

Holy Rood Church Packington

LE65 1WL

(Woodfield Team of Churches)

Annual Report

1st January – 31st December 2024

Woodfield Team Prayer

"God our Father, you long to draw all people into your love; increase in number your church at Holy Rood, Packington and throughout the Woodfield Team, deepen us as followers and learners of Christ and give us courage to share the good news of your kingdom. We pray this in the power of your Spirit, to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Team Vicar's Report

As the old sayings goes, time waits for no one, and time flies when you're enjoying yourself.

I have now been the team vicar for just over five years and there have been many changes with lots more to come.

When I first arrived the staff team consisted of four other people, and we faced the challenge of the pandemic together.

Over the year we have celebrated plenty of weddings and baptisms, but sadly many funerals. Its pleasing that people still want to get married and have their children baptised in church.

We have been in the pilot for minster community, opted out and back in, with a different set of churches, and we are moving forward with this process.

We are still engaging with the different schools across the Woodfield team, and that relationship is going well, being involved with all the schools, open the book also going into the schools.

We welcomed Revd Alison Thorpe to our team as a P.T.O, a welcome addition to the Woodfield team with her wealth of knowledge. We also welcomed Revd Chris Boulton, I am pleased to say they have been a welcome valued resource to our team.

I want to add a personal thanks to the ministry team, our administrator Ruth who does a brilliant job, a job I'm glad I don't have to do.

A big thanks to the church wardens keeping the churches going and big thanks to the treasurers, not a task I want, or able to do.

it's always a joy and a privilege to lead worship at the churches in the Woodfield team, and to continue to meet and spend time with those in church, and those out of church as well.

My prayers are that we can negotiate the challenges of minster community and strengthen our numbers in all our churches.

Every blessing

Revd. Captain Rick Tett
Woodfield Team Vicar

Report from Retired Minister with Permission to Officiate. Holy Rood Church Annual Meeting

Inevitably, as in the previous years since the retirement of our Team Rector, throughout 2024 we have been aware of a lack of overall guidance and leadership in our church life. At the beginning of the year a second advertisement was published with the aim of recruiting a new Rector. However, since again there were no applicants, we were subsequently informed by the Archdeacon that we should not be allowed any further opportunity to secure an appointment to replace Vivien. At the same time as receiving this disappointing news, and continuing into 2025, we have also been operating against a background of uncertainty as the Minster Community process has been grinding on, without thus far providing any clarity as to the impact it is likely to have on our future ministry. Nevertheless, although there have been a number of setbacks and attendance at services has fluctuated, thanks to the hard work and dedication of a variety members of our church family, in addition to maintaining our regular Sunday worship over the year, we have been able to reach out in love and service to the village community and further afield through a variety of different events and activities.

To return briefly to the topic of Minster Communities, the good news during the last year was that the placing of the churches in the Woodfield Team in the proposed Group 2A was confirmed (although, sensibly in view of its geographical position and everyday links, Norton has chosen to join the MC group which contains Twycross, Sheepy Magna etc) which means that, as was our preference, ministry will in future be shared with the churches in Ashby and its locality (the Flagstaff Team), together with Ibstock and Heather, Woodville and Blackfordby and Castle Donington and Lockington with Hemington. In the Autumn representatives from each of the parishes were invited to join one of 5 working groups focussed on different aspects of ministry e.g. growing faith and schools, buildings and resources, discipleship and mission. These were each tasked with summarising the strengths and weaknesses relating to their particular topic areas, which had been revealed by the individual churches through their own self-evaluations. They were also to identify perceived problems, make suggestions for future co-operation and raise any remaining questions. At the end of the year, these groups reported their findings to an overall co-ordinating group and at the time of writing we are awaiting a resultant draft proposal from that group, which will indicate how the churches will work together once the Minister Community is officially in place. PCCs will have the opportunity of commenting on the content of the proposal, which also has to be approved by the Joint Archdeacons' Mission Committee, with the final revised version coming back to PCCs in Summer 2025 when they will be asked, to "sign up" to its terms or, presumably, withdraw from the process.

