

ST JOHN'S
ANNUAL
REPORT
2023-24



PARISH CHURCH OF
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, DANBURY

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PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

PRIEST-IN-CHARGE Revd Canon Jacqui Jones

CHURCHWARDENS Vacancy

AUTHORISED LOCAL PREACHERS Jenny Molyneux-Berry & Janet Arthurs

TREASURER Alan Dixon

PARISH SECRETARY Nicola Telling

PCC SECRETARY Vacancy

DEANERY SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Arthurs & Alex Cooper

MMU COMPASS CHURCHES REPRESENTATIVE

Alex Cooper

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Alex Cooper	Paul Walton
Alison Cooper	Stephen Farrow
Jonathan Telling	Steve Arthurs

BANKERS

Barclays Bank plc, 40/41 High Street, Chelmsford
Sort 20-19-95 Account 90982571

LEGAL ADVISOR

Diocesan Registrar, 53, New St., Chelmsford

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Michael Ovendon, 10 Hyde Lane, Danbury

REGISTERED CHARITY NO.

1130296

The full PCC meets monthly except for August. Ad hoc PCC meetings are called when necessary.

On most occasions a representative from St Mary's Little Baddow has been in attendance. Agendas over the last twelve months have been full and varied and minutes are available to be viewed any time upon request.

Baptisms: 9

Marriages: 4 couples

Funerals in church or at crematorium: 28

Interments of ashes: 11

Report compiled by Alex Cooper, thanks to all contributors

Authorised Local Preachers

Over 10 years ago we were authorised as Local Preachers by the Diocese following a period of training. That authority has been periodically renewed with the support of the Priest and PCC. Since the last Annual Report, we have preached at both Eucharist services and Services of the Word a total of 17 times. That includes preaching and leading Services of the Word at All Saints, the parish church of East Hanningfield at the request of the Area Dean whilst that church is in vacancy.

We have also led Café Praise services and given 12 talks at those services which are referred to in a separate report.

The Diocese emphasises that Authorised Local Preachers are part of the preaching ministry within the church. We are very pleased to be able to exercise this ministry with the encouragement of Revd Jacqui at both Eucharist and non-Eucharist services.

We attend Preacher Training Courses and Safeguarding courses as and when required by the Diocese either in person or online.

A sermon at any service would usually be based upon the lectionary readings, and in preparation we pray that our words have meaning according to God's word. We endeavour to give those who hear us some food for thought for the week ahead, or for discussion in Café Praise, and encouragement in faith.

This year we are leading a Lent study group and there is a separate report on this. In all this work we are grateful for the support and encouragement of Revd Jacqui, Paul Hagger, PCC and the congregation.

- Jennifer Molyneux-Berry and Janet Arthurs

Bellringers

Practices now start at 6,30pm for the beginners with more advanced ringers arriving at 7.30pm. There have also been silent practices during the week for members to learn to pull bells up and let them down

January was the funeral of Tom Roast, a former Danbury person who had learnt to ring at Danbury but had moved to Norwich the bells were rung by the locals and visiting ringers who knew him well.

The use of the bells was not requested for the Course but they were for the Training Day when a Quarter Peal was attempted. There were 18 ringers in the Belfry on Saturday 6 May to celebrate the coronation of King Charles 3rd. – each ringer was given a badge in commemoration of the occasion.

There were several groups of visiting ringers during the year, one notable one was the Railway Drivers Union who had hired the 1942 Lodges coach from Chelmsford and were then worried if it would be able to get up the hill at Danbury.

Thanks to Ann and Caroline for meeting visitors and opening the Tower

The tower was open for the fete celebrating the Patronal Festival on Saturday 24 June 2023 – the weather was fine and trips up the tower were very popular.

Over the years an advanced practice has been held at Terling every month, this year it was distributed at towers around the District and was hosted by Danbury 3 times.

Danbury was requested to host the Carol Service on Saturday 9 December, the Service Sheet was compiled by Rev Jacqui who also took the Service – the organist was Paul Hagger and refreshments were served by the Church Ladies.

During the year there were 3 Quarter Peals rung on the bells, 2 Peals and two handbell peals, which both included Ann Roder, congratulations on her first two quarters on handbells.

Ringling over the Christmas period was for the midnight service and Christmas Day morning.

REPORT FROM THE RINGING MASTER:

Service ringing had been possible on the vast majority of occasions, which is especially pleasing given that Revd Jacqui is so supportive of the ringing. Practises are also well supported, but even when a lot of people are away, it is usually possible to achieve something productive . Those who started learning at the time of "Ringing Remembers" campaign can now help out with the more recent "ring for the King" cohort, hopefully giving them a sense of how much they have achieved.

Everyone is making progress in one way or another, whether handling, call change ringing and calling, or method ringing, and contributing to practice or service ringing that is often impressive. Some of our newer ringers have got involved in the wider ringing community (e.g. Ann Roder taking advantage to ring her first quarter peal on tower and in hand during 2023). The Band as a whole are making progress with method ringing, and the ringers seem to gel in a way that there is more to ringing than just the ringing

- Sue Spurgeon – Secretary & Mike Ovenden - Ringing Master

Café Praise

Our Café Praise services are back in full swing taking place in the Meeting Room, usually, but not always, on the 4th Sunday of each month. June, being Patronal Festival, there was a Eucharist instead of Café Praise, but otherwise there has been a service each month.

Regulars will know that this is an informal service with tea/coffee, cakes or sometimes bacon rolls being served. The joy of the service is that people can sit around a table facing others, keeping up with or making new friends, rather than seeing the back of someones's head in the pew in front.

Despite its informality, it is still a Service of the Word including Bible readings, hymns, prayers, a time to reflect on our wrongdoings, a Declaration of faith and talks; all the elements of a church service but with no set liturgy. And there is an added extra – the chance to have a discussion on the readings or the talks. Sitting in small groups, people are not so shy of asking questions or contributing their thoughts, and we love the feedback. We can all learn something from each other.

