

**Trustees' Annual Report - 2022**  
**For the Parochial Church Council of St Michael Aynho**

*Part of the Astwick Vale Benefice Churches with  
All Saints Croughton, St George Evenley, Most Holy Trinity Hinton-in-the-Hedges with Steane  
and St. Michael and All Angels Farthinghoe*

**Aims and Purposes**

**General.** Aynho St. Michael Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. This accords with the Church of England direction for the role of PCCs.

2022 saw us come out of the COVID 19 pandemic in the early part of the year and then the rector resigned her Ministry with us and left the Parish at the end of August. We have been in interregnum, or in vacancy, for the remainder of the year. We have aimed to keep St Michael's Church open and to provide regular services within the capacity of the retired clergy and lay readers in our Ministry Team.

The PCC met during the year and continued to try and achieve its overarching aims:

- To provide a warm, welcoming, open church, where everybody is and feels valued.
- To offer a variety of well attended services and opportunities for spiritual development for all in the Parish.
- To contribute to community life at all levels.

The PCC's purpose is to support the Rector and enable parishioners to worship God and to help each other on their journey to learn more of the love of God. In striving to achieve our aims and purpose the PCC values being part of the larger Astwick Vale Benefice. It brings opportunity to worship together and to help, encourage, and support each other.

Recognising the importance of the role the young will have in the future of the Church and in our own Parish life, we strive to maintain our links with the Church school in Charlton. Through young parishioners with families, we have managed to maintain a great little "Sunday Club" for the 7-year-olds and younger who give us some potential for doing more things than the lovely drawings they do each Sunday and their contribution to the feeling of life in the church. All so appreciated by our relatively elderly congregation of worshippers.

**Objectives and Activities**

**General.** We need to review how we do things in the Parish and the time is ripe for some changes to our growth strategy. We look forward to leadership from a new rector and have been slightly sitting on our hands maintaining the status quo whilst we advertise the post and pray for applicants.

Through the current Plan, however, we have maintained an overview of worship throughout the Parish to provide the variety of worship which reflects the needs of the parishioners. We try to involve the many community groups in the Parish. Services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament. At our PCC meetings we review the services and note those points which we consider need some adaptation for the next time.

In particular, we try to enable all people to live out their faith as part of our Parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the Parish.
- Missionary and outreach work supporting local, national and international charities.
- Provision of activities for the cohesion of the local community.

## **Achievements and Performance**

### **Worship and Prayer**

Until the vacancy we held at least three Sunday services a month at St Michael's. Within the Benefice there will be a service on the 3rd and 5th Sunday in the month and services on other weekdays. Since September we have managed two, sometimes three, services in the month depending on the availability of priests in the Deanery.

We have an open baptism policy in which children and adults are baptised as part of the main worship of the family of the church; this includes a communion. We have an open confirmation policy which encourages and supports children to receive communion before confirmation.

**Comment:** In 2022 we had no Baptisms

We accept and encourage marriage and blessing services for all couples from inside and outside the Parish and appreciate the time given by the Rector in her support of all the couples in their preparation until her departure. **Comment:** we had three marriages but no blessings in the year.

We held two funeral services and three interments of ashes during the year.

We recognise the importance and attraction of services which involve families and our community life. We held successful services to celebrate the key feasts of Easter and Christmas, with a Carol Service and a small nativity scene in the church. Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday were very well attended and supported after the Covid 2 years. On 5<sup>th</sup> June we held a celebratory service of Thanksgiving for HM Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee which was celebrated in the community exuberantly over a long weekend. We also held a very special service during the period of mourning after HM's death.

We decide at our PCC meetings how to respond to the needs of our communities – both near and afar – with charitable giving. Close to home we support the local hospice (Katharine House) and Banbury Young Homelessness Project, and nationally, Crisis at Christmas. We support Diocesan charities and national charities as well as responding to Disaster Emergency Committee appeals – and the financial details are later in the Report. As a result of the financial effect of Covid we were again not able to give as much as we would have liked (and have done historically).

We held a live face to face Lent bible study in March, again with a low number of participants but we were unable to hold a course during Advent due to having no Rector and the pressure already on the Ministry team.

We are very lucky to have the benefit of the services taken by the Ministry Team in their support of the Rector. It was wonderful that the Reverend Hugh Warwick was re-licensed for one final year.

St. Michael's Church enjoys a local bell ringing team, led by Paul Bennet from Evenley; they have rung for weddings and as a touring group ring fortnightly in practice. The bells were rung for the Queen's Jubilee and at her death.

We are very lucky to have our long-standing organist, Sybil Stevens, assisted by Graham Gibbs and Jonathan Clinch on big occasions. We are grateful for all who have given their time and skill.

### **Pastoral Care**

Within our village community the Rector and members of the church regularly visit parishioners during times of ill health and bereavement. This can be at home, in hospital, or at a residential home.

### **Ecumenical Relationships**

We have no Ecumenical links within the Parish albeit that the churches across the Benefice welcome those of all faiths and those of none to any of the services.