Returning to life at Holy Rood during 2024, we have been blessed to be able to continue to hold a minimum of 3 services a month, having been well-served by retired clergy and Readers from across the Team to whom our thanks are due, with input also from our Team Vicar Revd. Captain Rick Tett. Special mention must be made of David to whom particular thanks are due for his regular leading and preaching at services of Morning Worship, when his careful preparation and faithful preaching are always evident. One particular highlight of his service

is the hard work and attention to details which he puts into the compilation and delivery of the Remembrance Day Service. There were lots of special moments in many of our services and we were fortunate to welcome some visiting speakers who stirred us in different ways and these included Revd. Rhianne O'Rourke, Pioneer Minister, inspiring speakers from Scripture Union and the Church Army, and from the Diocese, the Archdeacon herself, Sue Willetts, the Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Jane Woolmer from the Diocesan Environment Group., And, not forgetting what I think we would agree was the highlight, when we were blessed to have Bishop Saju as our preacher at the Carol Service. He proved to be delightful and put everyone at their ease, whilst giving an unequivocal message. Over 100 people were in the congregation and more than one was heard to say that "we could do with a few more bishops like him".

Throughout the year a mid-week BCP Holy Communion has been provided here every month. usually led by our Team Vicar, and, although numbers attending are small, the service is much appreciated by those who do come.

With an eye to the future, and acknowledgement that it is unrealistic to rely on the leading of services in the future always to be undertaken by a priest or Reader, an innovation during the course of 2024 has been our now monthly Breakfast Church which is lay led. Different people are helped by different styles of worship and this informal gathering is not to everyone's taste. However, an interesting cross section of our congregation, plus some who do not normally attend our more traditional services, clearly enjoy its relaxed format, not to mention the croissants and crumpets, and the short service which follows and leaves spiritual nuggets behind to ponder. Thanks are due to Anne, Christine, David and Jane for making this happen – quite a challenge when it is a new venture for them to devise and lead a service.

Following our informal Sunday New Year's Day Service in 2023 followed by lunch, we decided to repeat the experiment in 2024, and have done so in 2025 as well. It has been well received and appears to be fulfilling a need for a good number who would otherwise perhaps be on their own on this rather special day.

Other "different" Services in the year have included two "Songs of Praise" and our Lights of Love Service. We hope to repeat the latter in 2025, but whilst using the basic Order of Service which is provided across the Team, we intend to choose our own hymns and bring a little variety to the format in future. Christmas always brings a full programme starting with our well-attended Christingle Service, with the children from school doing the readings and prayers and, with the support of Chris Miles, to whom we are very grateful, singing a rousing version of "This Little Light of Mine". Vernon Bayliss and Iona Dring from Youth for Christ, with three of our young people, added to the mix by acting out for us the message of Christmas. Once again, our Toy Service, with the visiting donkeys (Thank you so much, Phoenix Children's Foundation!) stealing our hearts and children starring in our nativity presentation, was much appreciated. The weather prevented our carol singing led by the Salvation Army from being held at the pub but, whilst I could not be present, I understand it was nevertheless a great success when held in the church. Our crib service and Midnight service reach out beyond our normal congregations and this year we also re-introduced the Posada journey of Mary, Joseph

and the donkey with an interesting diary and many and varied photos resulting from their stay in different homes which have been posted on our website.

In terms of occasional offices, one wedding was celebrated here during the year but there were no baptisms – I am pleased to say there are several lined up in 2025!, There were however 6 funeral services here. All of us were shocked and saddened by the death of Carole Hallam and we were also sad to say goodbye to Elaine Goodall and David Fill from our congregation and to Gail Saunt who was a well-known and popular village resident. Anne's sister-in-law, Ann Glover, originally from the village, was also remembered, with sadness at her unexpected death, at her funeral in our church.