Although led by one or two of us, other people have contributed to the service by reading, leading prayers and even a little bit of acting. The children, encouraged by Jenny Hagger on the

theme of the service, always have a contribution to make, often very imaginative, and enjoy showing us what they have been making before our final prayers.

We are enormously grateful to Paul for the music, Alex for enabling those who cannot attend the service to join us by zoom, and all the numerous people, particularly the Hagger and Cooper families, who prepare the room and make refreshments. Café Praise is very much a team effort, and it wouldn't happen without them.

Being a varied service, not always led by the same people, no two services are the same, and it is flexible enough to be open to new ideas. So if you would like to share any thoughts on what you would like to see included, or what you don't think works, please come and tell us so we can consider any changes. And if you would like to contribute, don't be shy, it's a people led service and we would love to hear from you.

- Janet Arthurs, Jenny Molyneux-Berry, Alex Cooper

Chalice and Serving Ministry

The heading of this report is now something of a misnomer as we have not reverted to a shared chalice since Covid, and I do not know if or when we ever shall. But the ministry is as important as ever.

Just before Covid struck several new volunteers came forward to become chalice assistants. So it must be frustrating and disappointing that they cannot now do the work for which they volunteered.

However, there is a place for you! Please, please, consider coming forward to be a server at our Eucharist services. With at least 3 Eucharist services a month, plus special Eucharist services at eg Maundy Thursday, Patronal Festival, the need for more servers is greater than ever before.

My heartfelt thanks go to Brian, David and Samantha who serve at the 0930 services, and to Barbara and Sheila who serve at the Thursday services. However, none of us is getting any younger, and there will come a day when one or more of us are unable to serve. Even now, it is very difficult when it comes to holidays or other commitments to be able to cover all the services, so we desperately need more people to share this ministry.

I have asked nicely, and I have asked bluntly, for more volunteers, and I do not know how long the few of us can keep going. It is really not difficult. Indeed it is a privilege to take part in the service from a different viewpoint and support the Priest in giving communion. Like any new skill, it just needs a bit of training and practice. If you are at all interested, I would welcome anyone to sit with me when I serve to see what it entails.

You would not need to serve alone unless and until you felt confident to do so, and would receive every encouragement from Revd Jacqui and the existing servers.

If you are feeling a whisper of God in your ear calling you to volunteer, please come and have a chat with me at any time, absolutely without obligation!

- Janet Arthurs - Sacristan

Charity Giving

In April 2015 Anne Alderton and Michael Green put a paper to St John the Baptist PCC looking at the outcomes of a Review of Grants to Charities at that time.

A small committee, made up of PCC members and congregation members, formed a Charity Giving Committee under the chairmanship of Anne Alderton. The purpose being to look at those charities receiving funds from the Church and whether they were still appropriate or whether there would be others more deserving.

The chairmanship was taken over by Rev Clive Ashley, after the sad death of Anne Alderton, and the committee continued to meet to draft a Policy document. The main theme of this document was as follows:

- The appointment of a Charity Sub-Committee
- A long term commitment to give a sum equivalent to 8% of budgeted total of stewardship income
- All donations would be published by the PCC and made known/available to the congregation
- Will endeavour to support charities with a declared Christian foundation
- Monies will be distributed to the chosen charities at the same point in the year
- There will be an annual review of our six chosen charities

This policy was finally agreed at the PCC meeting in September 2016.

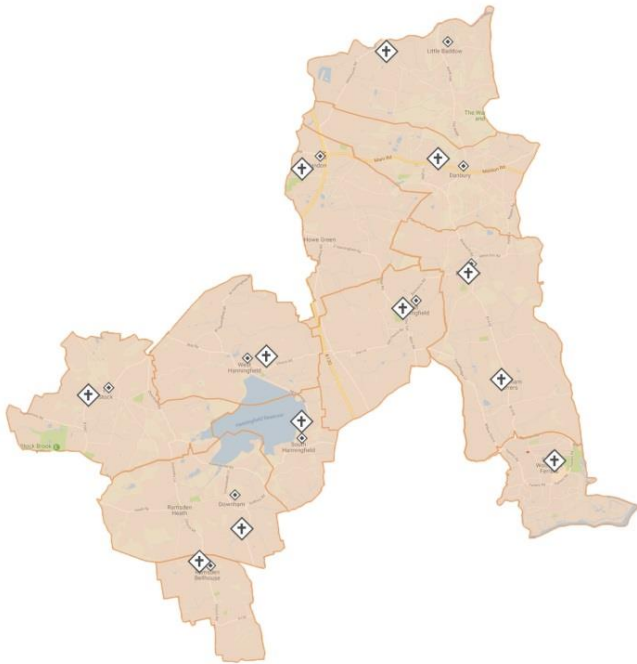
The Charity Sub-Committee was reconvened in early 2018 when Sylvia Beckett took over the chairmanship after the departure of Rev Clive Ashley. The 'review' for the year, 2020/21, has taken place and the sub-committee decided that the following charities would receive the funding – equal payments have been offered to.....

- Friends of Essex Churches
- C.H.E.S.S.
- World Vision
- Janet Muhindo
- St John's Discretionary Fund ... will be replaced as it is used throughout the period
- Safer Places (the care of men and woman at risk)

- Sylvia Beckett



Compass Churches



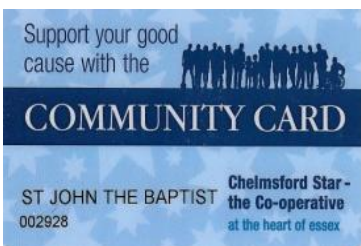
Compass Churches is made up of Little Baddow, St Mary the Virgin, Danbury, St John the Baptist, Sandon, St Andrew, East Hanningfield, All Saints, Bicknacre, St Andrew, Woodham Ferrers, St Mary the Virgin, South Woodham Ferrers, Holy Trinity, Stock Harvard, All Saints, West Hanningfield, St Mary & St Edward, Downham, St Margaret, South Hanningfield, St Peter and Ramsden Bellhouse, St Mary the Virgin.