### **Safeguarding**

The duty of safeguarding of all people is taken very seriously by the PCC which has adopted a suitable safeguarding policy which is consistent with the Church of England House of Bishops' "Protecting All God's Children". The policy is reviewed annually. Regular reports are given by the Benefice Safeguarding Officer. PCC members have received 'Basic' safeguarding awareness training and have all completed the C1 level. The PCC is very grateful for the work done this year by MayLeng Chong on the PCC, and as the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

### **Deanery Synod**

Two members of the PCC represent us on the Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the Parish, the deanery, and the wider structures of the church. 2 Deanery Synods were held this year. The Rural Dean, Carolyn Oley, gave us huge support during the Covid years and during the first 3 months of the vacancy. Members of the PCC attended her farewell service at Middleton Cheney on 27th September. A new rural Dean, Father Matthew Robinson was appointed in December.

### **Growth Action Plan**

The Growth Action Plan has endured since 2018 and has lasted through the year. Our vision statement has survived very well and the objectives which have not been mentioned earlier in this Report include:

- Not forgetting those who have been regular church goers but are now too old and infirm to attend
- Encouraging preparation for lay led services when needed.

- Establishing an occasional Evensong service in St Michael's
- Supporting a regular Church youth group
- Inviting visiting speakers to our services

### **Electoral Roll**

As of 31 December on the Church Electoral Roll there are 42 parishioners, 3 of these are not resident within the Parish. No names were added during the year and 3 were removed either through death or because they no longer qualified. The average weekly attendance on a usual Sunday, was 25 including 2 children, but this number increased at festivals and Christmas.

### **The Church and Churchyard**

**General.** Our aim is for the church to be open to all daily for private prayer and quiet meditation with the added opportunity to be informed about the history of St Michael's. We are pleased to have the services of our Verger, Jane Wade, to organise access, and to keep the Church clean and safe.

### **Concerts**

A programme of concerts was organised throughout the year inspired by one parishioner, Sue Chapman, who wanted to bring more cultural events into the village and to use the lovely space of St Michael's to host them. It was a wonderful initiative and attracted a lot of support. Four concerts were held, the first marking HM Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee, the second a summer concert, the third to mark Harvest and the last in late November as winter set in. A varied programme of music was offered, expenses were covered and a small amount (nearly £900) was raised to help church funds. We plan to organise something similar next year.

**Maintaining the Fabric.** We are into the first year since the Quinquennial Inspection conducted by Acanthus Clews of Banbury. In the course of the year:

- We have had our fire inspection.
- Church Tower. A Bell Safety Inspection was last conducted in the year.
- The Church clock was serviced – it and carillon continue to work well.
- The door from the tower to give access to the roof has been checked for safety and is fine.
- The main door of the Church pulled out its hinge in the summer and was repaired and refixed quickly by PR Alcock and Sons.
- We had one small repair to the roof which solved a leak above the south stairs to the balcony. We continue to believe we postpone a roof replacement for another decade – as it is only 100 years old this year!
- The plans to replace the complete heating system in 2023 were started and are now well developed. We may have to close the church for a short time in the late summer of 2023. More details will become available by the time of the APCM – and whether the Diocese have actually given the PCC the Faculty to proceed.

The Churchyard is in very good condition with the area of the graves and the paths very well maintained giving safe access.

## **Structure, governance, and management**

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The PCC Meetings were held on the following dates in the year with the main subjects discussed:

**Wednesday 16th February 2022** - During this meeting which followed the usual agenda, the Accounts for 2021 were approved in advance of the APCM. Preparations for the APM/APCM on the 26th April were discussed.

**Tuesday 26th April.** A short meeting was held following the APCM to confirm appointments and responsibilities.

**Wednesday 15th August.** Following the resignation of the Rector a Special meeting was convened to discuss the arrangements to be put in place throughout the Benefice and Parish during the interregnum. The Churchwardens were appointed to “act as representatives in connection with the selection of the incumbent” in accordance with Diocesan regulations.

**Monday 12th September.** The focus for the meeting was the approval of the Parish and Benefice profile needed to support the advertisement for applicants which was to be ready for the end of the month. The new cycle of services in the Benefice was also discussed. The Benefice churchwardens met regularly to agree a workable schedule with the Ministry Team.

Full details of all meetings are recorded in the Minutes which are approved meeting by meeting and signed by the Chair.

PCC Meetings follow the standard Agenda below:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous PCC Meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Worship Update
5. Safeguarding and Training
6. Secretary's Report / Correspondence
7. Churchwardens' Report (including about the fabric of the Church)
8. Treasurer's Report
9. Deanery Synod Report
10. Stewardship and Fundraising
11. Any other Business
12. Date of next Meetings

The meetings follow a standard review of those items which matter to the Rector, PCC, and Parish. The focus for each meeting is the review of services.

