



 The Diocese of
Peterborough

Annual reports for the year ending 31st December 2024

Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul Uppingham
Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul, Uppingham, Rutland

Annual report of the Parochial Church Council

Year ended 31st December 2024

Introduction

The reports below are submitted for approval and information at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to be held in the Church on the evening of 15 May 2024.

So that all members of our Church are able to share in our vision for the growth of the Church within the community, our Mission Action Plan (MAP) and Inventory are available from the Rector.

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Administrative Information

The Church of St Peter & St Paul, Uppingham, is located in the Market Place LE15 9TJ. It is part of the Diocese of Peterborough within the Church of England.

The correspondence address is: The Rectory, 43 Lime Tree Avenue, Uppingham LE15 9SS.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity currently registered with the Charities Commission.

Parochial Church Council

Members of the PCC who served from 1st January 2023 until the date of the approval of this report are shown in the Appendix (page 10).

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Objectives

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent Revd Canon Rachel Watts in promoting the mission statement of the Church and conducting the business of the Church relating to financial affairs and the maintenance of the Church buildings and possessions.

Vision statement

Serving God through love in action in Uppingham.

Safeguarding

I took over as the benefice safeguarding advisor in January 2025. Our church has continued to adopt the diocesan safeguarding policy, 'Promoting a Safer Church'. I will be looking to ensure that this continues to be updated along with other related policies. I am working closely with the diocesan team to ensure that we are up to date with these policies and updated information on safeguarding as this becomes available from the national safeguarding team.

We have just encouraged members of the church to complete the diocese safeguarding audit.

The policy is kept at the back of the church along with contact numbers for those with safeguarding roles and a list of useful numbers for a variety of agencies and support groups.

Everyone on the PCC and in a position of leadership has completed a DBS check and the appropriate safeguarding training. This is renewed every three years and there are a number coming up for renewal in the near future. There are new requirements for our bellringers and this is being addressed.

Safeguarding is a standing agenda at every PCC meeting. I have attended my first PCC meetings in Belton and Uppingham in the last month (April). We are going to review all policies going forward and ensure that we have everything in place taking on recent updates and a particular focus on safer recruitment.

I am pleased to report that there have been no safeguarding incidents in the last year.

If you have any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult, do not hesitate to contact myself, Nicky Jervis (deputy safeguarding advisor) or Richard Cole as churchwarden (while we are in the interregnum). Emails can be sent to uppinghamsafeguarding@gmail.com. If you need to contact the diocese safeguarding team the address is safeguarding@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

If there is anything else you would like to suggest in relation to safeguarding for both children and vulnerable adults, please do not hesitate to speak to me or contact me.

Liz Sargeant
Benefice Safeguarding Officer
uppinghamsafeguarding@gmail.com
07798 925976

Stewardship and Giving

The various methods of parishioners and visitors giving to our church, coupled with Gift Aid tax refunds resulted in £14,811 (£16,633 in 2023) being received. We are very grateful to everyone who gives to support their church. There are three different ways in which we give:

PARISH GIVING SCHEME (£39,536 in 2024 compared to £33,968 in 2023)

Thank you to all those who use the scheme and make regular contributions. Can I encourage anyone on the scheme who has not indicated that they are happy to see their donation increase in line with inflation (it's an option on the website) to consider whether it you are able to do so. Alternatively, if you haven't increased the amount you donate for a year or two, please consider whether you are able to increase now.

CASH COLLECTIONS SCHEME (£6,347 in 2024 compared to £7,201 in 2023)

These are cash donations made at services and left by visitors in the wall safe. It decreased in 2024.

WHITE ENVELOPE & ONE-OFF DONATIONS (£18,562 in 2024 compared to £29,521 in 2023)

The use of the white envelopes has fallen off sharply, possibly because it is now easier to reclaim the tax on cash collections. Again, we are grateful for a very substantial one-off donation made to the Church in March 2024.

DONA DONATIONS (£1,266.50 in 2024 compared to £2,230 in 2023)

The donation terminal offers a handy way to make occasional additional donations to the church. Please if applicable register for Gift Aid the first time you use the reader.

Despite the generosity of our regular givers, the finances of the parish are still under considerable pressure. The rise in the cost of living has impacted the Church's regular bills and the ability of our congregation members to make donations.

We remain very dependent on the large and one-off donations. Should those cease we would have a big problem. Please do all you can to encourage regular giving and legacies in wills to help us maintain a healthy church in the longer term.