Since being commissioned in 2018, we have continued to have quarterly meetings to discuss ways we can move our faith forwards together. The weekly morning services on Thursdays have continued online via zoom. For details of events at the churches and services we hold together, please visit www.compasschurches.org.uk

- Alex Cooper

Coop Community Cards



The Chelmsford Star Community Card continues to provide the church with funds which accrue each time we produce our card in local Star Coop stores or in the Quadrant store in Chelmsford High Street. It is such an easy way to help the church.

Unfortunately the Coop are not issuing any new cards so if you have a card but are not using it please pass on to someone who will use it or give it back to me.

But DO please continue to use the card as much as you can whilst it is still possible to do so.

- Sue Ferguson

Events

6th May – Screening of the Coronation of King Charles in Church with Fizz and nibbles.

24th June – Open Tower and Summer Fayre. Great views from the tower this year, a bit windy but enjoyable. Thanks to all who helped in the tower and with the stalls and refreshments.

15th July – Church Family BBQ was enjoyed in the sunshine

21st October – the postponed concert (from COVID times) given by the Chelmsford Male Voice Choir took place and the music was greatly appreciated by all. Our thanks to all who helped make the event a success.



9th – 10th December - The Christmas Tree Festival was a success with most of the trees finding good homes after the event! Father Christmas made a visit and children young and old made Christmas tree decorations in the meeting room. My thanks go to all the sponsors, stewards and caterers who made this event possible.



Events planned for this year are:

Monthly Lunchtime concerts, see Music Report.

21st – 24th June Flower Festival – The Beauty of the Earth.

12th July Church Family BBQ.

13th July Open Tower and Teas.

21st September Not the Last Knight (of the Proms).

7th December Crib Festival.

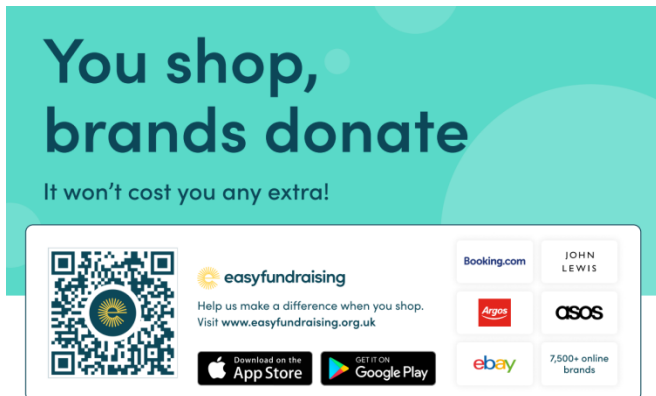
Next year (2025) – December - Christmas Tree Festival.

If you would like to organise an event for our Church please let me know.

(Please see me after a church service or email: alisonjcooper@aol.com or mobile: 07968796805)

- Alison Cooper

Easy Fundraising



Can I remind you that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Danbury St John Baptist Church with Easyfundraising.

There are over 4,000 shops and sites on board ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

All you need to do is:

1. Go to: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/danburystjb> and join for free.
2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.

3. After you've checked out, the retailer will make a donation to Danbury St John Baptist Church at no extra cost to you whatsoever!

There are no catches or hidden charges and Danbury St John Baptist Church will be really grateful for your donations.

- Sue Ferguson

Flowers

Our team of arrangers are all involved in our upcoming flower festival taking place the weekend of 21st - 24th June. St John's church presents 'Beauty of the Earth' inspired by the popular hymn 'For the Beauty of the Earth' & all aspects of our planet that we love & wish to celebrate & protect. Thanks so much to Joan Graham for coordinating this year, to Sue Daniels for support & assistance with the production, & to Sylvia Beckett for marketing. Huge appreciation too to all arrangers & sponsors, & those involved in catering & stewarding over the weekend. It is a team effort! We look forward to welcoming you.

- Suzanne Gaywood

Health & Safety

Our safety record continues to be excellent, with no reported accidents. Though crossed fingers are most inappropriate. It's down to the hard work of everyone in our Church teams, who plan services and events to avoid risks to those attending.



When a change is made to the way that we used our church and its buildings a review of risk is carried-out. Where new risks are identified, a full risk assessment is carried-out, recorded and communicated to those involved in the activity.

Of equal importance are our volunteers', sidesmen, stewards, and helpers who keep our congregations safe throughout the year. Their period of greatest worry is Christmas when several very busy services are taking place, some by candlelight. This requires extra vigilance and care to ensure the safety of the increased congregation in low light conditions and the safety of our very flammable building. We are assisted in this by our now extensive library of Risk Assessments which catalogue the risks and list measures to mitigate and reduce the hazards, but we are still reliant on our people to keep us safe.

The use of the Meeting Room increased again during the last year, and we now have village organisations and Church sponsored groups using the room for meals and refreshments every week. All users of the Meeting Room have been provided with guidance on the use of the facilities and means of avoiding risk. The Meeting Room now contains extensive video presentation and media equipment, all with comprehensive instructions on how to use it safely



St. John's Health and Safety Policy is reviewed, updated, and approved by the PCC each year, the policy aims to be user friendly and not prescriptive, keeping it up to date and relevant needs much thought and research.

Our insurers also have input into our Health and Safety policies and procedures. This year they have insisted that we increase the frequency of our inspections of the permanent electrical equipment, and Lightning protection provision. All of these inspections require time to organise and cost money. We always comply and our inspection regime is up to date and in compliance with all insurance, statutory and regulatory requirements.

We continue our quarterly inspections and checks of safety equipment, lighting and access routes continue. These ensure our safety systems are in place and capable of use in an emergency.

Since the end of covid the use of our church and meeting room has increased. Our very successful monthly concerts and community lunches bring a lot more people into our buildings and add to the work needed to maintain the premises. Anyone who would like to help out will be most welcome.



Let's make 2024 another safe, happy, and enjoyable year.

