



**Annual Reports for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and  
Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023  
of the Parochial Church Council.**

**Incumbent: Revd Tasha Anderson**

**Bank: HSBC**

**Independent Examiner: Hope Jones, Chartered Accountants**

**Church Office  
Church Hall, Greenbanks Close, Milford on Sea SO41 0SQ**

**Milford PCC** is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and is a registered charity. It has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish of Milford (which includes Everton, Keyhaven and Lymore) the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has legal responsibility for both churches and both church halls.

**Membership** Members of both Milford PCC and St Mary's DCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) or the Annual District Meeting (ADM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. During 2023/24 the following have served:

**Milford Parochial Church Council (PCC)**

PCC Secretary: Mrs Beverley Smith

**Members of the PCC:**

Incumbent: Rev Natasha Anderson

Licensed Lay Ministers: Miss Gillian Peard  
Mr Douglas Marcuse

Churchwardens: Mr Eddie Donaldson  
Mrs Val Hanson

Assistant Warden: Mrs Annabel Taylor  
Mrs Margaret Warren

Treasurer: Mr Bill Darley

Deanery Synod: Miss Gillian Peard  
Mrs Rosemary Marcuse  
Mrs Annabel Taylor

Elected Members: Mr Bill Darley  
Mrs Val Hansen  
Mrs Rosemary Marcuse  
Douglas Marcuse  
Mrs Liz Miller  
Mrs Kate Pinnell  
Mrs Annabel Taylor  
Mr Adam Smith  
Mrs Beverley Smith  
Mrs Margaret Warren

**St Mary's District Church Council (DCC)** was set up for that part of the Parish of Milford in which the daughter church of St Mary's Everton is situated in accordance with a scheme approved by the Diocesan Pastoral Committee and brought into effect on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1976.

**Members of the DCC:**

Incumbent: Rev Natasha Anderson

Licensed Lay Minister: Miss Gillian Peard

Churchwarden: Mrs Vera Peters

Treasurer: Mr David Kirby

DCC Secretary: Acting Secretary took the minutes during the year.

Elected Members: Mrs. Marlene Avery  
Mrs Patricia Ellis  
Mr Andrew Ellis  
Resigned November 2023

Hall Manager: Mrs Vera Peters

In attendance: Eddie Donaldson  
Vice Chair of the PCC

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## 1. CHURCH ATTENDANCE

### All Saints' Church Attendance:

Average Sunday attendance: 9am - 45; 10.30am - 84 and 4 children: 6pm Worship and Praise once a month - 28

### St Mary's Church Attendance:

The average attendance at 10am is 37.

## 2. VICAR'S REPORT

### ***'Be still in the presence of the Lord. and wait patiently for him to act' (Psalm 37:7)***

Throughout the past year, we have journeyed through a time of patient endurance (a word brought to us many months ago at our Prayer and Praise meeting).

After a bold step of faith by the PCC to recruit both a Families and Schools Leader and Associate Minister back in 2022, we have waited in hopeful expectation of God's provision. We are delighted in seeing how Rebecca has flourished in the Families and Schools Leader role this past year, yet as our APCM arrives, we will have gone out to advert for a fifth time for the Associate Minister Role.

Our Fallow Time at the beginning of this year has provided an opportunity for us to reflect on what it means to 'Be still' in the presence of God rather than 'Do' for Him. I like many of us, can find the 'doing' easier than the 'being'. Our journey this past year has required us to wait patiently for Him to act, to accept there is nothing we can 'Do' but to 'Be still' in the presence of the Lord and trust in his perfect timing. But it is so often in the times of waiting, that our character is formed.

As we studied the book of James last year, it challenged us to live out our faith in the everyday moments of life and drew us again to the importance of *who* we are rather than what we do. *Who* we are as people, is the more powerful witness of our faith, than what we do as church. As this time of waiting continues for far longer than we imagined, my hope and prayer it is and continues to be a season in which God is changing and transforming us for His greater glory.

But waiting doesn't mean doing nothing! As we look back over the past year there is much to give thanks to God for, as He has done much amongst us. The many stories in our Annual Parochial Church Report, speak of God at work in the midst of us. We continue to have new people joining our congregations and our commitment to employing a Schools and Families Leader has richly blessed us this past year. We are beginning to see people stepping into new roles and responsibilities as a new season begins for us. This is especially true at St Mary's as Gillian steps down from her ministry there as LLM after many years of faithful service and commitment – we give thanks for her as she takes some time ahead to 'Be still'.

Throughout the past year, there has been a beautiful commitment to and sense of prayerfulness, which I believe is foundational to all that God has done. I'm also aware of how valuable your prayers have been in upholding me. Thank you. As we read through the reports and give thanks for the many stories of God's work at our APCM, can I encourage you, as I have done before, to choose one team or team leader to commit to pray for over this coming year. And let's continue to wait patiently together in hopeful expectation of all God has planned and purposed for us in the year ahead.

**Tasha**

**3. Electoral Roll Officers Report** A revision of the Electoral Roll took place between April 2023 and March 2024. 16 names were removed because they had moved away or passed away and 28 names have been added. There are now 267 names on the Electoral Roll. (255 in 2023)

**Olivia Doull–Electoral Roll Officer**

#### **4. Safeguarding Report 2024**

The pace of safeguarding in the Church of England continues and filters down to our diocese and parish. In an effort to respond to the thousands of safeguarding incidents in the C of E over many years, each parish is now expected to follow a number of processes in an effort to protect children and vulnerable adults in the church and activities carried out in the name of the church. If anyone is interested in seeing an outline of these processes they can be viewed on the C of E website.

([www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)) and the Winchester diocese website ([www.winchester.anglican.org](http://www.winchester.anglican.org)).

In terms of the practical ways in which these processes have affected our parish in the last reporting year, our volunteers will have come across Safer Recruitment, which breaks down each volunteer role and puts it in the context of a number of safeguards. These include a role description, appropriate level of DBS (or none), a volunteer interview and safeguarding training. It has been very encouraging that several people who have undertaken the training have said how valuable they found it. The C of E has asked each church to back-recruit volunteers, so if you are asked to complete a short process regarding a new role or existing role, then please be aware that this is the reason why and thank you for your understanding.