Nick Clarke
Stewardship Secretary

NOTE THAT ALL AMOUNTS HAVE BEEN ROUNDED AND ARE APPROXIMATE
Most giving is for the General Fund which helps the church allocate funds to the greatest need, but some donors allocate their money to specific funds such as Fabric or Organ Fund.

Social and Fundraising

We have held a number of very successful events during the year as follows:

Concert for our High Sheriff's charity held in Lyddington with Andy Harris (trumpet), Fergus Black (piano) and Caroline Sharpe (Soprano).

Festival of Song Weekend

Lent Lunch

Church Bookings

Corby Male Voice Choir

Church Choir events: Successful Victorian Lunchtime concert

Many exciting events to come and details to follow, including an Eco Nativity Exhibition involving the whole community.

Part of the Uppingham Feast week and Christmas in Uppingham.

We still desperately need people who are willing to take an idea and lead it, with the support of a willing team of helpers.

During the winter months, our beautiful church costs £1000 a month to heat and light. This works out at £250 a week! We must generate more income and fundraising is an excellent way of achieving this.

We are currently running at a £10,000 a year deficit.

We look forward to hearing from you.

[Jenny Harris and Pat Cole.](#)

The Coffee Rota

We currently have 16 volunteers serving coffee after the 10.45 service each Sunday. They do a splendid job and the Church is very grateful. Churchgoers are provided with a great opportunity to meet new members of the congregation, catch up with the gossip or simply enjoy the company of others. Being an Eco Church we serve Fairtrade coffee and tea and also provide Fruit Juice and Biscuits. If anyone would like to volunteer please contact Claire.

Electoral Roll

There are currently 66 members on our Church Electoral Roll.

Sadly, we have lost a number of loyal and dedicated members over the last year and some of our congregation have moved away to be nearer to family. However, we have recently gained new members.

This is an important year for the revision of the Electoral Roll and Anna Wilkinson has kindly taken over as the Electoral Roll Officer.

Please note that all church members need to fill in a form, either taken from the back of church, or completed electronically, and return to Richard Cold or Anna Wilkison, or put into the wall safe at the back of church.

As a member of the Electoral Roll, you are eligible to be elected on to the PCC, if a vacancy occurs.

[Jenny Harris](#)
[Electoral Roll Officer.](#)

Come Rejoice

Currently led by Pam & Olivia with the help of many volunteers.

Christmas nativity and Christingle were additional services held and again VERY well received.

Come rejoice services happen every 4th Sunday of the month

These are still well received and often have congregation of around 30

Good Friday was a huge success for the come rejoice team with around 40 people filling the church to make Easter Garden, Foot washing, Cross building and Bread and Wine (Ribena) tasting.

Come rejoice remains on a Sunday with no intention to move forward to the 3rd Saturday again. Perhaps when a new rector begins this can be something to consider.

SOCIAL MEDIA – We share come rejoice updates on social media but also any event coming up. Please continue to send posters that need to be shared with up-and-coming events to uppinghamparishfamiliesworker@gmail.com

Eco Church

Unfortunately we had to stop collecting candles for Ukraine. This was because the transport that was taking the candles was no longer available. It's disappointing, as we were able to send quite a number of used candles to help with heating and cooking fuel.

The planters in front of the church have brought many positive comments from the community. We will continue our planting of them over the changing seasons.

The certificates showing the eight toilets that we have sponsored and now hung on the doors to the toilets in the church hall. This too has been positively acknowledged. It shows we are not just a church that meets on Sundays, but are involved in global outreach.

We have now submitted our Gold Award application. Needless to say, it has involved a great deal of work from many people, I would like to extend my appreciation to Richard for his help and support in getting me all the information need for our 360° Energy Carbon Footprint report. As part of our application, we will have a water butt taking waste water from the shed roof, we now have planting of native species of bulbs and flowers in the lower area of the churchyard, and in spring we will be sowing wildflower seeds in some protected areas. This will all add to the beautiful colour and diversity of our churchyard in spring and throughout the seasons. Once again, it's hoped the congregation will take part in No Mow May to help with the decline in pollinator habitat.

In May we are meeting to plan a fundraising event in November of nativity scenes. This too will be outreach to the schools and community. As you will see in our application as an Eco Church we need to be embedded in all we do.

If you would like to see are the application for our award, together with our carbon footprint and land management report for the future please see me. There is also a link to carbon footprint.