But our Christian life and witness is not defined merely or even principally, by our church services. We worship by how we live our lives and show our love to those around us and so we have continued with our programme of events of a more social nature. Our Ladies' Group, continues to grow from strength to strength and our sincere thanks are due to Doreen and the Committee of ladies who never fail to plan an interesting programme and whose hard work behind the scenes ensures that everything runs smoothly and all are made to feel most welcome.

You will recall that last year Anne Wathes was the first recipient of the Packington's Community Award - and how very well deserved it was. Anne works tirelessly in a number of different capacities within the church and to be frank, I don't know how she pulls it all in. The coffee mornings and lunches she hosts are very popular and Toasties and crafts is also well-attended, and not solely by children and their carers but by others from the village and surrounding area as well. It is so encouraging to see so many in the church enjoying one another's company as well as the delectable cake and other food which is served. It is Anne too who is at the forefront of our efforts as a church to improve our eco-status and as a result, last year we received the A Rocha UK Bronze Eco Church award.

From my perspective, because making all the arrangements was a daunting prospect, one of the main events of the year was Open Gardens Day, and the Flower Festival with its wonderful displays, and again Anne played an invaluable part in organising this and helping it to be the success it was. Of course, many people were involved in assisting with this project in many different roles and we were so grateful to all who opened their gardens, arranged flowers, helped with baking and with serving teas, sang in one of the choirs, manned stalls or car park or gave their support in any way and also to David Granger Architectural Design Ltd for sponsoring the event. It is an occasion when I always feel that the church is very much acknowledged as an important part of the community, which gives it its support.

We very much wish to foster relationships with children and young people – our age profile overall is, to say the least, elderly, and we would welcome an influx of younger people! Of course, one of our major routes to this goal is through the school, which we engaged with in a number of ways. Anne continued to work with them, principally through Mrs D, their Teaching Assistant and they have been involved in planting bulbs. The involvement grew with plans for bird feeders on the trees bordering the school and church land which in fact the children are now responsible for topping up. Some of the children were involved in the

Christingle Service of course, and as well as end of term services and a Harvest Service in church, the School does hold some class assemblies in our building, whilst Revd. Rick Tett takes an assembly in school once a term and our Woodfield Open the Book Team also visits each term.

In the Spring Term, the School expressed a desire for the church to provide an Easter activity and we used the resource "Experience Easter" which involved setting up interactive Stations relating to the events in Holy Week, both in and outside the church. All the children came in groups from the various classes to follow the journey round the stations and craft activities were provided as well. There was very good feedback and a debt of gratitude is owed to those who helped to set up the stations and "manned" (or should it be "womanned"?) them on the day. A further new venture last year was to give a copy of the Lion Storyteller Book of Parables instead of a full Bible, to the Reception Class children in the Summer Term of the year and to the new intake of Reception children in the Autumn, as well as a copy of the Scripture Union booklets called "On Your Move" to the school leavers.

In developing our relationships with the school our Foundation Governors do of course play a key role. Thank you to Keith Pound and Nia Sutton for their sterling work in this capacity – not only did they carry out all the responsibilities which the role entails in the same way as all the other governors; in addition, they supported the Headteacher in ensuring that the School operated in a way which showed its Christian distinctiveness and that Christian Values were at the forefront of its policy making, decisions and practice. For a brief time, Dave Manton held the vacant Foundation Governor but his commitments did not allow him to continue, and ultimately, Revd. Phil. White, a retired priest who lives in Leicester, was appointed to "fill the gap", for which he is very well qualified and experienced. Nia has kept us informed of the highlights of school life in termly reports in the Parish Magazine and in her Annual Report – unfortunately her term of office has now come to an end and she is not seeking re-appointment. She has been an excellent governor and will be much missed. We are currently seeking a replacement for her.

Toasties and crafts had brought a variety of children into the church so that it is now becoming a familiar and welcoming place to them. We continued to welcome the Van Sitterts, who arrived in the village late in 2023, as part of our congregation and provided for their three lively and enthusiastic children a mini "Sunday Club" during the service, in the Choir Vestry. The family's background in South Africa was membership of the Roman Catholic Church and we knew that the children would be leaving to receive instruction prior to taking their First Communion. That exciting event has now taken place, but we are delighted that the family does still feel at home here and will be worshipping with us and joining in in our activities from time to time.