- Stephen Arthurs

Landisdale Almshouse and Unknown Donor Charity



The Almshouses on Church Green in the heart of Danbury continue to offer shelter and good quality housing to the needy of the parish. These familiar homes are owned and maintained by the Landisdale Trust. The Trust built and has maintained the Almshouses on Church Green. Since 1313 when John and Margaret Landisdale gave forty-two and a half acres of land in Danbury, Purleigh and Woodham Walter "for the relief of the poor and the repair of the church". The Charity has continued to provide help for the needy of Danbury. Our constitution requires that only long-term residents of Danbury qualify for this housing.

Part of the above bequest was land off Maldon Road adjacent to Littlefields known as Sandpit Field. Based on local need we would like to provide a further 10 Almshouses on Sandpit Field. Only a small part of the area will be used, leaving the remainder for open space and agricultural use. We hope the proposal will be included in the forthcoming 'Danbury Neighbourhood Plan'. Our proposal was well received by the village when it was included in the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire four years ago. The plan is due to be published to the whole village for its approval and comment this year before it can formally be put forward for adoption.

The Trust welcomes applications from people who have been a Danbury resident for at least 10 years and who are in need of somewhere to live. Please apply to the address below.

The charity also owns and lets allotments on Ludgores Lane. These are used by many local residents to grow flowers for home and to enhance their fresh food provision. Each year half of the small annual rental income from the allotments is donated for the maintenance of St. Johns.

The incumbent of St. John the Baptist, Danbury, is always invited to sit on the board of trustees. All of whom are local people who try to provide and service to the village. We are looking for interested local people who would like to become Trustees. There are only four meeting a year where decisions on budget and aims are decided.

The address of the Clerk to the charity is:

The Clerk to the Charity.,
Danbury Landisdale Charity,
P. O. Box 933,
Colchester.
Essex. CO3 3TQ.

- Alison Cooper and Stephen Arthurs



Ladies Who Lunch

We meet once a month on the 2nd Thursday, and usually we go to The Bell in Woodham Walter. Not so many ladies came this year, an average of 7. Any ladies are welcome to join us.

- Ann Poulard

Lent Group

With the generous hospitality of Tiggy Farrow, hosting the group in her home, we are currently leading a Lent group of 12 people over a period of 6 weeks. With a weekly commitment, it is not surprising that not everyone can attend every week, but when people have been unable to attend, they have still been able to read the book and thus "catch up" with discussions.

The book guiding our discussions this year is written by Bishop Guli, which adds an extra interest to the theme of the book "Cries for a lost Homeland." She describes the book as Reflections on Jesus' sayings from the cross, which indeed it is, but it has also enabled us to get to know our Bishop better. Each chapter gives much food for thought.

Meetings begin and end in prayer, and each week we have looked at a different chapter, the book conveniently having 6 chapters, with chapters 6 and 7 rolled into one. This has enabled us to focus on a different aspect each week and we have enjoyed exchanging thoughts and ideas in a relaxed way that has meant we can all learn from each other.

Taking part in the Lent group has enabled all of us, including ourselves to address our doubts and uncertainties without fear of embarrassment or lack of knowledge. So that at the end of each meeting we feel enriched for the hour or so spent with each other in discussing our faith.

- Jennifer Molyneux-Berry and Janet Arthurs

Livestreaming Services

As Over the past few years, St John's Church has embraced livestreaming as a means to extend its reach beyond physical boundaries, especially amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March 2020, the closure of physical church spaces due to the pandemic presented St John's with an unprecedented challenge. As church's are deeply rooted in community engagement, the abrupt shift forced us to explore alternative ways to connect with our congregation. Initial efforts involved simple video recordings of sermons, gradually progressing towards more sophisticated remote services featuring live audio and music recordings.

Despite initial struggles and setbacks, St John's persevered in its commitment to fostering spiritual connection amidst adversity. The journey was marked by trial and error, with periods of experimentation and adjustment. Notably, the congregation endured months of limited attendance, with only a handful of individuals physically present in the church on Sunday mornings. However, through unwavering dedication and resilience, we overcame challenges and continuously improved our livestreaming capabilities.

Livestreaming enabled St John's to transcend physical barriers and cultivate a sense of community beyond the confines of the church building. Through platforms like YouTube, Zoom, and social media, congregants could participate in services remotely, fostering a spirit of inclusivity and fellowship. Special services, such as Café Praise, leveraged interactive platforms like Zoom to facilitate meaningful dialogue and engagement.

The livestreaming initiative has yielded promising results, with an average of 45 views per normal Sunday service. Special events, such as the service of lessons and carols and the Remembrance Sunday service, garnered significantly higher viewership, indicating strong engagement from the congregation. These figures underscore the importance of accessible digital platforms in reaching and connecting with our community.

While proud of our progress, St John's remains committed to continuous improvement and innovation. Constructive feedback from congregants is encouraged to enhance the quality and effectiveness of livestreamed services. Recent investments in updated sound systems have further improved the viewing experience, reducing technological barriers and fostering greater immersion in worship. Making café praise zoom services more reliable is our next challenge!

The livestreaming of church services has evolved into a cornerstone of St John's commitment to fostering spiritual connection and community engagement. While initially prompted by the challenges of the pandemic, our embrace of technology has transcended mere necessity, becoming an integral aspect of our ministry. Looking ahead, St John's remains dedicated to leveraging digital platforms to nurture fellowship, deepen spiritual connections, and serve our congregation with excellence, irrespective of external circumstances. Our journey with livestreaming reflects not just adaptation to adversity, but a genuine embrace of innovation and inclusivity in our worship practices.

- Alex Cooper

Meeting Room

The church uses the Meeting Room regularly. Café Praise, after-church coffee, PCC meetings, Compass Churches, and Parish Lunch are all regular fixtures. St John's School has also made use of the building. There are currently 16 repeat and regular users, and there have been 19 family celebrations of various types during the last 12 months.

Additionally, crockery has been well-utilised for Church concerts on Fridays.

The floor has been sanded and polished, the electrics tested and a smart meter installed. We are fortunate to have a regular weekly cleaner who maintains a high standard throughout the building.

On a personal note, after many years as bookings clerk, I feel the time is right to hand over this role. I have enjoyed meeting many people from varying backgrounds over the years and wish my successor the same enjoyment.