We have continued to involve each team leader in drawing up a role description for themselves and for members of their team and this is interwoven with safeguarding pointers.

If anyone is new to the area of safeguarding since last year's APCM then please feel free to speak to me, and additionally there is a safeguarding pocket guide and leaflet at the back of the church.

I would invite anyone who has a safeguarding concern to contact me via the methods below. There is also literature available at the back of the church giving details of what a safeguarding concern could be.

*Safeguarding Helpline (not emergency 24-hour but checked once a day):*  
0751 4471 545

*Safeguarding email address: [safe@allsaintsmilford.org.uk](mailto:safe@allsaintsmilford.org.uk)*

*Diocesan Safeguarding Manager: 01962 737317*

*Out-of-hours: 0300 555 1373 (Hampshire County Council hub)*

**Annabelle Short - Safeguarding Officer**

#### **5. PCC Report for the APCM 2024**

Following the APCM in 2023, Val Hanson was re-elected as churchwarden and Eddie Donaldson was elected as a new churchwarden. Annabel Taylor and Margaret Warren were appointed as Deputy Wardens. Bill Darley and Beverley Smith, having been elected to the PCC, were appointed as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. Eddie Donaldson was appointed as Vice-Chair.

Since the APCM in 2023, the PCC has met bimonthly, with the Standing Committee also meeting bimonthly. Since the sub-teams of Buildings and Fabric, Office and Finance and Ministry and Worship have become operational, more of the day to day running and maintenance of the church has been discussed in these teams, thereby leaving the PCC with more time to focus on prayer and the way forward for us as a church.

At our Away Day in September, Graham Archer from CPAS was our speaker. We endeavoured to discuss what we love about our church, the work of the PCC as it relates to the future and briefly to return to the book "How Village Churches Thrive".

It is now almost a year since we first advertised for a House for Duty person. As a PCC we have learned to be more patient and prayerful as we wait for God's timing to bring the right person to us. We have advertised four times but sadly the right person has not applied. We are about to

advertise for the fifth time and trust that God will provide someone to work alongside Tasha and complement our present ministry team.

During the year, the house in Carrington Lane which is designated for the new HfD person underwent a major refurbishment. The funds for this were provided from the Penshurst Trust together with a gift specified for this purpose. As we are needing to advertise for a House for Duty person again, the PCC agreed that the house should be let for 6 months, and a local estate agent has been appointed. An extra meeting was convened at the end of May, specifically to focus on the Church of England's decision to bless same-sex unions. PCC members were asked to read a paper "Together in Love and Faith". This was not a meeting to make any decisions but to consider what does a welcoming church look like. Following the publication of the liturgy prayers in December, the PCC spent time sharing views and praying about the situation. The ultimate decision remains with Tasha who wrote a letter to the congregation outlining her view that she did not feel she could use these prayers as part of regular Sunday worship. However, if standalone services were to be commended in the future, further discussions would have to take place.

At the summer meeting of the Deanery Synod, a document concerning Clergy Wellbeing was discussed. This was brought to the PCC and following discussions a letter was sent to the congregation from the wardens advising how best we could reduce the demands on Tasha. It was suggested that initial contacts were made to the church office, followed by the wardens. These suggestions were well received by the congregation and seemed to be effective.

Tasha informed us that the process of intinction (i.e. dipping the wafer into the communion wine) would be stopped and we would revert to the normal practice of bread and wine for Holy Communion. However, for those who still felt reluctant to sip from the common cup, to receive the bread only is also considered to be partaking of Holy Communion.

Olivia Doull has been in her role as Operational Manager for over a year. From the Buildings and Fabric team emerged the Tuesday Maintenance Club which has been invaluable in fixing the plethora of small jobs which accumulate. Rebecca Webb has also been in post for a year and you can read her report in full later in the booklet.

We were delighted to baptise Derek Batterbee in the sea in September and to repeat two services on the beach during the summer. Any type of service not held on church premises needs the permission of the PCC.

Once again we participated in the Carols on the Green in December, distributing ginger biscuits with a gospel message attached. We also repeated Carols in the Car Park around the fire pit and served mulled wine and mince pies. These events attracted visitors. The main candlelit Carol Service was well attended, and we were greatly blessed to have the Festival Choir leading us. For several years we have paid a slightly reduced rate to the Diocese as our contribution to the Common Mission Fund. This year, on the recommendation of the Office and Finance Team, the PCC discussed the proposal at length and concluded by a majority vote that we would in future pay our full share to the Diocese.

Another Fallow time was launched during January/February to allow time as a church and personally to just "BE" and take the opportunity to restore and renew. Tasha was also granted a period of extended study leave/retreat time for her personally to be renewed and refreshed. Should there be any safeguarding issues, these are brought to the PCC at each meeting, although the nature of the complaint remains confidential. We are indebted to Annabelle Short, our Safeguarding Officer, for all the work she does behind the scenes.

We have been a slightly smaller PCC this last year. The new format of agenda for the meetings allows for time to discuss different views and opinions about topics, and then prayerfully come to conclusions. This has usually resulted in a unity within the PCC and we hope that we are able to support Tasha and the wardens in all they do to demonstrate "being" church.

**Beverley Smith - PCC Secretary**

## **6. Churchwarden's Report 2024**

This time last year we welcomed Eddie Donaldson (Church Warden) and Annabel Taylor (Deputy Warden) as they joined Val Hanson and Margaret Warren on the Warden Team. As Margaret Warren has now stepped down from the team we want to give her enormous thanks for all that she has done in that role to the benefit of the whole church family. We have been so encouraged this year to see the continuous increase in numbers at both the 9am and 10.30am services. With our thankfulness for that, we recognise the importance of the contribution of all who play a part throughout our Sunday mornings ensuring things go smoothly, people feel welcomed and worship and word speak to all.

So our thanks to all including the ministry team, welcomers/sidespeople, audio/visual systems' teams, the music groups and their leaders and the two voluntary organists we share with St Mary's. Those who lead prayers, those who read the scriptures and of course those who provide subsistence and serve coffee in between the two services. It is so good to hear the buzz of conversation and engagement with one another from both services at coffee time, albeit sometimes providing a challenge to call to order for the second service!

But it is not just Sundays that the church is in use and having it open during the day brings an opportunity for people to come for times of prayer and reflection, or exploration as visitors come to discover the architecture and artistry of the church itself. We so appreciate those who volunteer to open up and close the church to enable this. Sadly, for quite a long period this year the bellringers were not able to ring out their peels from our tower. How lovely to have them back again and what a joyous sound they ring out for us again on Sunday mornings. Very appealing! The renewed lighting enhances the practicality of worship within the church as well as the artistry contained in the features of the church building. It also has the ability to reveal that feature of all buildings known to us: 'dust'. So thanks to those who have come for our Autumn and Spring cleans, both those who hover on ladders above and those who gather to clean and dust below! But dust does not choose to visit our church just twice a year and we are very grateful for the faithful work of the 'Holy Hoovers/Dusters' who clean the church each Friday morning. Several who have served faithfully in this way for many years have now stepped back, so our particular thanks to them and gratefulness to those who have stepped forward to carry on this good work. Likewise, thanks to all those working on the church grounds outside, including the mowers and the Tuesday Maintenance team who work inside and out! In fact, there are many teams at work in different areas of our church life as well as those mentioned above; the PCC teams, the Home Group leaders, those that work alongside Rebecca in the exciting school and families work, our office team and lovely volunteers working alongside them along with many others. You will be reading at other places in this report more about many of these, but for us, our thankfulness in our role as Wardens is that all together we form a body to serve Christ in many different ways, with each person playing their part. What a joy!

With so much to be thankful for we end with very special thanks for Tasha, our Vicar. For her leadership, many gifts, commitment, openness to the Holy Spirit, inspiration and encouragement. As we see all that God is doing here, building His church through All Saints' and St Mary's, we are so grateful to have her as our leader.

**Val Hanson**

**Eddie Donaldson**

**Annabel Taylor**

## **7. Buildings and Fabric Report 2024**

The Buildings and Fabric Team's role is primarily that of managing the buildings and grounds maintenance, repairs and renewals and to manage any capital projects as agreed by the PCC. With a Grade 1 listed church building, the church hall and an extensive graveyard, plus a three-bedroom

house in Carrington Lane, there's a lot to take care of. We are blessed to have the assistance of the Tuesday Maintenance Team (TMT), a group of willing volunteers led by Adam Smith and Derek Batterbee who meet up every Tuesday morning in term time, to carry out a list of regular checks and maintenance jobs as well as ad hoc tasks. There is also a team of volunteers who keep the churchyard mown throughout the growing season. We are hugely grateful for all their help and welcome anyone else who would like to get involved.

#### All Saints' Church

The major expenditure last year was the replacement of the old lighting system, which was causing concern, with instances of control panel components overheating and of local spotlight fittings generating intense heat in areas difficult to access for regular cleaning and maintenance. In addition, major system components had become obsolete and impossible to replace. At the same time the decision was made to move to LED lighting as part of our ECO church initiative with an associated reduction in the amount of power used and thus a saving on the electricity costs. During the year advice was sought from Ryan Bunce, our church surveyor responsible for our most recent quinquennial report, about a number of other issues. The most significant of these was the state of the tower. The quinquennial report had identified that the render on the outside of the tower has extensive areas of cracking and is also of a type which is trapping moisture within the walls leading to damp problems internally. This situation is predicted to develop further. The remedy it seems is the complete removal of the current unsuitable render to be replaced with a lime: sand render. Only then, after a period of time to allow the walls to dry out, can internal repairs and redecoration be carried out. This is a large and complicated project for which grant funding will be needed in addition to money raised through the parish. A small fund-raising team has been formed to begin looking at this but, before they can begin to apply for grants, we will need permission from the diocese (faculty) to carry out the proposed works. At the time of writing, we are in the process of gathering all the necessary information to apply for this.

Also, during the year permission to move the Royal British Legion Standards from their position by the organ loft to either side of the war memorial was granted.

Many jobs were carried out by the TMT including repairing floorboards and pews, easing doors and making a Nativity shed and crib to stand outside the main door for Christmas.

#### Church Hall

No major works have been carried out to the church hall in the last year, but minor works have included replacing the outside lights to the front and side of the hall with lights, operated on a timer system, to improve visibility in the car park at night.

The TMT have been extremely helpful with jobs such as making new shelves for the Toy cupboard, painting the Ladies' toilets and repairing leaks in the flat roof as well as many other tasks. Outside jobs completed have included constructing a log store and rebuilding part of the retaining wall to the churchyard.

#### Churchyard

During the year part of the churchyard has been kept mown by a paid contractor with the rest being covered by a team of wonderful volunteers, each of whom has their own section to maintain. Clearing paths, weeds, brambles etc has been carried out, when time and weather permit, by the TMT and by occasional work parties organised by Adam. A dead Sycamore tree has been noted and will be removed in the near future.

#### The Carrington Lane house

After many years renting the house out to provide an income, the decision was taken to re-purpose it as a home for the prospective new "House for Duty" (HfD) Minister. It was in need of considerable refurbishment which has included a completely new kitchen, returning a converted garage to its original purpose, two new windows, clearance in the garden and numerous other items.



We were fortunate that much of the cost was covered by a trust fund (Penshurst Trust) and a donation from a private individual, with the TMT also helping with many minor works.

As we have so far been unsuccessful in appointing a HfD Minister, the house will be rented out on a six-month contract so that it will not be standing empty while we continue to advertise for someone to fill this role.

**Val Hanson**

### **8. St Mary's Review 2024**

The DCC which holds responsibility for St Mary's has met 7 times between April 2023 and March 2024. The Annual General Meeting of the District Church Committee was held on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024. During the year numbers on Sunday mornings have increased very slightly, especially for Communion Sundays, when sometimes 8 people from Milford join us. However, we still have less worshippers than in pre- covid days. Café Church has continued on a 4th Sunday and, as well as each of the Homegroups leading a Café Church, in June, Brian Skelley, a Methodist Lay Preacher from Crowe Hill Methodist Church, led Café Church for us.

We celebrated King Charles's coronation with a Songs of Praise followed by a very successful Bring and Share lunch.

Our annual Holiday at Home took us on an imaginary trip to London where, among other things, we had a trip down the Thames and attended a Buckingham Palace Garden Party. As is usually the case, the team organizing the day enjoyed it as much as the holidaymakers!

Our Autumn Bazaar in October raised over £1000. For several weeks after the Bazaar, we put unsold items out in the hall and increased our total income quite considerably.

Once again, a highlight of our year was the 'Indoor/outdoor' Nativity when the Sunday morning congregation join with the Family Tea families. Rebecca's ministry amongst us has enabled Tea, Toast and Toys to open on Wednesday mornings and she is leading Family Tea.

When the village gathered around the flagpole and Remembrance stone on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November, it was a special occasion with 2 young trumpeters playing the Last Post and Reveille for us.

Friendship coffee has continued on Tuesday mornings and numbers are quite low but greatly appreciated by those who attend. Friendship Lunch now caters for 36 each month and we have the short service before the lunch in the hall every month now as it saves people moving from one building to another.

Just before Christmas, we joined the Hillyfield Carol afternoon. Jan played the piano, Vera and Joyce sang and I led a short service. Andrew and Patricia Ellis kindly invited a group of us to the Efford Cottage Christmas evening. On Christmas Day we served a lunch in the hall. Some from throughout the Parish ate in the hall and others, who live in Everton, had their Christmas lunch delivered to them at home.

The Everton Community Association has reviewed its procedures and each Village organisation can be represented on the Committee. I have attended committee meetings this year. Unfortunately, the Coronation Fete was spoiled by the weather.

From July until November, Old Christchurch Road was closed to through traffic outside the Church and the Gas Board had their welfare unit parked in our Car Park. Due to the length of time the unit was in the Car Park, the Church benefitted by £840 rent.

The homegroups enjoyed 2 summer visits to the Headlands Adventure Centre near Ringwood.

As we look to 2024, many changes await St Mary's but it began with the very special occasion of Myra Campbell and Dave Kirby's wedding on 6<sup>th</sup> January.

As we pray for God's blessing on Dave and Myra's marriage, we pray too for God's guidance and blessing on St Mary's in the year ahead.

**Gillian Peard**

## 9. Treasurer's Report

### Treasurer's Report 2024

To be read with the Annual Financial Statements for 2023

Through our wonderful congregations, God has been immensely generous to us in 2023. By God's grace, we have not only stepped out in faith to recruit Olivia Doull to restore our team of 2 in the office, and Rebecca Webb to take on the Family and Schools role, we have also been able to complete 2 major capital investments in our buildings, together costing £113,000 and a window repair behind the organ for £5,000. At the same time, our Unrestricted Funds in both churches have actually risen slightly from £174,000 to £183,000 in All Saints' and from £19,000 to £22,000 in St Mary's. So we have been wonderfully blessed in 2023.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this amazing year, both through faithfully sustained standing orders, our regular Sunday morning collections, the brilliant 3-yr pledges and those who have made specific additional donations during the year to, for instance, provide new IT equipment for our staff in the office. It all adds up to a church community that clearly demonstrates loving generosity and a firm hope for the future.

The £62,000 All Saints' LED Lighting project was conceived almost 3 years ago, due to the old lighting system containing obsolete parts that could no longer be sourced, and a desire to cut our carbon footprint and thereby reduce energy costs. Particular thanks go to Pete Hanson and Terry Bufton who took great care over the specification, which meant the project ran exactly to budget. Thanks also to the team at Blakey Electrical who worked around our other commitments. It was funded from our Unrestricted Funds, partly from a grant for £11,000, but was largely facilitated by the unrestricted 3-year pledges that were made in September 2022 Giving Day which, with Gift Aid, delivered £57,500 in 2023.

The £51,000 spent in 2023 on the Carrington Lane refurbishment project was funded by a £45,000 grant from the Peshurst Trust, which you can see explained in Note 11 to the Accounts and an anonymous donation of £6,250 (including Gift Aid). This has left just £4,600 in the Peshurst Trust, so it was a once in a generation opportunity to bring the property up to modern standards. Whilst we now have a paying tenant back in the property to ensure that the asset continues to deliver benefit for the Parish - around £16,000 per year now rather than the £10,000 per year we were earning prior to the refurb - we continue to earnestly pray for an Associate Minister to be called to the unpaid, but housed, role that we are advertising. It was the original purpose of the sale/gift of the house to the Parish that it should house an assistant clergy member and we would dearly love to honour that original purpose.

The other significant decision this year was to increase our 2024 Common Mission Fund donation (once called Parish Share) from £108,000 to the full amount requested by Diocese of £116,000. Something under 50% of this goes to pay for Tasha's salary, housing, training, pension and other support, but the balance over 50% represents a donation to support mission work in poorer parishes than ours. We are delighted to be back to doing all that is asked of us in this regard, as we did in decades past, as a reflection of our gratitude to God for His generosity to us at this time. Giving to our other mission charities is reported on elsewhere, but totalled £25,000 for the Parish, so in 2024 we gave away around £80,000, or over 20% of what we have been given.

I would like to offer my personal thanks to Tasha, Val Hanson, Peter Rawson (sadly no longer with us), Elizabeth Whatmore and Olivia Doull who have served faithfully with me on the Office and Finance Team. Together in 2023 we have installed a secure digital accounting system which can now be operated from anywhere in the world (provided it has an internet connection), tightened up our financial control processes, enabled 2 of us to make same-day payments from the bank account from anywhere in the world and even introduced a

detailed operating budget for All Saints' for 2024. The budgets are now delegated to our PCC Teams which should free up the PCC considerably from detailed admin decisions. Particular thanks go to Olivia who has taken on pretty much all of the duties that were previously undertaken by both Hall Committees, amongst which she is now doing the invoicing (and debt collection) for both the All Saints' and St Mary's Halls. Those who have done this job before will know how much time this takes. A big thank you also to Dave Kirby who has taken on the Treasurer's role at St Mary's with aplomb, which meant that this end of year process was exceptionally smooth.

The finance function in 2024 will focus on how to support the ongoing spending that the 3-year pledges which will start to run out after 2024 have been supporting, and the Tower restoration project which is a £90,000 investment to fix our damp penetration in the bell tower caused by the cracked cement rendering on the outside. We expect that this will involve a major fundraising effort from grants and from some fun outreach activities.

Going forwards it is so encouraging to see the average Sunday attendance figures at All Saints' up by 14%, and children back in our churches. Committed giving by monthly standing order represents the bulk of our income, without which our 2 churches simply cannot run. We are entirely financially dependent on our congregations' giving. So, huge thanks to each of you who underpin all our mission activities in this way. Thought is being given as to how we might also encourage our church community to consider leaving money in their wills to our mission, which is a sensitive subject, but perhaps needs discussion in 2024 and beyond.

Finally, a thank you for the prayer support that I and the finance function have received. We are very conscious of its value and are very grateful for it. God is clearly and encouragingly at work here and it's a tremendous privilege to be able to see it from the Treasurer's position. If anyone would like to join our Office and Finance Team, please contact me (details in the Parish Magazine) – we only meet 5 times per year, generally on a Wednesday morning, so it is not onerous.

**Bill Darley – Treasurer**

## **SECTION B: Families and Mothers' Union**

### **10. Families and School (All Saints' Church and St Mary's Church)**

Our fulltime Families and Schools Leader, Rebecca, works with and has oversight of all our parish work with children, young people and their families at both All Saints' and St Mary's as well as in Milford on Sea Primary School and the wider community.

All Saint's Tea, Toast and Toys

Numbers at Tea, Toast and Toys tend to fluctuate with no real pattern. Aside from a random week in October (4 families) we have had between ten and twenty families attend each week. Currently 30 families (and one childminder) are registered, with 14 families (18 children) being regular attenders. This year we received a donation enabling us to purchase a small climbing frame - which has proved very popular. We are blessed with good relationships with Coastal Bakery who give us their leftover bread free of charge when available.

St Mary's Tea Toast and Toys 2

TTT2 (Everton) was launched at St Mary's Hall in September 2023, following exploratory coffee mornings during the summer term. This Wednesday morning group runs along similar lines to the group in Milford but has a very different feel. Numbers have risen steadily with 25 families and 2 childminders currently registered. Fourteen families with 16 children attend regularly. Having received a start-up grant from Councillor Fran Carpenter (NFDC), we have invested in a coffee machine and are looking forward to purchasing a new

safety gate and safe travel cups for parents, as well as other key items. We are blessed with three teams each taking one or two weeks a month to serve our refreshments. Our other team members are drawn equally from the congregations at All Saints' and St Mary's. Both groups are self-funding through donations from parents and carers, which cover the costs of refreshments each week. We would love some additional team members to support both groups.

### **All Saints' Messy Church**

Messy Church took place five times between March 2023 – 2024. Although numbers of families regularly attending have decreased, we have connected with 34 families during the year. Some young people and the parents of older children have been encouraged to join our team, enabling some older people to step back. New team members are always welcome.

### **St Mary's Family Tea**

Family Tea has continued monthly on the second Sunday afternoon of the month with between two and four families exploring Old Testament stories and key festivals. Highlights included a Palm Sunday visit by Morris the donkey, a special tea party celebrating Gillian, and the Nativity.

### **Milford on Sea Primary School**

Our church-school links have been strengthened this year through Rebecca's involvement in the school and as a school Governor. Pentecost Workshops were held in the church for Years 1-4 followed by Lord's Prayer Workshops for Y5/6. A YR Graduation celebration, Y6 Leaver's Service and Whole School Christmas Carol Service also took place. Church-led Collective Worship within the school has increased over the year and these are now taking place each month: Rebecca has also been supporting at the weekly Singing Workshops. The diocesan 'Chatting Faith' project was implemented during the Autumn Term, and it is hoped to revisit this again soon. This term has seen the introduction of a series of Godly Play sessions in Y1/2. Weekly lunchtime gatherings for Y4-6 are now being developed as training and support sessions for pupil Worship Leaders.

Seasonal and other activities during the year included weekly Let's Get Outside activities and drop-in sessions for teens during the summer; a village Pumpkin Hunt, Christmas Nativity and a Pancake Party.

### **Sundays and Baptisms.**

During the year two younger families (4 children) have begun to attend the All Saints' 10.30am service on a regular basis. Activities linked to the service theme are prepared each week, with any children being taught at the back of the church. Following the introduction of the monthly All Together Worship at All Saints' we have had our first whole church baptism, and periodically been able to draw some other families into All Together Worship too. Seven children (and 2 young people) attended Breakfast Church at the end of January.

### **Rebecca Webb**

#### **Families and Schools Worker**

## **11. Mothers' Union 2024**

Our branch here in Milford and Everton is now 'committee-led' as Margaret Whatmore has stepped down from leadership. Thank you Margaret for all you have done for MU.

We have had a rich variety of speakers and events throughout the year. Our committee liaises with branches in Brockenhurst and Hythe. Our Carol Service was held in the church of St Nicholas, led by the vicar of Brockenhurst.

Our speaker in November was from the Women's Refuge (we support them with gifts of toiletries). She spoke about domestic abuse in all its forms.

The highlight of our year was to meet up with our Worldwide President, Sheran Harper

to hear about the work of MU in the neediest parts of Africa.

Christine Baldry has sent 6 wedding anniversary cards and 11 baptism cards.

Happy to tell you that we have 2 new members who will be enrolled at our September Communion Service.

Thank you all for another wonderful year.

**Val Butterworth (Secretary) for the MU Committee**

## **SECTION C: Our Worshipping Life Together**

### **12. Bell Ringing and Tower Report 2024**

Since the commencement of ringing on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2023 for the crib service, ringing has gone from strength to strength. There are now ten regular ringers plus a ringer who learned at and rang at Milford more than twenty five years ago. Additionally, we have gained a ringer who attends 60% of the time and is hoping to move to Milford on Sea permanently. We also have a new learner who is progressing swiftly and is doing extremely well with the help of pre-practise ringing. We continue to ring all eight bells on Sundays when possible and practise on Monday evenings.

Milford has a permanent Tower Captain in myself and a Deputy, Mary-Kate Wells. The Secretary is Peta Stedman-Bee. However we do not have an official Steeple Keeper. Frank Morton has been kind enough to share his expertise to advise on the bell maintenance issues we have. This has primarily been regarding the clock hammer and some new ropes. He has also advised on the stays that are required and how they should be made. The ropes will soon be replaced on the seventh and tenor bells. As All Saints' Church has not had the benefit of new ropes in ten years, it is thought that a couple more will be required in the next two years.

Whites of Appleton gave the tower a favourable report on the remarkable condition of the bells. They are still considered to be one of the best rings of eight bells in the area. Finally, the bell ringing team would like to thank Tasha and the Church community for their continued support.

**Margaret Morton - Tower Captain**

### **13. Flower Guild 2024**

All Saints' Flower Guild

Firstly, a very grateful thanks to Jackie Parker for her organising of flowers and me, so we can continue to decorate the church.

Second thanks to the few volunteers who help us weekly and on festive occasions. We also arrange at weddings and funerals if asked, for which we charge.

We would love to have some extra arrangers and would give training if needed.

**Andrea Fitz-Gibbon.**

### **14. Eco Church 2024**

Our Eco Church committee continues to meet at regular intervals, and we are very pleased that Clive and Rachel Foster have now joined our group. Their horticultural knowledge is most welcome, especially as we seek to make the wildflower meadow, and the churchyard in general, as 'eco-friendly' as possible.

With regard to the church buildings, the new lighting system has considerably helped our environmental impact. In the immediate future, important work on the Church Tower will take priority over other projects.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> June we are planning a special Climate Sunday service at All Saints'. During the preceding week, children from Milford School will focus on the churchyard as a special 'Count on Nature' project.

**Douglas Marcuse**

## 15. Home Groups

I am delighted to say that Homegroup membership is still very much at the heart of our 2 churches. With the addition of a new group, we now have 13 homegroups meeting across our villages with members of all ages and stages not just from our 2 churches but from others in the parish. We meet in each other's homes or the church halls and some join in virtually on Zoom. Groups meet weekly or fortnightly either during the day or evenings. There is even a Mustard Seed group for those new to faith or who are unfamiliar with studying together in a small group. Homegroup attendance is thriving, some groups have grown quite large, and we have a waiting list of folk waiting to join groups and therefore desperately need new leaders and hosts.

In the role of Homegroup Co-ordinator, I meet with homegroup leaders twice a year with Tasha to review studies, share encouragement and agree the study material. Some terms our studies echo the Sunday services and groups choose from a selection of prepared study material that suits their group. Some terms groups individually choose a theme or book of the Bible. In either case the intention is not just to study the Bible together but to apply the teaching and live it in our walk with God to put our faith into action.

In September 2022, all groups studied the Apostles Creed which was a wonderful opportunity to explore and affirm the basic beliefs of our Christian faith alongside our Sunday sermon series. Groups then chose their own material and format until Christmas when many did Advent studies. In January 2023 we all followed Nehemiah studies which were also our Sunday sermon series and then recently many groups have been sharing in Lent reflections and studies that they have chosen. The Bible is packed with encouragement, guidance, and wisdom not just for us but to help others. By studying God's word with our own eyes, we get to know Jesus, we hear from God, and we keep in step with the Holy Spirit and God's plan for us. When we study together with people who care for each other, we can ask questions, find answers as we delve further and really grow in our faith.

As well as Bible study, groups also meet to pray for each other, the community and world issues. We support and care for one another, sharing our struggles and encouraging each other on our Christian journey. We also make time for fun and regularly share meals and social time. This year I would like our groups to also engage outside into the community, with our neighbours, and non-Christian friends, working together as a group, perhaps hosting events like a coffee morning or participating in community hosted events as a team.

It is important for those who follow Jesus to regularly meet together in small groups for in depth Bible study, fellowship, prayer, and pastoral support – it's where real Christian growth happens. So, if you would like to join a group, even if you have never studied the Bible before or have experience of leading a bible study group or would like to host one, please speak to me [kate@simonpinnell.com](mailto:kate@simonpinnell.com) or contact the church office directly or via the website. <https://www.allsaintsmilford.org.uk/contact-us>

**Kate Pinnell – Homegroup Co-ordinator**

## 16. Prayer and Pastoral Support Teams

This has been a year of transition. Libby Gillespie -Smith used to head up the Prayer Ministry team. She decided to step back after many years of faithful service and we thank her for this. Going forward it was decided to merge the prayer and pastoral care teams, as they compliment one another. We have re-launched the prayer chain and are encouraging its use. Many have spoken of the sense of being covered in prayer as they face challenging times. The Prayer Chain team consists of 10 people who are committed to praying for those in our community, whether they attend church or not.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6*

The Pastoral care team is headed up by Carol Tyler and Sue Forward and we thank them also for their faithful service. Over the year Maggie Hobday and Annabel Taylor have attended the BCM (Bishops Commission for Mission) in Pastoral care course and now play an active role in the team. We are mindful of the increasing pastoral needs of our congregation and, looking to the future, we are aware we will need to change our structure - to integrate pastoral support for one another within the whole life of our church. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Gillian Peard for her pastoral care and faithful support in funeral and bereavement ministry in our churches over many years.

**Annabel Taylor**

## **17. Music in Worship Report**

Worship Band Report

It's been another busy year for us. We've maintained our numbers and have a selection of leaders we regularly use. We aim for a band at every 10:30am service and have gradually added to our repertoire of contemporary worship songs in the past twelve months.

It was good to be able to contribute to Breakfast on the beach and Cafe church in the hall earlier this year. By careful planning we avoided wet feet from a rising tide at the Sea baptism service last summer!

I'd like to thank our instrumentalists and singers for all their hard work and weekly commitment. Well done folks.

**Pete Hanson**

## **The Festival Choir 2024**

The members of the Festival Choir were joined last Christmas by extra volunteers from Choralia Milford to swell the voices, thus making us a very community- based choir.

We led the singing for Carols in the Car Park where we were joined by children from the Primary School. A joyful start to the Christmas services.

We sang carols at St George's, firstly in the Lounge and then around the first floor for those residents unable to join everyone downstairs, taking requests as we went. Finally, we sang at the Carol Service, leading the congregation carols and singing three separate carols. Four choir members, who sing together as the a Capella group 'Straight Banana', sang a beautiful rendition of 'Mary did you know'.

We will also be singing at the Reflective Service on Good Friday.

**Valerie Kidd**

## **SECTION D – The Community and the Wider World**

### **18. Parish Website Report**

The site is accessed at either of the two addresses: [allsaintsmilford.org.uk](http://allsaintsmilford.org.uk) or [stmaryseverton.org.uk](http://stmaryseverton.org.uk) and it is hoped that it will be of help to visitors, newcomers and regulars alike in sharing what the churches are about, what goes on from week to week and to seek help for any reason connected with the Parish churches. It should enable an easy connection to the All Saints' YouTube channel for regular streamed services, updated weekly, and details of events posted on ChurchSuite and the Church Calendar, including a live list of Sunday Services. You can also access the most recent and current copies of the Parish Magazine.

**Olivia Doull – Operations Manager**

### **19. Tech and AV Team**

2023-4 has been a busy year for the tech team, not just with Sunday by Sunday services, funerals, school and other services, but also with changes to our equipment and methods of working, which have presented challenges for us all.

With thanks for generous donations, we purchased two cameras with PTZ (pan, tilt and zoom) capacity, which sit on the belfry screen, together with a switching facility on the desk. This feeds directly through our on-line telephone to our YouTube platform, without the need for a second computer. With the considerable expertise of Pete Hanson and Terry Bufton, the AV desk was rebuilt around the new facilities, without the need for an enlarged desk. There are still glitches to be ironed out with the initial suppliers of the system, and we experienced problems in January, when winter storms reduced the speed of the church's BT connection, but we are now close to achieving our aim to operate a stream each Sunday, using only two operators at each service.

The team still consists of 10 members, including one leading member of the band and a number who fulfil other duties within the services. We will always be eager to hear of others with a modicum of technical experience who are willing to be trained in either using a laptop screen projection programme or an iPad sound control system. As well as AV assistance at other services during the week, I should also highlight the need for someone to help with sound at the regular Sunday 9am service. Val Hanson fulfils this 9am role largely on her own. She also shares with me the preparation of schedules during the week, so I am truly grateful. While aiming to give you a clear screen and sound view of the services in church, a stream from 10.25am each Sunday remains on YouTube afterwards and is often viewed over 50 times during the following week. From our recordings, podcasts are added weekly to the website media page, containing the reading, talk and a song. Nor should we forget the occasional outside services – eg: Good Friday, Music Festival and Keyhaven Songs of Praise for which Terry and Pete provide the essential sound facility.

**Colin Fry**

## **20. Christians Together in Milford**

This last year has been a busy one for Christians Together in Milford and Everton.

The following events now come under the umbrella of Christians Together:

The Good Friday service on the Village Green

The Music Festival Church service on Sunday morning

Keyhaven Songs of Praise organised by Elizabeth Whatmore

Newcomers' supper organised by Ruth Bufton

Outreach performances eg: I MARK and in November 2024 THE MAGI to be performed in All Saints' Church

Group Bible Studies at the Methodist Church and St Mary's

Small Christmas Trees on the Green

Carol singing before Christmas and after the main event of switching on the lights

World Day of Prayer Service

POP IN coffee organised by Ruth Bufton

Christians Together is very ably guided by Chris Steadman (chair) Baptist Church

Alan Boyce (treasurer) Methodist Church and Ruth Shale (secretary) Baptist church, with reps from St Francis, All Saints' and St Mary's.

**Joyce Rhoden**

## **21. MenMeet**

We continue to strive to meet the aims set by our founders, Mike Warren and Peter Rawson.

Briefly these are:

(a) To be a presence in Milford and Everton.

(b) To promote fellowship among church-going men.

(c) To build bridges with non-church-going men (the overall aim)



To this end we have had a varied programme that has attracted good support for our activities which have three aspects -

MenMeet - monthly social evenings on the Third Thursday - usually at The Beach House with a speaker and optional meal. Topics from submarines to climate change, plus skittles and walks including a bird watching evening.

MenMeet Breakfasts - held quarterly and recently with a Christian speaker giving a thought-provoking testimony.

MenMeet Plus - we meet six times per year in a home group style meeting to explore questions of Christian faith.

MenMeet is run by men from the local churches. Unfortunately the team has lost Peter Rawson, now with Jesus, Mike Warren retired due to ill health but still an active encouragement, Alan Chapple after many years' service and Michael Iles who stepped down for personal reasons. They were our All Saints' reps. The team now comprises myself, Dennis Steadman, John Gilbert and Dudley Andrews who are all from the Baptist Church, so not very balanced. However we hope that Howard Ray will provide support and a vital link with All Saints'.

**Tony Styles - MenMeet**

## **22. Mission Support Team**

In 2023 the Team comprising Sue Forward, Rosemary Marcuse, Jill Neill, Steve Jennings, Kate Mitchell and Libby Gillespie-Smith (Leader) welcomed visits from some the leaders of the overseas Missions we support, including Jon Budgell from Hope Now, Stephen and Diki Hawkins from Word for Life and our local leaders, Matthew and Nicola Brearley from Friends of Namuwongo .

Our budget for financial support for our six overseas Mission Partners plus national and local charities was £16,500 which came from one tenth of All Saints' annual regular income. The breakdown is as follows:

£2,600 to Hope Now, Word for Life, The Bible Society, The Leprosy Mission and Friends of Namuwongo, £218 to support a Compassion child from Rwanda, £500 to Tearfund for the Turkey Syria earthquake appeal, £500 to Step up safe Space, £1,250 to New Forest Basics Bank, £282 to Christians against Poverty and £750 to Christian Aid working in Gaza. Bi-annual donations are given in June and December.

Undergirding all this is prayer, which is part of our meetings, and those said regularly at Parish Prayers and in Church services. Please see All Saints' Mission Board and shelf for more information.

**Libby Gillespie-Smith**

## **23. Newcomers' Welcome**

Newcomers' Supper 2023

Once again, we had an enjoyable evening thanks to everyone's help and support. I want to thank everyone from table arrangers to clearing up people and everyone in between for the love and encouragement given to me which makes this event so much fun and so good for outreach.

We tried to reduce various parts of the initiative to make the evening less arduous, but it's a well-oiled machine and so it went very smoothly on the day.

The exhibitors did their usual displays and it was really good to hear the buzz of folk getting to know more of where they had moved to. We had fewer people attend being on the end of half term. This worked to our advantage - we were able to hand out drinks and allow everyone to mingle before sitting down to eat. It was encouraging that there were friendships made at this level so they sat together too! Everyone enjoyed the meal and the village song! We now have two village songs thanks to Pete Hanson!!

Once again thank you to all the church congregations in Milford for their part in making this day such a special village occasion.

**Ruth Bufton**

## **24. Pop in Café**

### **Christians Together Pop-In**

Pop-in Coffee, on Thursday morning in the library, has really taken off this year. We consistently have between 12 and 16 folk who pop in for coffee and a chat on Thursday mornings plus people coming into the library often stay too. The lovely band of helpers, from all 4 churches, make it run so smoothly. Thank you so much ladies for all you do. Pop-In allows people to share their concerns and joys with sympathetic listeners and it is amazing how supportive everyone is. It is a privilege to be part of the team. We, the helpers, decided that we should give a cheque to both Naomi House children's Hospice and to the Honey-pot charity from our takings this year. We will be donating any surplus this coming year towards the 'Journey of the Magi' production that Christians Together are arranging for November. We badly need 2 or 3 more helpers to run these weekly events so if you can spare 2 hours every month do come and join our team; all you need do is pour the odd cup of coffee, hand round a plate of biscuits and chat to people! Simple!

**Ruth Bufton**

## **25. New Forest Basics Bank 2023-2024**

Basics Bank offers non-perishable food items, personal hygiene items and basic household essentials. The food parcels have sufficient supplies for one week for one person and is increased to cover the number of family members for which a request is made.

From humble beginnings in 2004, the Basics Bank has become an essential support service within the New Forest and has grown to meet the needs of the community. A sincere thank you to all those who give regularly, either in items or monetary donations which is so vital. The response at the Harvest Thanksgiving at All Saints' Church was enormous as it has been in previous years. Non-perishable goods can be left in the box at the back of church or at Hollands. These are collected regularly.

There are many reasons why people find themselves needing the support of the food bank; when the main earner loses their job, a medical condition, a change in personal circumstances or a large unforeseen bill that leaves inadequate or no money for food. All parcels are a stop gap to support clients through troubled times. Food parcels can be collected in person or delivered. Food is delivered to those living in vehicles and rough sleepers. Demand is high and is still growing.

Areas are covered in the Southern New Forest and referrals can be made through a number of organisations such as Christians Against Poverty (CAP), social workers or Doctors' surgeries.

In the last twelve months donations from All Saints' have totalled £2,402 for which grateful thanks are given.

The work of volunteers include those who manage activities in the food bank, office, deliveries, pickers and packers and those now driving to Southampton 3 times a week to collect fresh produce from Fair Share. This is now distributed at local hubs in New Milton, Pennington and Ashley once a week. A very small contribution is requested in return for fresh produce which is considered a positive response to maintain people's self-worth. If anyone has further ideas of how we can promote our giving or volunteering then please speak to Terry Bufton or myself. Steve Jennings has kindly volunteered to take contributions to the Basics Bank during my absence.

**Sue Forward**

## **26. Magazine Report March 2024**

The Magazine Editors offer our sincere thanks to our many contributors, our valued advertisers and all who buy the magazine, whether by subscription or individually. We continue to receive wonderful positive feedback on content and appearance, particularly the cover images. We've held the cover

price at £1.50 (subscriptions £15) but have reduced our monthly print run to 250 copies to tally with current demand.

Mark and his staff at Village News have continued to oversee the collection of magazines by the distributors each month. The magazine is still available online with an additional front page encouraging the readers to make an online donation.

The Editors have renewed their membership of The Association for Church Editors and continue to make good use of the Parish Pump website for resources.

During this year Jill Neill stepped down as Advertising Co-Ordinator and we offer her our grateful thanks for all her hard work. Only a few years ago the magazine team had six members who shared all editorial and support activities. Now the two editors alone are responsible for all areas – we produce the magazine each month, co-ordinate all aspects of advertising (billing, invoice chasing and gaining new advertisers), manage the collection of subscriptions at renewal time and throughout the year (cash, cheque, cardless and BACS payments), and co-ordinate the magazine distribution team (including receiving cash and cheque payments). We fully intend to continue as long as possible to offer our wonderful magazine but ideally our team needs to expand to ensure its on-going viability.

**Valerie Kidd and Jackie Parker (Editors)**

## **SECTION E**

### **27. DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

There are three members of Deanery Synod representing Milford and Everton: Annabel Taylor, Rosemary Marcuse and Tasha Anderson. The main aim of the Synod is to support the local church through participating in information sharing, common events and mission activities. Over the past year there have been 3 meetings focussing on different aspects of church life.

In the summer meeting at St Luke's Sway, the Ven. Richard Brand reported on a published document concerning Clergy Welfare. He urged PCCs to address the issues raised and discuss with their vicars ways to support their wellbeing.

The autumn meeting focused on Digital Media. Jordan Shepherd, from the Diocesan Communications Team presented interesting statistics demonstrating how important church websites are in engaging people's interest. He urged churches to use social media to promote young people's participation.

The spring meeting will focus on the mission link with Rwanda and the recent visit by the Lyndhurst Deanery. Milford's Lent appeal will enable a gift to be sent to Cyangu, our linked diocese.

**Rosemary Marcuse**