Encouraged by the success of Toasties and Crafts, at which he had been assisting, and the wish to forge links with children moving up to secondary school, in discussion with Anne and myself, Vernon Bayliss suggested running a group for 11 to 14-year-old children in church once a week after school. Helped by Iona Dring, Vernon ran "Come and See" during the Autumn Term with lots of silly games and fun but also some more serious teaching Unfortunately, the response was very limited, and whilst one or two more attended on the odd occasion, the core of the

group consisted of two girls only. However, they enjoyed themselves and since then Vernon and Iona have maintained contact with them at school. YFC resources have not been sufficient to justify continuing the initiative with such low numbers participating.

On a broader front than our church community, we were represented at Packington Welfare and Safety Event. The Packington Community Choir has continued to rehearse regularly in our church and they sang beautifully for us in Aimee's Garden on Open Gardens' Day, with a few members augmenting our choir at the Carol Service. During the year we hosted an evening of Tudor and Stuart Music and one day Burton U3A History Group came to visit our building. Our own History Group has supported us, with Robin Boucher giving a talk on that occasion, and the Group putting on a display at the Open Garden's Day. In addition, the Group has published "Changing Senes" which is a fascinating diary principally about changes in the church at the end of the 19th Century and early 20th Century, written by one Thomas Oakey, a village farmer, member of the church and one time churchwarden, which has been for sale in the church. Finally, Robin Boucher summarised some of the history of the church, thus assisting us in the provision of text for the History Board which the PCC has been discussing during the year and which was finally ordered once permission from the Archdeacon had been obtained and which should have been erected in the churchyard by the time of this meeting.

The need for a complete restoration of the Church Clock was discovered during the summer and we are very grateful to the Clockmakers' Charity for a grant of £500 and to the Parish Council for a grant of £1,000 towards the cost. And whilst talking of grants, thanks are also owing to the Parish Council for a grant towards the purchase of a refrigerator, which has been a boon.

One of the topics which the PCC has wrestled with this last year relates to the potential offering of Prayers of Love and Faith in Holy Rood Church but I shall say no more about that here since it is a topic on the agenda for debate at this meeting.

There are so many people to thank. I find it most uplifting regularly to hear the bells ringing to call us to worship and on special occasions including OGD, so big thanks to all the team but especially to Caroline for getting the group going again and now to Dave Gammon who will be becoming the Captain of the Tower when all the paperwork is completed. And then there is the small army of people who do all sorts of jobs behind the scenes – and I know I shall miss someone because there are so many! Geoff and Doreen have faithfully, for many, many years (30 or so?) edited and produced the magazine, our magazine assemblers and deliverers; the flower arrangers; the cleaners who were co-ordinated by Carole Hallam and I am ashamed to say I do not know who had taken over but thankfully, they are still operating; the clock-winder; those who put up and take down the flag; those who work in the churchyard; those who serve coffee; those who help out when there are special occasions e.g. with the children's activities at toasties and crafts and at the Annual Autumn Fayre; the sidesmen and lesson readers; Wendy Jones who carries out the very important role of Safeguarding Officer, which involves ensuring all relevant people have an up to date DBS check, that all relevant people attend the correct level of training, and ensuring that our policies both regarding children and vulnerable adults, are up to date. And then of course Ivan, ably assisted by Faye, who shoulders many

responsibilities and does lots of jobs; Carolle who is Warden Emeritus but still gives help and advice in various ways, and the members of the PCC, Jane, our Electoral Roll Officer, our Treasurer, who invests our money very wisely, our Evangelists, and a huge thank you too to Noreen who belongs to another church but has carried on being our PCC secretary despite the fact that meetings have often been long and the minutes must take her hours to type up.. And I must mention Marian Mugglestone who faithfully day in and day out, year after year, locks and unlocks our church.

