Catherine's held on Wednesday 10th May 2023, 7.30pm at St Catherine's Church, Long Melford

1. Members Present:

Rev Matthew Lawson, Cheryl Morgan, Deborah Blake, Graham Wegg, David Walters, Ian McDonald, Judi Moss, Chris Badger, Bronwen Recknell, John Watts, Linda Goodban and 11 members of public.

2. Apologies: Charlotte Harkness and Harry Mee.

3. Minutes of the previous Annual Parishioners Vestry Meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd May 2022 we approved and signed by Rev Matthew Lawson

4. Election of Church Wardens: Two nominations received.

Cheryl Morgan - elected (see nomination form)

Deborah Blake - elected (see nomination form)

Graham Wegg - to continue supporting as Assistant Church warden

All nominations unanimously approved by all present

5. Any other Business: No other business

ADDENDUM 2

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of Holy Trinity Church with St Catherine's held on Wednesday 10th May 2023, 7.40pm at St Catherine's Church, Long Melford

The meeting began with all present singing hymn 270, followed by the prayer on page 2 of Annual Report

6. Members Present:

Rev Matthew Lawson, Cheryl Morgan, Deborah Blake, Graham Wegg, David Walters, Ian McDonald, Judi Moss, Chris Badger, Bronwen Recknell, John Watts, Linda Goodban and 11 members of public.

7. Apologies: Charlotte Harkness and Harry Mee.

8. Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd May 2022 we approved and signed by Rev Matthew Lawson

9. Electoral Roll Report: Mary MacDonald gave the following report;

Three members of Electoral Roll have passed away during the year, Bill Haldane, Gwen Clephane and Ann Paton. We remember them in our prayers.

Three additions to the Electoral Roll, Judi Moss, Christopher and Lynda Badger.

One further enquiry, Kate Allen, issued with form several weeks ago but not yet returned.

Electoral Roll numbers stand at 169.

10. Finance Report: David Walters gave the following report;

The 2022 approved and examined accounts, with front-sheet and Independent Examiner's Statement have been on display for over a month and spare copies are freely available in both churches. It is not my practice to go through these in any detail at the APCM because they have been presented in full to the PCC, but please take a look at them and get back to me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Our unrestricted reserves were depleted by £19,000 in 2022, partly because of repairs at St Catherine's and a contribution to improvements to parking on the Green in addition to our normal expenditure, but costs like this must be expected and we need to continue to address our income sources, primarily regular giving, to ensure that our ministry and mission, as well as our wonderful but expensive building, continue into the future.

I am extremely grateful to Deputy Treasurer David Tweed, Cashier Ron Davies and Planned Giving officer Theresa Munford for the essential work they do and the highly efficient way in which they cheerfully carry it out. We are also very grateful to our examiner Neil Pearson for his highly professional and helpful work at no charge, and I propose that he continues in this role. 2022 was my 8th year as PCC Treasurer, and so I am now into my 9th. While I am prepared to continue this role for the present, it is not good practice to be indispensable and as most people know I am quite active in various other areas, including as a member of the Bishop's Council and Diocesan Finance Committee. It would therefore be healthy for the PCC to find a deputy Treasurer who would be prepared eventually to take over, either running the evolving financial system that I have now put in place or radically changing it and running it their own way, as I did when I took on the role in 2015.

Our Bank no longer treats our account as a charity and significant charges are now applied throughout the year, however whilst this is frustrating the bank were very proactive this year in identifying a fraud attempt that would have cost us in excess of £83k had the attempt succeeded

J Freeborn asked how our finances compare to 2019 - Response: Comparable. There is lower cash income but an increase in planned giving, Parish Giving Scheme, online and card payments.

A Douglas asked if the card reader in shop could take payment from Apple Pay via apple phone - Response: Apple payments can definitely be made via i-phone so should be available via watch.

ML extended a vote of thanks to David and team for their hard work.

11. Fabric Report: Ian McDonald gave the following report:

Clerestory works; Scaffolding to be put in place next week for the commencement of the necessary repairs to the clerestory. Two species of Bats have recently been identified in church placing additional cost on the project in order to protect sensitive areas and not disturb the bats. An infrared camera is to be used on Tuesday 17th May to film the bats and identify pathways and areas used by them. Bat poo has already been sent for examination to identify the bat species.

During the works it is intended to have exhibitions and displays highlighting the activities of the Church and it is hoped to hold events such as 'pop up cafe' during this period. Boards on display will be of the same design as the recent coronation boards and will be prepared by Indigo Ross of Sudbury.

Power Supply: Graham Wegg is liaising with UK Power Network to get improved power supply to church which will greatly improve options and costs for heating the premises. R Davies reported that wooden panels stored behind the tomb in Martyn Chapel have become wet, possibly with water from flower exhibitions placed on the tomb. GW to investigate and check.