<https://360carbon.org/en-gb/footprint?id=fbligsko8lo>

Christobel Price

Choir Report

During the course of 2024 the choir have been able to celebrate in music several significant events. Not least was Canon Rachel's final Eucharist with us, at the start of November; and the following month we were invited to join the singers of St Mary's, Nottingham, at the Installation of James Saunders as Vicar there. This meant the loss of two highly supportive families in a very short time. Nevertheless, we continue our strong musical tradition, enabling a rich tapestry of worship week-by-week to support the priests, particularly Fr Peter and Canon John, celebrating the Sunday Eucharists with us during our interregnum.

At the end of June, we were invited by St Peter's, Brooke, to sing a celebratory Evensong marking their Patronal Festival, followed by a splendid strawberry tea; and we have been invited again this year! In August, we led a service of Thanksgiving and Renewal of Vows as part of the Wedding Gala. In October, we hosted a weekend visit by composer and choral animateur Geoff Weaver. Geoff led a highly memorable Come & Sing Messiah, with four Wardle family soloists joining tenor Andrew Kennedy, and Wardle senior accompanying; then on the Sunday afternoon he conducted our Choral Evensong.

Our Advent, Christmas and Epiphany candlelit services have also been well received, as well as our monthly Choral Evensongs. The demands of Holy Week 2025 were also managed with considerable success, particularly the Robert White setting at Tenebrae. Special thanks are due to our loyal troupe of visiting singers who boost our numbers and enjoy the excitement of these special services.

Recruitment to the choir, of male singers, has been steady this year, but the soprano line is in need of some greater strength of numbers. We have been running a publicity campaign and are praying we might gain some new singers – who do not necessarily need to come reading music fluently – during this year.

Looking forward, we have the opportunity to lead the weekend services at Ripon Cathedral, at the end of August. Peter Clements will be at the organ for the majority of the services, with Oliver accompanying us for our first Evensong, on Friday 29 August. We shall be singing a Mozart Mass setting, as a 'dry run' for Ripon Cathedral Eucharist on 31st, at our service this Ascension Day evening.

John Wardle
Director of Music & Organist, Uppingham PC

Church Hall

It is hoped that the users of the hall find that it is a pleasant and airy facility without being too costly to hire. Although the hall is not large, it seems to meet the regular needs of several organisations. After the annual meeting of May 2024, it was decided to raise the hire fee per hour for the use of the hall to £10. This was a result of the financial statement for the hall being disappointing, considering the number of bookings that had taken place. The hall had been £7.50 per hour for over eleven years, and with the cost of fuel going up, a realistic price increase was necessary.

I would like to thank Mr Nick Kennedy who cleans the hall regularly, cleans the carpet annually, and during the summer of 2024 removed all the protective wires off the outside windows to clean them. Unfortunately, from time to time we do have youngsters who will climb on the hall roof using the refuse bins as steps. Thank you to Robert Cliff Ltd also, for helping with emergency plumbing problems, as well as servicing the water boiler and heating system each year. Thank you to those who continue to take an interest in the hall, who check that it is locked, observe any problems, and generally walk along the path at different times to see that things are in order.

The following groups used the hall regularly in 2024

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- The Labour Party
- Women's Singing Circle
- Churches Together in Uppingham – Lent Course
- Mellors and Kirk, Nottingham – Valuations
- Uppingham Mothers' Union
- Uppingham Evening WI
- The Parish Church – Canon Rachel Watts (up to December 2024) Lent lunches of 2024 and with colleagues - events for children including Biblical Meal
- The Parish Church – events throughout the year
- Uppingham Parish Church choir
- Parsnips Youth Theatre
- Uppingham Choral Society
- Uppingham Community College – training young people in catering for examinations since September 2024
- Rutland Musical Theatre

Other groups and organisations used the hall or its equipment at other times:

- Uppingham and District Twinning Association
- Private children's parties and family parties, private prayer meetings, Christening parties
- Private musical rehearsals
- Private theatre rehearsals

- Parishioners – Posy making for Mothering Sunday of 2024
- Edward Dorman – funeral refreshments
- Uppingham Ladies Choir of 2024
- Uppingham Bellringers – Area events Slimming World

- Various musical events and choirs, for rehearsals, and use of chairs

The income from these lettings and donations can be seen in the church accounts.

Hilary Dawe
Church Hall Bookings

Deanery Synod

Meetings are attended by clergy in the Deanery and lay representatives. Coordinated by the Rural Dean, the Revd. Canon Jane Baxter, meetings provide the opportunity to find out what is happening in the diocese and deanery and to share views. Meetings are 3 monthly. Following COVID we have continued the pattern of Zoom meetings in the winter and face to face in the summer. Each time there is an interesting speaker and opportunity to find out what is going on in the deanery. This is particularly important as several benefices are in interregnum I have enjoyed meeting and worshipping with people across our Rutland churches. Due to other commitments, I cannot always attend. I hope that someone will join me to represent our church at these meetings..

Jill Cannings
Deanery Synod Representative

House Group

The Bible Study Group meets each Tuesday, apart from the 2nd Tuesday in the month, in Chestnut Close, Uppingham. Each session begins at 10a.m. and ends about 11.30a.m.

The Group have recently completed a study of the 2nd Book of Samuel in the Old Testament and recently begun a study of Ecclesiastes.

Reverend John Portlock

Mothers' Union

Welcome to the start of this MU year – 2025 a year of joy and hope.

We especially welcome our new members and those from the Ketton MU who have supported us at our meetings and celebrations.

It has been wonderful to meet together at different venues every month and enjoy fellowship together, as well as welcoming our guest speakers. We have learnt so much on a wide range of subjects, particularly the talk & photos of Nick and Richard's walk to Santiago de Compostella bringing back to several members our visit there also some 14 years ago! - although the walking was a little too far for us to join in! But we did enjoy beautiful weather and many sites of interest and Churches for prayer and reflection. Not least of all the amazing Cathedral where we joined with many pilgrims who had made that gruelling journey. Now at their pilgrimage end - sharing their faith at the tomb of St. James.

We also had an inspiring talk from Cathy (Dyson) about her witness and work at Stocken Prison. We too appreciate the association which our President Helen Lynett has encouraged us in our mission to local prisons, i.e. in sending cards for Easter and Christmas and also giving gifts/chocolates to prisoners. I am sure this awareness has benefitted us as well as the contact with inmates. In mentioning Helen we give thanks for all her work – for Forum meetings, quiet mornings, her visits around the Deanery and so much more.

I would also like to thank and congratulate all those members on our committee who on behalf of us all work enthusiastically and are an encouragement to us all. Sue for our finances and fund-raising, Val, Joy, Claire & Margaret for cakes! And food! And all the extra jobs they are asked to do! Particularly I would like to thank HILARY who is in and behind all the work we do. She is a tireless, wonderful ambassador for MU and our Lord. Thank you again Hilary – we couldn't do anything without you. I am sure this is echoed around this room today from us all. And last but not least Jill, our Past President who encourages and supports us all. Thank you-Jill.

To close I would just like to say THANK YOU to everyone for all that you do – and remind you again about the power of prayer – in March the World Day of Prayer – in September the Wave of Prayer –both now timed as part of the regular church prayer meetings on a Friday morning at 9.30 a.m.

A quick resume of our year together and a challenge for 2025 – where is your faith journey taking you this year?

Moya (& John)

Bell Ringers

2024 was quite a busy year for Rutland bellringers generally as it was the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers.

The Rutland Branch of PDGCBR set a challenge to ring a Quarter Peal in every Rutland tower during 2024. Uppingham achieved their celebratory Quarter Peal on February 29th.

Recruitment of new people to learn to ring church bells is an ongoing challenge and we actively promote and advertise for new ringers. However, we are still very much dependent on ringers from other parishes to help with Sunday service ringing. This is reciprocal and Uppingham ringers assist others when we can and share practice sessions.

On Saturday mornings the Uppingham bells are in use for the training of new learners, with the bells completely silenced to the outside world. This has been a particularly successful venture, teaching individuals from across the local area in small groups in a safe environment with recognised teachers. Once a basic level of competence has been achieved the new ringers join in with normal practices.

In January we hosted an 'Association of Ringing Teachers' (ART) training course, a pathway for experienced ringers to become accredited ringing teachers. We have four local ringers on track to achieve this recognition, including Ted Phillips from Uppingham who is also our 'steeple keeper'. They all, plus a mentor, regularly help with the teaching of new ringers from the surrounding local parishes.

During 2024 we were requested to ring the bells at 4 funeral or thanksgiving services, and two weddings. For one of those weddings, we rang the bells at a pre-arranged time with the ceremony having taken place at The Falcon Hotel. We also rang on June 6th, commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

Our annual cake and plant stall on Uppingham Market Place was held in May, raising funds for the Uppingham Church Bell Fund.

Practice nights are Thursday's 7.30pm -9pm.

Sue Webster
Tower Captain

Little Fishes

Average number – 15 children 10 parents. Ran by – Olivia Linnell with volunteer support. Every Monday 9.30-10.30

We are getting regulars and little fishes and continue to have people help with tea and coffee.

We continue to ask for volunteers to help welcome people and make tea and coffee. Parents are responsible for their under 5's so asking them to make coffee at the same time could be tricky.

It has been suggested to ask for a small fee. To begin with we would like to have a voluntary donations pot as not all people are able to make a set payment every week.

We are seeing more children join in some of our other activities such as come rejoice and Good Friday events. Children are finding enjoyment in church and parents are using the children's play area even when little fishes is not on.

Olivia Linnell

Churches Together

The representatives from the various churches in Uppingham have met regularly during the past year and we have been pleased to be joined by the Baptist Church in Oakham whose reps contribute significantly to our discussions and activities. They also provide a monthly lunch at the Town Hall on the first Sunday of each month at 1pm called "The Gathering". It is arranged as a means of outreach to the community. Everyone is welcome for a delicious hot meal.

Children's Activities (Kids Clubs) are held during all school holidays with days planned for May half-term and the summer holidays this year. These have been discussed as being nonprofit and funded by the churches together to enable all families the chance to participate.

Harvest Festival at the Methodist church in September 2024 and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service at the Parish Church (which included the annual Methodist Covenant Service) in January 2025 were well supported.

Holy Week and Easter services took place recently

Due to illness and other unavoidable absences, we were unable to arrange joint Advent and Lent Courses this time but the date for a United Harvest Festival Service has been agreed as 28th September 2025 at the Methodist Church.

Other activities will be arranged later in the year – A light festival being one of them held at the town hall on 31st October.

Churches together will be looking for a new chairperson at the end of the year as Peter is due to step down.

It has been discussed that this is a perfect time to look at what our aims are as churches together and what we hope to achieve.

We still need more church volunteers trained in first aid especially over the summertime events.

Olivia Linnell

Uppingham C of E Primary School

The school has had a good year and has been making significant progress.

Monitored full year annual performance has shown great improvement in 2024 compared with 2023. There is a myriad of indicators that have to be measured now with the accompanying acronyms but, by way of example, the school's performance in EYFS Early Learning Goals, Year 1 Phonics and Key stage 1 & 2 Reading, Writing & Maths is well ahead of the national averages. What makes this all the more impressive is that the school looks after a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

Pupil numbers have continued to fall and of last term were around 123. The projection for next year currently is just 121. This is well below the operational capacity of the school and is going to have implications for funding. The school is currently operating within budget but this is proving ever more challenging and, as it is linked to pupil numbers, it will possibly lead to the need to make tough choices in the future.

We lost a few governors at the start of the academic year but have managed to replace most of these with three excellent new volunteers. We now have two foundation governors and ideally would like three and hopefully we will be able to achieve this in the next few months.

The system of reporting at Governors meetings had been updated with a new Leadership report system being implemented in Spring 2025 that has been well received.

Safeguarding and pastoral care continues to be an incredibly important aspect of the schools operations and this has been constantly reviewed throughout the year and, with Rachel's departure and Uppingham being in Interregnum, Common worship assemblies are being conducted by volunteers so that the spiritual ethos of the school is continually nurtured.

Philip Warner, Foundation Governor.

Appendix

PCC Members 2024 to present time

Clergy

Deanery Synod

Jill Cannings	01572 821870	jillcannings2@gmail.com	1 Ayston Road, Uppingham LE15 9RL
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Diocesan Synod

Vacant

Co-opted Safeguarding Officer

Liz Sargeant	07798 925976	uppinghamsafeguarding@gmail.com
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Reader

Christobel Price	07939 444227	bisbrooke@live.co.uk
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Musical Director

John Wardle	01572 829923	john.wardle@btinternet.com	5 Elizabeth Way Uppingham LE15 9PQ
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Churchwardens

Richard Cole	01572 821190	r.cole583@btinternet.com	26 Stockerston Crescent Uppingham LE15 9UB
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Deputy Churchwarden

Geoffrey Welband	07753 422816	jeffrey.welband@gmail.com
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Elected Lay Representatives

Janet Wardle	01572 829923	janetwardle97@gmail.com	5 Elizabeth Way Uppingham LE15 9PQ
Pat Cole	01572 821190	p.cole155@btinternet.com	26 Stockerston Crescent Uppingham LE15 9UB
Philip Warner	07786 337393	pwarnergae@gmail.com	
Olivia Linnell	07912 988725	uppinghamparishfamiliesworker@gmail.com	
Anna Wilkinson		annawilkinson89@outlook.com	
PCC Vacant postion for 2025			

Co-opted Treasurer

Jonathan Gibbs

Secretary Ex-Officio

Jenny Harris	01572 822223	uppinghamchurchoffice@gmail.com	14 Chestnut Close Uppingham LE15 9TQ
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