- Marian Kingsley

Men's Group

From our annual Burns Night celebration in January to our Pre-Christmas dinner in November St. John's Men's Group Enjoy a monthly evening of good food and good cheer.

The Cricketers Arms in Penny Royal Road continues as our venue and the resident chefs cater to our varied needs and unusual choices.

We try to select our menu a month in advance to give chef a chance to source the necessary ingredients, these decisions are usually friendly discussions, but personal preferences do get an airing. Those who don't fancy our choice can choose from the extensive menu.



Our convivial group meet on the last Thursday of each month (except December) to enjoy good food, good ale, good company and good conversation. We are definitely not politically correct and few subjects are closed from discussion.

Our numbers vary between 6 and 12 and allow comfortable imbibing and lively discussion, ages range between teens and eighties.

All gentlemen of the parish, their friends and guests are made most welcome.

- Stephen Arthurs

Mothers Union

We have 17 members this year, with an average attendance of 13-14 We had a variety of speakers.

David Whiting took us to Egypt, Kevin spoke about the Salvation Army shop in Maldon. Eileen showed us how to arrange flowers very beautifully, and Julie read some of her funny and moving poems. Our outing was a good lunch at Butts Green Nursery, and at our Strawberry Tea we welcomed the MU Diocesan President and her husband who is also a member.

Our monthly Bring and Buy stall raised £170.00 for MU Projects.

We drank many cups of tea and enjoyed several cakes.

A good year, come and join us anytime.

- Ann Poulard

Music Report

Another busy year for the music team. We continue to provide a solid musical offering week by week with a motet most weeks and, of course, our usual closing voluntaries (which are now streamed over YouTube).

Highlights of 2023 included:-

- The continued popularity of our monthly lunchtime concerts on the 2nd Friday of each month. The audience continues to grow and is rarely less than 80 in number and is often nearer to 100. We have had some excellent performances by very talented musicians throughout the year;
- A full and exciting programme of music for Holy Week and Easter, extending across the whole triduum;
- Uplifting music during the celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III in May. There was a service of the word for which we had a sizeable extended choir where a special coronation by Joanna Forbes L'estrange was performed concurrently with many parish churches across the UK and the rest of the world. Jamie Morley added excitement to the music with his trumpet;
- A very full church attending the candlelit service of lessons and carols at Christmas. This service was also live streamed.

I re-iterate that the musical offering at St John's continues to be varied, exciting and professional. However, I do consider that we do need now to try to give focus to developing a youth music offering and I will be trying to take this forward.

As always, we welcome anyone to our friendly choir, so if you have an inclination to sing, then do step forward.

- Paul Hagger, Organist and Director of Music

Prayer Ministry

The Prayer Board which was re-introduced last year and relocated near the Memorial Book has been well used. In addition to individuals who read the board and pray for the requests on the board, the requests are almost always referred to during the Intercessions in the main Sunday Service. An innovation this year has been to add the names of all the children baptised at St Johns over the last 10 years during the current month and these children are prayed for during Intercessions on the first Sunday of each month.

In addition people may request prayers for the sick to be named on the list printed each week in the Pew Leaflet but, if adding a name on someone else's behalf, please ask their permission first. Also on the Pew leaflet are the names of those who have recently died. Please contact Jacqui or one of the wardens if you wish to add a name.

If you are wanting personal face to face private prayer, then please contact Jacqui in the first instance.

- Jenny Molyneux-Berry

Quadrant Trust



Abundant Canon Janet Muhindo is a resident of Kinyamaseke village in South Rwenzori. She was a teacher by profession, clergy by calling.

Having served the Church of Uganda for over twenty years is now retired to this village.

Her latest news reads as follows:

'I bring Christian greetings from South Rwenzori, Kasese. I must tell you that you are ever in my thoughts and prayers. I can never forget your wonderful hospitality

offered to me each time I visited, how can I forget what you have done for my vulnerable children, my schools that I once was in charge of. Kasese is hot now with spells of rain here and there. Three of the schools I am chairperson of have done wonderfully well. These are schools we have provided with solar lights, water collection tanks and text books. Bwera Secondary School was the best in the district and the region, and Kisinga Secondary had 16 grades for the first time ever! St. Barnabas model Primary School was the best in the town council! Also, thank you that you have continued sponsoring students in their education. This year we are supporting 8 students; 3 at university level, 3 in secondary schools, and 2 in tertiary colleges. Your support has given them hope and trust in the Lord.

You might be aware that it is not long ago when terrorists entered Uganda and brutally killed over 50 people on different days. The first at a school 3 miles away from where I live! Then an English couple were murdered near Queen Elizabeth National Park, about 4 miles away from me. The British Foreign Travel does not advice travelling to my district so Rosie was unable to visit my area. So I have been chasing after her. We were able to meet up at Mbarara and I was able to travel the 400km to meet her in Kampala. I thank you so much for putting a smile on my face but also touching Gods heart. Give my love to anyone who asks of me.'

Janet Muhindo

Rosie is the representative for the Church of Uganda Chidrens Ministry in the UK and visits Ugamda and is in regular touch with Janet.

Rosie says Janet is not strong, her diabetes is playing up and while she was visiting Uganda, Janet was suffering from Sciatca and thus was not able to walk far. Please do pray for her!

- Sue Ferguson

Safeguarding

There were no reported safeguarding incidents this year.

The Church of England takes safeguarding seriously and we have a diocesan safeguarding officer see: <https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-contacts>

The Diocese of Chelmsford is committed, as part of the Christian Church living in the spirit of the Gospel, to protect and care for everyone and aims to be a beacon of best practice in safeguarding. Looking the other way is not an option.

- Ensuring that its volunteers, clergy, advisers and lay people achieve the standards laid down in the Safeguarding Policies of the Church of England.
- Working with individuals who have criminal convictions, or where other safeguarding risks are identified, to ensure that they, and all members of the church community are safeguarded.
- Holding to account all persons responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults in the Diocese.

I have completed my Parish Safeguarding course on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking and nearly completed my Safeguarding Leadership. I hope to set up some training sessions for anyone interested in basic safeguarding on a Saturday in the meeting room later this year.

- Alison Cooper

Sunday Children's Club

Our Children's' Club continues to be well supported by a core group of children and their guardians on the 2nd Sunday of the month. We also make a similar provision at the Café Praise service on the 4th Sunday of the month. On the 2nd Sunday the children now meet in church in order that they can be more of a part of the service with the adults. The children do enjoy this.

If you want to join our worship but are concerned about keeping your children occupied, then do come along to the club. If you know of anyone with children that might be interested, then do invite them along. Everybody is welcome!

- Jenny Hagger

Tea and coffee

Our small group of volunteers continue to provide refreshments after the main Sunday service each week. We have recently made a sizeable donation to church funds as a result of what we have collected in donations.

As always, we are pleased to welcome new volunteers onto the rota. The current group remains very small. Please do come forward and help out if you can.

- Jenny Hagger

World Vision

As a church family we continue to sponsor children through the charity World Vision. Over the last 26 years we've sponsored 12 children from different countries including Ethiopia, Niger, Zimbabwe, India, Nepal, Mozambique & Malawi, wherever there's been a need for development & education. Thanks to our PCC & Charity Giving group for kind support & annual gifts to the children & their communities. At the end of last year we sent £550 to be divided between Jiyaul in Nepal, Falancia in Mozambique & Glory in Malawi. We look forward to hearing from them with photos of their gifts.

- Suzanne Gaywood

List of Sidespeople

Clare Collier
John Douthwaite
Steve Farrow
Tiggy Farrow
Ana Gil
Jean Hunt
Rachel Perry
Ann Richardson
Nicola Telling

[updated March 2024]

DEANERY SYNOD (CHELMSFORD DEANERY)

The Chelmsford Deanery Synod serves as a vital platform for communication, collaboration, and decision-making among the diverse array of churches within its boundaries. Over the past few years, the Synod has undergone significant changes, including expansions in membership and renewed focus on key issues facing the community.

Membership and Functioning:

Chelmsford Deanery comprises a dynamic mix of churches, with varying denominational affiliations and worship traditions. The precise number of member churches may fluctuate (as some churches within the group combine), but the Deanery continues to function effectively, facilitating robust communication and engagement.

Meetings and Engagement:

The Synod convenes four times a year at different parishes across the Deanery, fostering opportunities for interchurch dialogue and collaboration. These gatherings serve as invaluable forums for sharing insights, exchanging ideas, and exploring new directions for Christian ministry. Speakers at each meeting contribute fresh perspectives and encourage reflection on pertinent issues facing the community.

Representation and Leadership:

The appointment of representatives to the Deanery Synod, including lay representatives and clergy, remains a pivotal aspect of church governance. St. John's Church is represented by Revd Canon Jacqui Jones, Steve Arthurs and Alex Cooper. New volunteers are always welcomed.

Financial Stewardship and Transparency:

Deanery Synod, in collaboration with Mission and Ministry Units (MMUs), oversees the apportionment of Parish Share - how churches pay for and clergy (past in pensions, present in clergy salary and future in training) and the administration within the Deanery, Diocese and national Church. Efforts are underway to ensure fairness and transparency in the apportionment process, reflecting a commitment to equitable financial stewardship and mutual support among congregations. The new formula is currently in its second year and has had some snags but is improving.

Community Engagement and Outreach:

Beyond administrative functions, Deanery Synod actively engages with charitable organizations, missionary initiatives, and community development projects. These interactions provide valuable insights into local needs and opportunities for collaborative outreach, demonstrating the Synod's commitment to holistic ministry and social justice.

The Chelmsford Deanery Synod stands as a vibrant expression of unity and collaboration among diverse churches, committed to advancing the Kingdom of God in their communities. Through shared dialogue, strategic planning, and inclusive leadership, the Synod continues to navigate challenges and look for opportunities for growth and transformation. As we look to the future, the Synod remains steadfast in its mission to nurture faith, foster community, and extend God's love to all.

- Alex Cooper

FABRIC

Maintenance Last year we realised that we need the assistance of a specialist Architect. The PCC started on a quest to find the most appropriate candidate from a list of qualified Architects supplied by the Diocesan Advisory Committee. We hope that this can be completed in the spring.

During 2023 we were able to carry-out not just the usual round of regular maintenance issues, but also move forward with the surveys needed to enable decisions to be made regarding the longstanding and very costly remediation of woodwork in both the church main roof and the spire. The rope access survey in the spire took 3 men 5 days and has produced a comprehensive report. These surveys will enable our Structural Engineer and Architect to decide what work is necessary to preserve the antient building.

Our annual Church Workday on 27th May was very productive and was enjoyed by all. The amount of work done is always gratifying to those taking part and rewarding to the upkeep of our grounds and buildings. Our reliable roofer Lee Gamon carried-out some repairs to the church and meeting room roofs to keep both rain and squirrels from damaging our buildings.

There remains some Quinquennial work that we know of and hope to complete next year before our next mandated inspection in 2025. Remounting the gutter above the boiler room, is a quinquennial item, but new work is continually raising its head, we need to investigate voided plaster in the south nave. We may save some of this for advice from our new Architect when he is appointed.

Our insurers (Ecclesiastical Insurance) have required some additional checks on our electrical installations and lightning protection, shortening our periodical inspections from every 10 years to every 5 years. We have complied and all our inspection certification is up to date. Finding qualified specialists to carry-out these tests gets increasingly difficult and expensive. Our electrical inspection in 2023 cost over £1,100 and took 3 days to complete.

The annual heating system inspection and servicing revealed that our boiler is getting more difficult to maintain and will need expensive repairs next year.

The floor in the meeting room as been sanded and sealed. It now looks much better and can be more easily cleaned.

The new sound system in church has greatly improved our ability to hear words and music. It also broadcasts our weekly services over the internet. Alex continues to improve the broadcast facilities in both the church and the audio-visual equipment in the meeting room (a facility greatly enjoyed by our various meeting room users).

Churchyard Volunteer Team:

Every Wednesday morning, our Churchyard Volunteer Team takes care of the open spaces and hedges. They have enjoyed the use of a new tractor mower last year after the previous one mowed its last. The team greatly miss their 'Colonel in Chief' Clive Willey who died in December. The team soldier on and achieve excellent results while having good fun doing it. On a recent Archdeacons Visitation, our new Archdeacon the Venerable Jonathan Croucher complimented us on the excellent condition of our churchyard. Anyone with an hour to spare is welcome to join the team.

Faculty Applications:

None

Future Improvements:

Restoring the clock and renovating its face is a major task but is not currently within our financial capacity and will have to be postponed for the time being.

We may well face the cost of a new boiler in 2024 and the dreaded woodworm hasn't gone away.

- Steve Arthurs, Fabric Officer

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Independent Examiner's Report

To the PCC of Danbury St John the Baptist

I report on the attached accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2023, which are set out on pages 1 to 4.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner:

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the Act)
- Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145 (5)(b) of the Act and
- State whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act and
 - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 ActHave not been met, or
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

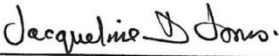
 7 March 2024

Michael Ovenden
10 Hyde Lane
Danbury

Parochial Church Council of Danbury St John the Baptist
Financial Statements for the year ended December 31st 2023

<u>2022</u>		<u>2023</u>		
<u>Statement of Financial Activities</u>	Note	<u>Total</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Unrestricted</u>
Income				
£49,443 Planned Giving, collections etc	1	£51,031		£51,031
£3,500 Village Friends	2	£3,193	£3,193	
£6,039 Events	9	£6,930		£6,930
£1,560 Grants Received	3	£60	£60	
£9,518 Fees		£10,728		£10,728
£9,990 Meeting Room Income	4	£10,110		£10,110
£13,200 40 Millfields - Rental Income	5	£13,200		£13,200
£3,294 Garden of Remembrance		£2,200		£2,200
£18,500 All Other Income	6	£7,476	£230	£7,246
£115,044		£104,928	£3,483	£101,445
Expenditure				
-£2,561 Grants to Charities	7	-£3,016		-£3,016
-£58662 Parish Share		-£54,450		-£54,450
-£6,082 Meeting Room Expenses	4	-£10,431		-£10,431
-457 40 Millfields Expenses	5	-£432		-£432
-£1,338 Garden of Remembrance		-£1,051		-£1,051
-£25,133 Other Church Expenses	8	-£39,690	-£6,028	-£33,662
-£94,233		-£109,071	-£6,028	-£103,042
£20,811 Net Surplus/Deficit		-£4,143	-£2,545	-£1,598
Balance Sheet				
Net Assets				
£100,303 Cash at Bank and on deposit	10	£96,160	£81,071	£15,089
£92,000 Property, 40 Millfields	5	£92,000	£92,000	
£192,303 Total Net Assets		£188,160	£173,071	£15,089
Funds				
7604 Endowment Funds	12	£7,604	£7,604	
76012 Restricted - Other	12	£73,467	£73,467	
16687 Unrestricted funds	12	£15,089		£15,089
100303 Total Cash funds		£96,160	£81,071	£15,089
92000 Restricted - Clergy Housing	12	£92,000	£92,000	
£192,303 Total funds	12	£188,160	£173,071	£15,089

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on March 11th 2024
and signed on its behalf by:



Canon Jacqui Jones (Chairman)



Alan Dixon (Treasurer)

Parochial Church Council of Danbury St John the Baptist
Financial Statements for the year ended December 31st 2023

<u>2022</u>		<u>2023</u>	
Total	Statement of Financial Activities		
	Note 1: Planned Giving, collections etc		
		Total	Restricted
			Unrestricted
£42,625	Parish Giving Scheme	£41,994	£41,994
£1,766	Non PGS	£1,846	£1,846
	Gift Aid	£2,590	£2,590
£0	SumUp	£898	£898
£5,052	General Collections	£3,703	£3,703
£49,443		£51,031	£51,031
	Note 2: Village Friends		
£3,500	Parish Giving Scheme	£3,193	£3,193
	Note 3: Grants		
£1,500	Danbury Parish Council: Churchyard		
£60	War Graves Commission: Churchyard	£60	£60
£1,560		£60	£60
	Note 4: Meeting Room		
£9,990	Fees from Letting	£10,110	£10,110
	Expenses:		
-£1,816	Cleaning	-£2,376	-£2,376
-£2,297	Electricity & Water	-£1,964	-£1,964
-£66	Repairs & Mtce	-£4,634	-£4,634
-£330	Glebe Rent	-£270	-£270
	Sound System	-£298	-£298
-£786	Insurance	-£829	-£829
-£787	Sundry	-£59	-£59
£3,908		-£321	-£321
	Note 5: Millfields		
	The PCC owns the curates house at 40 Millfields, purchased in 1989 for £92,000		
	The capital value is restricted to the clergy fund; net operating surplus /deficit is General Fund		
£13,200	Net Rental Income	£13,200	£13,200
-£355	Insurance	-£382	-£382
-£102	Maintenance	-£50	-£50
£12,743		£12,768	£12,768
	Note 6: Other Income		
£813	Interest (CCLA)	£2,591	£2,591
£10,000	Donation - Sound System		
£1,350	Donation - Majumdar bench		
£2,615	Other Donations/Bequests	£2,014	£2,014
£1,283	SumUp (Now Included In Note 1)		
£132	Wall Safe (Now Included In Note 1)		
	Other Income	£317	£317
	CAF	£480	£480
£165	Landisdale Charity	£230	£0
£2,142	Rectory Car Park Income	£1,844	£1,844
£18,500		£7,476	£7,246
	Note 7 : Grants to Charities		
-£550	Friends of Essex Churches		
-£550	CHESS	-£550	-£550
-£550	World Vision	-£550	-£550
-£550	Safer Places	-£550	-£550
-£550	Quantock Christian Trust	-£550	-£550
	DEC	-£154	-£154
	Danbury Parish Council	-£100	-£100
	Essex Wildlife	-£92	-£92
£564	Discretionary fund, reverse		
-£100	RBL Poppy Appeal	-£90	-£90
-£275	The Childrens' Society (Christingle)	-£380	-£380
-£2,561		-£3,016	-£3,016

**Parochial Church Council of Danbury St John the Baptist
Financial Statements for the year ended December 31st 2023**

<u>2022</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Unrestricted</u>
Note 8 : Other Church Expenses				
-£3,143 Insurance	-£3,318			-£3,318
-£1,812 Gas	-£2,401			-£2,401
-£613 Electricity/Water/Waste	-£1,202			-£1,202
-£613 Daisy. Telephone and WiFi	-£728			-£728
Maintenance	-£498			-£498
-£2,044 Beetle Costs	-£6,750			-£6,750
-£1,094 Organ & Choir	-£1,377			-£1,377
Altar	-£317			-£317
-£267 Bank Charges	-£241			-£241
-£1,167 Clergy Expenses	-£763			-£763
-£2,953 Churchyard & Green	-£3,111			-£3,111
-£4,599 Secretarial	-£5,805			-£5,805
Majumber Bench	-£1,093	-£1,093		
-£536 Church Flowers	-£637			-£637
-£5,065 Replacement Sound System	-£8,010	-£4,935		-£3,075
£650 Glebe Rent Expenses	-£758			-£758
-£1,877 All Other	-£2,683			-£2,683
-£25,133	-£39,690		-£6,028	-£33,663
Note 9: Events Committee				
318 Jumble Sale				
53 FOEC Ride & Stride				
1396 Summer Fayre	£1,728			£1,728
£575 Tree Festival/Crib Festival	£672			£672
£3,697 Concerts	£4,345			£4,345
CoOp card	£185			£185
£6,039	£6,930			£6,930
Note 10: Cash on Deposit				
£62,635 Deposit A/C Cent Bd of Finance	£85,226	£81,071		£4,155
£37,668 Current A/C Barclays	£10,934			£10,934
£100,303	£96,160		£81,071	£15,089

The deposit account is showing the balance as at 30/09/2023
The final quarter's interest was paid on 3rd January 2024

Note 11: Liabilities

The accounts are now prepared on a 'Receipts and Payments' basis.
Unrecorded liabilities at 31st December 2023 relate to uninvoiced gas, electricity and water usage amounting to less than £1,000. Meeting Room income of £858 was received in 2023 relating to 2024 usage..

**Parochial Church Council of Danbury St John the Baptist
Financial Statements for the year ended December 31st 2023**

Note 12: Funds	At Jan 1 2023	Income	During 2023 Exp	At Dec 31 2023
Endowment Funds				
Wigan Grave	£6,580			£6,580
Turner Gift	£1,024			£1,024
Sub Total Endowment	£7,604			£7,604
Restricted Funds				
Church Building & land	£33,346			£33,346
Village Friends	£34,237	£3,193		£37,430
Other Restricted Transactions	£8,429	£290	-£6,028	£2,691
Sub Total	£83,616	£3,483	-£6,028	£81,071
Clergy Housing Fund	£92,000			£92,000
Total Restricted Funds	£175,616	£3,483	-£6,028	£173,071
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	£10,063	£101,445	-£103,042	£8,465
Church Building & land	£6,624			£6,624
Total Unrestricted	£16,687	£101,445	-£103,042	£15,089
Total: All Funds	£192,303	£104,928	-£109,070	£188,160

TRUSTS: WIGAN GRAVE & TURNER GIFT. In 2017 at the instigation of Chelmsford Diocese, the PCC applied to have the capital in these trusts transferred from the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance to the PCC. Sums of £3700.71 (Wigan Grave) and £705.20 (turner Gift) were transferred in April 2017 and were included as income in the 2017 accounts.

WIGAN GRAVE: The capital sum (originally donated in 1966 by Aline Wigan, widow of Brigadier General J T Wigan) is now held by the PCC. It is for the maintenance of the Church & churchyard so long as the Wigan Grave is kept in good order and repair.

TURNER GIFT: capital sum is for the upkeep of fabric or internal adornment of the Church or any special object relating thereto which may require the raising of special funds; not for ordinary church expenses. The decision as to manner of use is with the Rector and churchwardens.

Church building/land: private donation, bequests, gifts (inc fund raising) given or raised specifically for the purpose

Village Friends: During 2014 the Rector wrote to all households in the parish requesting financial support. The resulting income, much of which is in the form of PGS Direct Debits, which are ongoing into the future, is to be used exclusively for the maintenance and restoration of the Church building.

Other specific grants and donations that have been used for the purpose given. Danbury Parish Council & War Graves Commission (Churchyard), special collections etc

Clergy Housing Fund: Represents value of the curates house at 40 Millfields at purchase in 1989

St John's School

The school has had another busy but successful year. In September the school received its first Ofsted inspection since January 2018. The headline result is that the school has maintained its overall 'Good' rating but also some 'outstanding' ratings in the key areas of 'behaviour', 'attitudes' and 'personal development'. The inspection report includes some very pleasing comments about the overall ethos and culture within the school which further emphasise the nurturing and supporting learning environment that is a credit to our parish and which gives so many of our young parishioners a great start on their educational journey.

There were some significant changes to the school's senior leadership team at the end of the last academic year. Deputy head Ms Bridget O'Reilly left the school after many years of dedicated service to the school, including the introduction of many regular fixtures to the school year such as the annual spring farm visit and summer Triathlon event. Mr Toby Power has joined the school leadership team as deputy head teacher and Mrs Lois Barrett has become Assistant head teacher, thereby strengthening the school's leadership focus.

The school governors and leadership have updated the school strategy to build on the good foundations evidenced in the Ofsted report. The key focus areas for this year are to improve the Christian distinctiveness, to improve communication within the school and to parents and to raise the profile of reading throughout the school. A significant investment in new books has been made to achieve the latter aim.

At the end of the last academic year the school received Eco school Green flag accreditation following great work by the school's Eco Club and by former deputy head Bridget O'Reilly.

- Stuart Bird – PCC Foundation governor