ML extended a vote of thanks to Ian and Graham for their reports and continued support.

12. Group Reports and Deanery Synod report: Reports from Church groups and Deanery Synod received and noted as per Annual Report document

13. Elections to PCC: Three lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council each for three year terms.

Nominations received were: Bronwen Recknell
 Christopher Badger
 Judi Moss

No other nominations received, all three elected to the Parochial Church Council.

ML extended a vote of thanks to three outgoing members of the PCC, David Hamand, Fiona Pearson and Alison Ewbank, for all their hard work and support during time on the PCC
A further vote of thanks was extended to Bronwen Recknell who is stepping down as PCC Secretary, her support in this role has been very much appreciated.

14. Election to Deanery Synod: Two nominations received for Deanery Synod;

John Watts
David Walters

No other nominations received. Both nominees elected to Deanery Synod. One further vacancy remains unfilled, anyone with an interest is invited to speak with John Watts or David Walters for further information.

15. Appointment of independent examiner:

David Walters proposed that Neil Pearson be appointed to continue in this role.

Seconded by Ron Davies Unanimously agreed. DW to notify Neil Pearson.

16. Any other Business: The following items were raised under AOB

- a) L Shewring asked for update on project for kitchen/toiler area at rear of church, stating that as one of the largest churches in the county she felt we were lacking in facilities offered to visitors and users of the premises and the project seems to have stalled for some considerable time.

- b) ML responded that our focus is currently on the Clerestories as this is safety related and this is a big project demanding considerable energy from the PCC, the Rector and others. He explained that our studies have shown that re-ordering the back of church is complex as it is a multidisciplinary area. Unfortunately the architectural constraints limit us. He explained that heating must be a part of the solution – this is one reason why we are upgrading the power supply. Also there are matters relating to storage that need to be considered. Whereas the current facilities are frustrating we can work with them and have done so effectively. However, there is no denying we need to consider how to take this forward. It was noted that the toilet facilities need redecorating.

- c) Picture board at back of Church: V Hills asked if the photos on website and picture board at rear of church could be updated. ML asked that if anyone notices pictures out of date to please contact group leader for that photo and ask for it to be removed or updated. For pictures on website please notify ML or parish administrator.

- d) It was asked if minutes of PCC meetings could be displayed on the Church notice board. CM confirmed that this is not possible under data protection, however minutes are readily available to anyone who is on the Electoral Roll.

17. Rectors Report: Rev Matthew Lawson gave the following report;

Looking at the bigger picture this year it is clear that lockdown has affected families, health, mental health and finances, and the volunteer economy in general. We are only now coming through this, however we are back up and running with services in Church and thanks to the commitment of many we have fared better than many.

Throughout lockdown and the return to 'normal service' there were services live-streamed, as they continue to be. Together with our regular Sunday and midweek services, the 4o'clock community has helped the Church to offer services with a range of traditions, and hopefully we offer a pathway for all, young and old, traditional and contemporary, to grow closer to God. Last year we only had one Church Warden; for us to have achieved all that we did Cheryl must be commended for all her hard work.

We have a developing ministry team supporting all services, outreach and sessions within the parish and community.

It is likely that my position as Rector within Lawshall will become official from August 2023. With Nigel Brown now retired from teaching he has been working closely with the choir and our work with music within the Church continues to grow bringing new members to the choir. Major projects that we are currently carrying out are the clerestory and the cleaning and protection of the medieval stained glass windows. In the pipeline we have the organ restoration, the power upgrade and the re-ordering at the back of church (and parking is an issue too!). These projects take a great deal of time and energy and I am grateful to the support of all those involved in these.

At a recent church conference for some 2000 delegates in Harrogate it was noted that some 37million people still identify as Christians despite national claims that numbers are in decline. This could have been a challenge shared, many clergy are stressed, tired and over stretched, however so many good things were also identified. I feel eyes were opened to attendees as to what it is to be in the climate where God is moving despite the relative weakness we are feeling.

I have been particularly encouraged by the success of the following;

Our regular worship	Music	Alpha courses	Adult Baptisms
Confirmations	Dawn Chorus	Forest Church	Messy Church
4o'clock community			

I have also received enquiries to provide confirmation classes for children. I feel excited by all of this and see potential here in Chadbrook Benefice on what God might do amongst us.

I would like to extend a great vote of thanks to Nicky and Pam as they reach out to 'the missing generations'.

I would like to thank the ministry team and all those involved in supporting and managing all we do here at Holy Trinity and within the Chadbrook Benefice. Thank you all for your patience, kindness, generosity, faith and support.

On behalf of all present John Watts extended a vote of thanks to Matthew for all his hard work, enthusiasm, encouragement and leadership in prayer and faith.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 20.55

Signed:

Date: