

## SHIRLEY PARISH ELECTORAL ROLL - APRIL 2024

Following the publication of the statutory notices of the revision of last year's electoral roll the revision has now taken place which shows an amended total of for the whole parish. A detailed analysis between our three churches is given below:

	APRIL 2023	Additions	Deletions	2024
Christ the King	15	1		16
St. James the Great	145	27	9	163
St. John's	18		1	17
Total				<b>196</b>

### Report for APCM May 2024

#### Work with children and families

During the last year we have continued to put significant resources into our work with children and families, and are delighted that we have a number of families who are now very much part of our church community.

Jimmy Tots, for preschool children and their carers, meet weekly during term time and having started afresh when we returned from the covid lockdowns it is now time to say goodbye to some of the children who joined us then as they move on to school or regular nursery. At the end of each term Rev Paul has led us in a short service in church, where we have been able to make a lot of noise and enjoy stickers.

Monthly Messy Church has carried on growing, and is now often our largest congregation, with up to 50 children, 50 adults, and a large team of about 25 who provide refreshments and activities. Even on the busiest mornings this can give the opportunity to talk with parents as we get to know the families. Planning now includes making a themed link with the Worship for Everyone service (usually 8 days later) where some of the older children are reading and leading parts of the service.

On Christmas Eve we held 'Shepherds at the crib' where with a packed church and an orchestra of random percussion instruments we celebrated the shepherds' role in the nativity story.

We are regularly working with 3 schools in opening the book, a Bible storytelling initiative.

Currently we visit year 3 at Widney Junior School, and have sessions with early years children from Kingswood school and year 3 from TGPA St James either in church or at the schools. The children all seem to enjoy these especially the older children who join in with the acting with great enthusiasm. In addition at TGPA St James we run a weekly Bible Art session where with a small group of children we talk about stories related to their weekly assembly topic and do some artwork.

In November we held our Journey to the Stable attended by over 500 5 year olds, and in March Easter Journey for 300 10 year olds. For both events we invite all the schools within the parish that have classes of the relevant age, although not all schools can and do come along. It is important that we continue to allow these journeys to evolve and at Christmas we included a new version of the nativity story.

As in previous years we welcomed the year 7 pupils from Light Hall School class by class to talk about the events of Holy Week and Easter, and more generally to have a look at the church.

Children from the Tidbury Green Nursery have been welcomed at St Johns to take part in Christmas, Easter and Harvest activities. Rev Paul has been involved in assemblies and Harvest celebrations at a number of other schools.

What has been especially noticeable in the last year has been that we are becoming more joined up, baptism visits can lead to Jimmy Tots, and to Messy Church, Jimmy Tots to the crib service, school contacts to Messy Church.

Looking forward, in June we will be starting a children's group on a Sunday morning during the middle part of the service at St James, Open the Book are publishing new material which our storytellers will be using from September, and we have met with Hazel Oak school to discuss ways in which we might work together.

Finally we need to shout a big 'Thank you', to all the people involved in all of this, as storytellers, craftspeople, toastmasters, tea makers, furniture movers, celebration leaders, actors and .....

Without you none of this would have happened.

Rev Paul, Sarah Penfold

### Shirley Churches Together Report

Churches Together had a stall in the park for the Shirley Carnival. At Christmas we organised carol singing outside ASDA . Easter was marked by the extremely well attended Good Friday Walk of Witness. To mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we had a unity service in the Baptist Church at which Fr Andrew Franklin from Our Lady of the Wayside preached followed by a social in the Lion Pub – this was very well received. The World Day of Prayer service took place at The Bridge this year in March. Weekly services take place in Solihull Village led by a rota of church leaders from the churches in Shirley. Ministers continue to meet regularly every fortnight for prayer and support.

**St James, Shirley,  
Mothers' Union  
Annual Report to APCM  
May 2024**

Our membership as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2023 is 37 – one new member Sue Rawlings and Sue Guy left the area. Our meetings have been well attended by an average of 21. Very sadly we lost three of our much loved members this year - Margaret Taylor, Brenda Goudie and Janet Butts absolute stalwarts of our branch and who we greatly miss.

We commenced the year with the Wave of Prayer, when we meet together at our allotted time to pray for our members in our Link Dioceses of Malawi, Marathwada in India and Enugu in Nigeria. Although we don't have a meeting in January, I always feel this is a good way to start our Mothers' Union year - in prayer.

We do try to make our programme as varied as possible and within a budget. In May we invited Anthea Tinline who showed us slides of her parents early years in Newfoundland. We moan about our weather, but that showed us real hardship and resourcefulness!

Rev Denise Jones spoke about her role as a hospital chaplain working in the ICU and premature baby unit at the Women's Hospital. Jill and Richard Posthill entertained and surprised us with their choice of Desert Island Discs, I on my own, would find it very hard to choose just eight discs let alone to have to share them. Just a little useless information, Desert Island discs was first broadcast in 1942!

We had a return visit from Ray Sturdy with an illustrated history of Witley Court. The following month we were taken on a very nostalgic ride around the number eleven bus route with Pam and David Humphries – perhaps in the better weather this is something that we could actually do for ourselves – just a thought!

Jan Dalton inspired us with a Craft Session for Christmas and to finish our Advent Service in Church, which coincided with the commencement of the Christmas Tree Festival, making it even more special.

As many of you know we tried to get a Baby Project off the ground being inspired by Rowena Nicholls and her MU branch at Northfield. We had wonderful support from our members but we were unable to find the right outlet for the items. Perhaps Solihull isn't the 'right' area. We felt that rather than keeping these items in storage they needed to be put to immediate use where there is great need and Linda was able to take them to the Baby Unit at St Michael's Church in Redstone Farm Road, where they were immediately used and appreciated. PLEASE if you would like to bring to Mothers' Union items for babies or toiletries for young women we can always find a home for them, there is a great need right on our doorstep.

## Report for the Friends of St James, Shirley

I think 2023 can be best described as 'steady' - the most memorable event being the power failure at our Christmas by Candlelight dinner !

Various fundraising events have been held throughout the year – the ever popular Coffee Mornings and Bric a Brac, a Sunday Lunch, the forementioned Christmas by Candlelight and two items in Church – the Church History Evening and the Shirley Band Concert. These events have provided about half of the funds raised in the year while the perennial 100 Club, Walking Club, Book and Cake sales have maintained a regular income. We have also received donations of £1120, for which we are truly grateful.

Our team has given their support and time to the events of other Church groups, the Christmas Tree Festival and the Craft Morning being the most recent.

Other than our 100 Club prizes, we have only paid out for two maintenance items this year and thus we have a good base for the likely contributions to the Church Pod Project and the replacement of Church heating in due course.

Our programme for 2024 is now available, and we will be very grateful for any support that can be given for the events arranged. Please also consider joining the 100 Club, and for the more active, the Walking Club.

As ever, I thank my fellow 'Friends' and our band of "occasional" helpers for the time they give and for their ongoing commitment to the various fundraising activities.

Gordon Bragg  
April 2024



The dashboard report does however indicate the PCC has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure (2016) to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

### **Safeguarding Hub Dashboard**

In October 2023 access to the new Safeguarding Hub was granted to the Vicar and Safeguarding Administrator. A sample of fifteen roles and eighteen volunteers were used to test the application and its usefulness to the Parish. Following a meeting with the Safeguarding Team it was decided it was not in the best interest of the Parish to use the hub in its present configuration. This is primarily due to the reporting aspects of the package, i.e., file format, exception and audit reports, but also its failure to record existing data and its inability to improve the current process. In its current format the Hub would necessitate two sets of records. This was communicated to the Diocese, along with an offer to support development of the programme which was accepted by the Diocese and developer.

Subsequent to this contact was made with the developer and an online meeting took place to discuss the various issues. Judith Chivers (JC) was provided with access to all the modules to allow testing. Errors were reported and suggestions provided as to how some functions could, or would not, be used by the Parish. The perception is that the developers are being guided by the remit provided by the National Safeguarding team which does not reflect situations at Parish level. Discussions about this and how to influence the structure of the Hub were undertaken with Claire Wesley (CW), Safeguarding Learning & Development Officer for the Diocese, at a safeguarding drop-in session. This resulted in CW and JC meeting to discuss all the issues raised by the use and testing of the Hub so far by JC. CW appreciated the issues, particularly about reporting, and will attempt to influence changes.

As there has been no further contact with either the Diocese or the developer since January 2024, and as use of the Hub will become mandatory, JC has continued to input data for the Role Creator and People Manager modules. This is, at present, the minimum requirement from the Diocese although as the other issues remain two sets of records are being kept.

The dashboard does however report we are meeting the requirements of each module.

	Role Creator	People Manager	Recruitment Tracker	Dashboard Updater
April 2024	✓	✓	Not utilising	Not utilising

**Prepared by Susan Harries and Judith Chivers**

## **Growth and Discipleship in 2023**

### **A report for the 2024 APCM**

As Christians we believe that life is so much better if we do it with God.

So how, in 2023, did Shirley Parish encourage and enable more people to get to know something of God, and then to get to know God better?

The 'formal' things first....

Once again we ran the enquirers course, START, and the follow-up course, Moving On. Meeting weekly over the summer, this group gathered at the Vicarage for something to eat, and then watched videos, thought about stuff, and began to explore who God is, discover who Jesus is and find out more about the Holy Spirit. Following on from the course, Nicole was baptised on Easter Day 2024, and she and Dan, her husband, will be confirmed in Birmingham Cathedral at Pentecost.

Lots of families brought their children for baptism, and all were visited by one of the clergy, for an opportunity to discuss what baptism is really all about. They were also invited to Jimmy Tots and/or Messy Church, so they can continue to be part of the Shirley Parish family of God.

At every service we had the opportunity to hear a sermon, explaining the readings and helping us to apply them to our everyday lives. And importantly, week by week, people have responded to the invitation in Sunday worship to share with us all where they have 'seen' or 'experienced' God in their every day lives. Often in really straight-forward things like bird song, or a hug from someone special – but all pointing towards the God who loves and cares for us.

Then perhaps some more indirect ways in which we share the Good News...

Although we don't have a huge number of weddings at St James, two of the 2023 couples attended a Marriage Preparation Day organised by Paul and run by the local Anglican churches. As well as talking about things like how we're all different, communication, and about resolving disagreements, we also explained the symbolism of the Christian Marriage Service, about the blessing, and about how we see God being at the centre of a strong and joyful marriage.

The loving, caring, accepting welcome that people receive when they come either to a service or to one of the activities in the Parish also speak loudly of the God's love and invitation. Many of us first 'see God' in someone else – "they have something special that I don't have..." which encourages them to find out more – maybe even to give a START course a go. It's wonderful that so many people come to give church a try, come back, and begin or continue their journey with us.

And alongside this, week by week, the quiet encouraging conversations that people have with other members of God's family in the Parish, and the prayers that come from those chats, also help us to grow in our faith.

During 2023 we also had several more organised opportunities to grow in our faith – or "get to know God better."

The daytime Journeying On Together (JOT) group met weekly during the first half of the year, thinking about the Creeds, the Coronation Prayers, and some of the Psalms. During Lent it became a Lent Group with an extended membership as we discussed the Lent booklet Dust + Glory. A daytime Pre-Advent Course based on the songs in the Nativity story also ran during November.

The monthly evening Home Group, aimed primarily at those who are at work during the day, continued to flourish, looking at Faith at Work – and then branching out into all sorts of other topics which the members wanted to discuss. It also met weekly during Lent, following the Dust + Glory readings.

In July we re-ran the Opening the Book morning, to explore the Bible, and extended an invitation to the other churches in Shirley. Church House was full and we had to print more copies of the booklet!

And then, during the autumn, we published our first Parish Prayer book, providing options for daily prayer – including some prayers suggested by members of the congregations.

Finally it is a joy that we are seeing so many families now coming to Messy Church regularly – and bringing their friends too! And a joy seeing how the Messy Church team members are growing in our own faith as we see God at work when we meet.

So – thank you to everyone who is part of all this – whether that's planting seeds of faith or tending and nurturing them – and especially to God, who makes them grow.

Kate Day  
April 2024.

### **Events Committee report for the 2024 APCM**

There are many activities that take place in the Parish – in addition to the worship services - and the aim of the Events Committee is to oversee and coordinate all these events, for both church members and for the wider community. We work with the appropriate people/groups across the Parish to ensure that events have the help, support and resources that they need as well as being directly involved in some of them. An Events Plan is regularly updated and circulated.

We are so grateful for all those who volunteer in the Parish and for all their hard work and commitment to these activities.

Good feedback has been received for our events from our regular congregations and members of the local community. The signs of growth and increasing fellowship in the Parish, as a result of these activities, are very encouraging. It is not all about Fund Raising!

The current regular activities in the Parish are -

First Sunday – 'Friends' Cake Sale

Second Monday – Coffee Morning at St John's Church

Third Monday – Nordic (or not) Walking

Every Tuesday – Welcome Café (an official 'Place of Welcome')

Alternate Tuesdays – Craft Club

Every Wednesday – Churchyard Working Party

Alternate Wednesdays – Ploughman's Lunch

First Wednesday – Mothers' Union  
Fridays in termtime – Jimmy Tots  
Second Sunday of the month – 'Friends' Walking Club  
Every Saturday morning – Parish Prayers  
Monthly – Book Club  
Monthly – Sunday Lunch Club/Afternoon Tea  
Open the Book/Bible Art with schools and a nursery

In 2023 we also held (in addition to the events organised by the 'Friends of St James') –  
February – Jigfast (Jigsaw Sale and breakfast)  
February/March – Lent Groups  
March – Fairtrade Event  
April – Quiet Day at St John's Church  
May – Parish Boundary Walk  
May – Coronation Celebration  
June – Fire Safety Training  
June – Welcome lunch for Richard and Ruth Haynes  
July – Stall/activities at Shirley Carnival  
July – Quingo  
July – Bible Workshop  
July – Cream Teas at St John's Church  
September – Coffee Moring in aid of the POD project  
September – Macmillan Coffee Morning  
September – Harvest Supper with line dancing  
November – Refreshments after the Remembrance Sunday parade  
December – Christmas Tree Festival – supporting the POD project and the Mothers Union 'Away From It All' charity  
December – Craft Fair and Breakfast with Santa

*Gill Hanton – April 2024*

### **Annual Report for Christ The King.**

After a rather cold start to our year, we moved over to our new home during the school holidays and it was a very welcome move as we are now a much smaller congregation and the hut that now has become our new home is just right for Christ the King. Although we now have to use electronic candles due to the very sensitive fire and smoke alarms, we have got used to them and with the flickering flame seem very realistic. It's also a bonus of having a smaller area to heat and in the summer nice to have the advantage of having air con. The playground has had some more parking places mad, meaning even more people can now park in the lower playground. We have had visits now from all our clergy to take a Eucharist service and we thank each one of you. We still find each Sunday a challenge of setting up as it all depends what the hut classroom has been used for that week, and we have even sat in a cafe style setting for church now, which means plenty of space to place your hymn book, pew slips and any other paperwork that we have for the service that morning. Gill Gough our reader got relicensed so we are so pleased for her as she is a very valued member of the team and for the parish.

From Denise Smith Deputy Warden for Christ the King.



## APCM Shirley Parish May 2024

### Deputy Warden's Report St James's Church

#### St James's Church

Regular maintenance (lightning conductor, PAT, servicing of fire extinguishers, gutter clearance boiler service) is up to date.

Following a drone survey of the roof (as recommended in the Quinquennial Report) we carried out some pre-emptive maintenance of the roof. A large sapling was removed from a hidden valley and is now growing in the churchyard.

A ladder has been installed in the clock tower to allow safer access to the platform under the clock.

#### Church House

Regular maintenance (PAT testing, servicing of extinguishers, servicing of burglar alarm, gutter clearance) is up to date.

A number of repairs have been needed during the year including a new water heater and improved plumbing in the men's toilet, adjustment of the garage door and servicing of the hot water boiler in the kitchen. The microwave oven failed and the fridge is in need of replacement. We have updated the hiring document and hourly charging rates for church and Church House and now require all users of the buildings to observe the same terms and conditions, whether paying or not.

#### Fire Safety

A group of parishioners undertook fire safety training in July. We have updated fire safety management for the Church (Church House updated in 2022 with the refurb). We need to train newcomers and vergers in how to evacuate the building, then have a practice. This will make us fully compliant with Health and Safety law.

#### Churchyard

We have had to spend a lot of money on our trees this year. Many are over 150 years old and need maintenance for safety. We had the 5 yearly tree survey in November, which led to more safety work. Tree surgery is an on-going expense and the PCC has agreed to commit funds annually to allow for this.

With the assistance of the team from Newlands Farm we are managing (just) to keep the churchyard tidy. Another wet spring has caused difficulty getting started and we really need more volunteers, especially people able to mow.

In January, a sink hole appeared between the church and the graveyard on the north side. It seems to have developed along the course of the gas main. We are still awaiting permission from the Diocese to carry out repairs and the area is currently cordoned off.

#### War Memorial

There is some loose and missing mortar at the base of the memorial, which needs to be repaired to stop ingress of water. We approached the Diocese for advice last September but are still waiting for a decision as to whether a Faculty is needed.

#### Pod Project

Fundraising began in earnest last July. As a Parish we raised over £15,000 from donations, a legacy, events and sales and Paul and Kate's sponsored walk. This is a tremendous achievement. Thank you to everyone who has helped with this- it demonstrates our commitment to the project to grant-givers and has given the project a flying start.

Grants from various charitable trusts have now boosted this to £51K, which brings us close to our target. My application to the National Churches Trust has been delayed by a technical issue and I cannot re-submit it until July. We have plenty of funds to start phase 1 (the drain connection) in July and hope to complete all work by late September.

#### Heating

The gas boilers which heat the church are over 40 years old, expensive to run, inefficient, unreliable and increasingly difficult to repair. We want to move to chandeliers which will provide both heat and light (LED) for the nave and electric panels (as in Church House) for the transepts, altar, sacristy and vestry. At present we do not propose to heat the chancel since it is hardly used. The idea is to warm the people, not the fabric of the church with the heating only on when needed and it should be less costly than the boilers which have a long warm-up time. The cost will be around £45K so more fundraising will be needed!

The process is moving slowly as we try to find the best arrangement of heaters and satisfy the requirements for a Faculty and we may have to brave another winter with the old boilers. Because we have this solution, Ben Smith, who is carbon-neutral lead for the diocese, has nominated us as a Demonstrator Parish. If we are selected there is the prospect of support and funding from the diocese.

Many thanks to everyone who lends a hand, whether regularly or when needed. We really value your help.

Thanks also to the Friends, whose hard work and generous support have underpinned our projects and helped with repairs.

I'm also very thankful for our regular contractors, Jelley Roofing, Jason Rainey, Martyn Bentley, who resuscitates the boilers and John Richards for his handyman skills.

Kate Crocker

## **Report to the 2024 APCM from St John the Divine, Tidbury Green**

Numbers at our 9am service have declined slightly during the year and, for access reasons, the monthly Reflective Worship service now takes place at St James Church. Our green space is appreciated and is used for Forest Church on the fifth Sunday of the month and the Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday morning. We also hosted a successful Cream Tea afternoon there in July.

We have celebrated milestone birthdays and anniversaries with some of your congregation and, on a sadder note, bade farewell to Joyce Ferris and Lyn Herbert.

Tidbury Green Private Nursery came into church regularly for seasonal celebrations, bible stories and craft work. The nursery also use the church from time to time for parents meetings etc. A drama group use the church for rehearsals on Wednesday evenings.

The nursery is closed on Mondays, leaving the car park free for our monthly coffee mornings on the second Monday of the month which have been very well supported and attended by members of congregations and friends from across the parish.

The planning application for the site adjacent to the church was revised but is still shown as 'awaiting decision' on Solihull Council's website. We submitted our comments to the Council on the plans.

Our Health & Safety policy has had its bi-annual review and been updated as necessary and the fire extinguishers and electrics (PAT) have been checked as required.

Architect Richard Crook visited in the church in November and supplied our Quinquennial Inspection Report. The work requiring immediate attention was identified as the trees in next door north side that are overhanging the roof and entrance paving and need pruning – we have asked the owners of the site to attend to this.

The work needed in the next twelve months has been identified as a loose bottom weatherboard on the north side, some brick re-pointing along the south side, to blue-brick steps on east side and along north side, kitchen ventilation – both (north and south side) plastic vent grills need to be replaced and the ducts cleared as necessary.

Ian Simpson - the Diocesan Buildings advisor – visited the church in August 2023 to look at the question of adapting the building to provide level, step-free access and provided a report detailing the work that would be needed. His estimated cost for this work was £97,080.00 which is obviously prohibitive and may in fact place too much strain on the building.

The concrete slab paving along the west boundary and down the south side of the church all need lifting and re-laying as they are uneven with 'trip' edges exposed – this work is due be completed in May 2024 and will include the provision of a new parking space/access near the front door to help those who find the walk from the car park a challenge and to add a safer space for locking the church when it is dark.

Storm Pia brought the cross on the roof down and this is currently undergoing repair/replacement.

We are planning for all the required work, including painting inside and out, to be completed ready for us to celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in May 2025.

We extend our thanks to our ministry team and all our volunteers for everything that they do.

*Linda Alford – Deputy Warden – April 2024*

### **Parish Warden's report for the 2024 APCM**

We have met regularly with Reverend Paul during the year and provide support to him and the ministry team wherever we can. Together we review what is happening in the Parish and discuss any issues including the people needing pastoral support. We also contribute to the Parish's committees. The signs of growth and increasing fellowship in the Parish are very encouraging.

Margaret Foresheew stepped down as Parish Warden at the 2023 APCM and we thank her for all that she did during her time as Warden and for all that she continues to contribute to the life of the Parish.

Linda and Gill attended training at the diocese offices on 25th April and were admitted as Wardens, alongside other Wardens in our deanery, at a service led by Archdeacon Jenny and Area Dean Phelim at St James Church on Monday 5th June. Thank you to Kate Crocker for stewarding at the service and serving refreshments afterwards.

Gill attended a Greater Chapter meeting on Zoom on Thursday 25th May. Andy Winmill, Director of Mission Support, introduced himself and talked about his role and ministry. There was also an update on deanery business, including oversight areas.

The Archdeacon's Articles of Enquiry have been submitted, with thanks to Kate Crocker and Judith Chivers for their words regarding Eco Church and Safeguarding respectively.

Nick Forknell, the deanery lay chair, came to do the Archdeacon's Visitation on Tuesday 31st October, inspected our records and signed all of our service registers.

The enthusiasm and generosity surrounding the POD project is very encouraging and we look forward to the work being completed later this year.

We wish to thank our ministry team, our deputy wardens and those who in volunteer in the parish for all their hard work and commitment during the year.

*Linda Pitt and Gill Hanton – April 2024*

## **Ecochurch**

The Ecochurch subcommittee (Chris Speakman, Chris Terry, Pam Owen, Wendy Martin and Kate Crocker) meets quarterly.

We have written monthly articles for the parish magazine and organised displays on the notice board in the south transept of St James's to highlight environmental issues. The group led the Harvest Festival Service in Autumn and praying and reflecting on environmental concerns is embedded in all our worship and learning.

Our Christmas tree made from shoe boxes attracted a lot of interest at the Festival in December and everything used to build and decorate it (except the sellotape!) was recycled.

In March, we carried out the Big Plastic Count, organized by Greenpeace, both as individuals and in St James's Church and Church House and are looking at ways to make our recycling more effective. We have badgered our MP and others over green issues.

Chris Terry works very hard to maintain stocks of Fairtrade products for our refreshments.

Fairtrade fortnight has been moved to September and we will be holding a Big Brew event on 14th to mark this.

Our sharing basket appears at the monthly Parish service and is a fun way of reducing waste and giving each other little treats!

We are not consciously aiming for the Gold Ecochurch award at the moment. Much of what we need for this is the reduction our carbon footprint by addressing the heating of St James's Church. We are keeping a record of other activities (a detailed portfolio of evidence is needed for gold). I think the important thing is the way in which we are making environmental issues a key part of our parish life.

Kate Crocker

## **Vicar's Report**

In the January Parish Magazine I took the opportunity to look back over 2023 at all the things we had been involved in as a Parish – and came up with a pretty substantial list ..

In 2023 ....

- we had a wonderful Confirmation service with Bishop Anne at the start of the year
- we hosted the World Day of Prayer service for Shirley and the RBL 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary service
- The Friends organised many fundraising events – Shirley Band concerts, history evening, candlelit supper and more
- we walked and prayed around the Parish boundary
- Wendy Martin was licensed to the Parish as Associate Priest
- Richard Haynes was ordained at the cathedral and joined us as Curate
- We were very social – St John's cream teas and coffee mornings, Quingo, Jigfast, Harvest supper, regular Sunday lunches etc
- we joined with other churches in Shirley in the Walk of Witness, a Unity service, the Shirley Carnival and the carols outside ASDA
- we said farewell to Hannah and Ellie and, after a difficult time in the office, Belinda Piasecki stepped up to the plate to fill the post on a temporary basis – We are so grateful Belinda!
- we launched the Pod project, obtained quotes for the work and started to apply for grants
- we made great steps forward with the new heating project for St James
- Christ the King Church moved into the new classroom at Widney School
- We watched the coronation on the big screen

- The Eco Group led a thought-provoking Harvest Festival service
- We launched our Parish Prayer Book
- The school chaplaincy team led our Sunday worship one week
- We learned together of God's love and purposes for us through sermons, study groups, Lent groups and the Opening the Book Bible day
- We ran another START group
- We welcomed many children into the church through baptism including one at Messy Church
- We continued to support the Food Bank, ADAVU and Narthex charities
- The Remembrance parade service was back at the memorial in the St James Churchyard
- Sadly we lost some of our long standing members – Joyce Ferris, Doris Hyde, Brenda Goudie, Janet Butts, Barry Robinson and Nick Ball
- We took 1000 children on Easter and Christmas 'journeys'
- Many, many people enjoyed our Christmas Tree festival
- Ewan Murray came to join us as organist from the Conservatoire and made his mark straight away by convening a choir for the Christmas Carol Service
- Christmas was also celebrated with a riotous Crib Service – Shepherds at the Crib
- as well as regular Messy Church, Jimmy Tots, MU, Welcome café, Ploughmans lunch, care home services, Sunday lunch club, churchyard working group, Open the Book sessions in schools, Bible Art, Bell ringing, Nordic (or not) walking, Book club and, of course, Sunday and Thursday worship
- and so many other things which I have not got room for (Sorry!)

WOW! What a year ...

And since the turn of the year even more has happened!

- Our new Bishop – Bishop Michael – has begun his ministry in the Diocese
- We had a joyous baptism renewal service in January to which many families who had had children baptised in 2023 came
- Wendy M led a Quiet Day at the beginning of Lent
- Our thought provoking Lent course on the marks of mission, based on the videos by Bishop Anne, was very well attended
- Worship 4 Everyone is now well established and more families from Messy Church are beginning to attend
- A Creative Prayer Day is planned for 11th May
- Four of our members will be confirmed at the Cathedral in May
- Richard Haynes will be ordained priest in July
- The Pod Project will be completed (watch this space!)
- Progress is being made with the new heating system for St James
- The PCC has agreed that we will allow prayers for blessing for same sex couples
- Richard Brooker has joined us for the second part of his curacy
- Emily Ellis has joined the team as Parish Administration Manager

So much to thank so many people for – and so much to praise God for.

At the APCM itself, as usual, I will reflect further on the past year and try to take a look into the future to see where God might be leading us as a Parish in the year ahead. I am sure there are exciting times ahead as we continue to live out the Gospel in Shirley.

Paul Day  
April 2024

### **Shirley Parish APCM 2024 Report from the Deanery Synod**

The Deanery Synod meets three times a year in various churches across the patch. Shirley Parish is represented by our clergy and three lay members, Gill Gough, Margaret Foresheew and Kate Crocker.

The meetings begin and end with worship. The usual format then is for a presentation on a topic of general interest to the group, followed by small group discussion then a plenary session to draw ideas together. It is a great opportunity to learn from one another and share experience. Recent topics include youth ministry, recovery from the effects of the pandemic, oversight ministry and diocesan finances (which are very stretched!).

The Deanery also has a lively Eco champions group which meets every couple of months on Zoom and reports to the Synod. We are focusing mainly on strategies to reduce our carbon footprint, since this is a priority for the Church at national as well as diocesan and local levels. The group has access to many helpful resources and discussions are very practical.

Our Area Dean, Phelim O'Hare is moving to become the new Archdeacon of Aston. We are so grateful for all the work that he has done for our Deanery and pray that he will be blessed in his new appointment.

Kate Crocker