PCC continued in its establishment as per the composition:

### **Ex Officio members of the PCC:**

Incumbent: The Reverend Suzanne Cooper (Chair)

Wardens: Kathy White and Andrew Bellamy (Deputy Chair)

**Elected members:**

Annabel Bellamy	2021-2023
Norman White	2022-2024 (Deanery Synod Representative)
Mayleng Chong	2021-2023
Ted Sutton	2022-2024 (Deanery Synod Representative) (extended)

**Appointed officers in 2022:**

Jane Wade	Verger
Norman White	Treasurer
Annabel Bellamy	Secretary
Kathy White	Electoral Roll Officer
Mayleng Chong	Parish Safeguarding Officer

**Readers**

Carrie O'Regan	Lay Reader
Mayleng Chong	Lay Reader

**Volunteers**

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community it is. In particular, the day to day and week to week activity in the church throughout the year could not happen without a host of other parishioners volunteering for all aspects and the PCC would particularly like to thank the flower ladies, choir and organists, bell ringers, tea/chocolate makers, church cleaners, church openers/locker uppers, 'welcomers' and sides- persons.

**Sides-persons**

The following functioned as side-persons during the year, after appointment by the PCC:

Annabel Bellamy	Mayleng Chong	Gillian Reynolds
Ted Sutton	Jenny Pusey	Jane Wade

**Administrative Information**

St. Michael's Church is situated just off Roundtown in Aynho. The Parish is part of the Diocese of Peterborough, the Brackley Deanery, and the Astwick Vale Benefice within the Church of England.

The correspondence address is The Rectory, Croughton Road, Aynho, Northants OX17 3BD.

**Communications**

Our Parish Newsletter is distributed monthly to the whole community in Aynho, and we are thankful for those who create it and to those who distribute it. The Newsletter keeps our parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our Church and articles that help develop our knowledge and trust in Jesus; it acts as the single village mail drop to the 300 homes in the village and covers most community activities. It is supported by local businesses and self-employed trades people.

The Church page on the Apricot Village website has been populated with information and space is provided on the main page for the Church Newsletter where the Rector posted her Pastoral Letter each month until she retired; in vacancy the Churchwardens offer their "Ramblings".

## **Financial Review**

The annual accounts for St Michael's Church for 2022 are published in detail at the end of this report. In accordance with the Diocesan rules the annual accounts have been prepared by the Treasurer, independently examined, and approved by the PCC. They have been published on the church notice board for 28 days prior to presentation at the APCM. The Treasurer has submitted an Annual Parish Finance Return summarising the finances for 2022 and giving details of regular giving.

One feature of the Church finances which affects the way we interpret the results for the year is that there is no such thing as a "typical" year. In 2022 we were still feeling the effects of COVID and lockdowns as many activities either did not restart or struggled to regain their previous levels. We also suffered the loss of our Rector, which had a major impact on the services which could be held throughout the Benefice. In addition, we launched our Replacement Heating project.

Bearing all of this in mind the following points are relevant:

The bank balance on the Balance Sheet (accounts page 1) shows a substantial increase of £31,921 from the previous year. The principal reason for this is the acquisition of £50,000 from the Aynho School Trust Fund to help finance the Heating Project. We have spent £13,260 in fees relating to the Heating Project so, taking these figures out of the equation, the underlying position is that we have spent £4,819 more than we have received in income.

Incoming resources (accounts page 2) show an encouraging increase of almost £2,000 in gift-aided donations. The income also benefits from the very useful £2,000 for rental of the car park to contractors at Aynho Park House. Whilst fundraising looks very healthy at £4,547, the costs related to these (on the outgoing resources page) amounted to £3,659, giving a net of only £888. This does not diminish the value of the concerts in appealing to the wider public.

Outgoing resources (accounts page 3) The major points to highlight here are Charitable donations, slightly higher than last year, and the expenditure on the Heating Project of £13,260. Other abnormal costs include a Quinquennial Inspection, £1,911 and Electrical costs of £1,264 relating to 2021 that were invoiced late by the contractor.

Parish Share – We paid £17,500 in respect of Parish Share. This was £2,500 greater than the previous year although still only 69% of the figure requested of us.

### **Reserves Policy**

The PCC's aim is to keep 25% of running costs in reserve plus £5,000 to cover emergency building work which cannot be planned into the Quinquennial cycle; this was previously calculated to give a target Reserve Fund figure of £13,500. We shall strive to manage our costs without using the Reserve Fund, accessing the Aynho School Trust Fund to cope with any substantial one-off item of cost.

### **The Future**

2023 is going to be another challenging year during which we hope to have a new Rector in post and a warmer church at the end of it. We will continue to control the finances and we hope to report an exciting new era with our hoped-for new Rector.

## **Approval**

The Church Accounts for 2022 were approved by the PCC of St Michael's Church, Aynho on 16th February 2023 and signed on its behalf by the Chair.

*{Signed - AB}*

Chair of the PCC, Andrew Bellamy

### **On the following pages are:**

The approved Statement of Accounts for 2022 which include

- Balance Sheet
- Statement of Income
- Statement of Expenditure
- Statement on the Aynho School Trust Fund – income, withdrawals, and valuations
- Details of the Charitable Giving made and the recipients

And on the said Statement of Accounts

The Independent Examiner's Report (30 Jan 2023)