One or two of these will be retiring shortly after years of faithful service, but that is a problem for 2025!

On a personal note, may I thank you all for the support which you have given to me during the last year. I am almost embarrassed by the number of enquiries about my welfare and grateful for such a caring church family. There are fears about the future and controversy about the new arrangements which are planned, but small signs of life; a few different faces in the congregation, offers of help from unexpected quarters etc etc. are heartening and I do believe that God can work miracles out of our little offerings and that He will be with us as we sail into uncharted waters.

Lesley Birtwistle (Revd).

Crosslinks Missionaries Report

During 2024 we have continued to support Charles and Frances de Roemer who are employed by Crosslinks and who first became our Mission Partners in 2023. You may recall that Charles and Frances have been serving in Belgium for around 30 years and have founded the Eglise Protestante Evangélique de Binche - a small church made up of around 20 people. Charles preaches most Sundays whilst Frances leads services, teaches in the Sunday school, manages finance and admin. and helps with music.

Charles and Frances also run a youth group, whose membership is drawn from several churches, reaching up to 20 teenagers each month and in the summer are involved in a bi-lingual Youth Camp. Frances also reaches out to the community through teaching English and taking part in walking and art groups. The church also hosts a Bible Study Group and a Ladies Group. Their congregation however, like ours, is predominantly aged but in recent times it had been growing a little and it included a Ukrainian family and a few children.

The de Roemers quite often send short video clips to us with the latest news as well as from time-to-time emailing prayer letters, amusingly illustrated by Frances, copies of which are sent to those on an email list and paper copies of which are available in church. If you would like to receive this electronically, please do let me know.

Last summer, unexpectedly, with very little notice, Charles and Frances visited Packington on an informal basis – not as a part of their official Crosslinks programme - and I was able to host them for coffee and cake with three other members of our congregation present as well. It does so help to be able to meet them personally and hear their story – it is so much easier then to pray for and support them.

Charles and Frances have many family members in this country and so come back quite a lot. I am delighted to say that they will be visiting us officially on Wednesday, 14th May 2025 when they will be the guest speakers at the Ladies Group meeting in church, starting at 2.30pm. The meeting is being opened to all, whether or not they normally attend and men are welcome as well. We have a commitment to support Charles and Frances but giving money without really knowing them is very uninspiring, so I would encourage as many as possible of you to come along on that occasion and meet them. Tea and cake will be served!

In the meantime, they clearly value prayer support for church and their own ministry. So, as well as our annual donation, this is a simple and effective way in which we can give them our support on a regular basis.

Revd. Lesley Birtwistle

Parish Governance

Summary of Fabric Repairs, Improvements and General Maintenance Work

A length of fallen churchyard stone wall to Vicarage Lane rebuilt on Concrete footings with weep holes.

Loose and open cement joints replaced with lime mortar.

Work carried out by Stephen Anstey Stonemasons Ltd.

Lightning conductor tested.

Fire extinguishers serviced.

Church organ serviced.

Portable electrical appliances safety tested.

Church mower serviced.

Spring and autumn clearing of roof, gutters, downpipes and gullies.

Ongoing maintenance of Churchyard, mowing, strimming, hedge cutting etc. plus Spring working party.

Ivan Bowers
Churchwarden

Church Terrier

Holy Rood has a requirement to maintain the Church Terrier, this is a list of land and all items/property belonging to the church. It is also a log book and detailed record of all the alterations, additions and repairs to the church, its land and contents which enables churchwardens to comply with the law, it is continually updated and stored securely.

Ivan Bowers
Churchwarden

Electoral Roll

At the Annual General Meeting on 6th May 2025, it was reported that there were 53 names on the Electoral Roll.

Jane Hall
Electoral Roll Officer

The Year at Packington C E Primary School

I am glad to be able to share, from a Governor's perspective, a review of a very positive year at Packington Primary. A highlight must be the Ofsted inspection last June, but we should start with a reminder of our school's Vision and Values.

Knowledge empowers us. Faith gives us courage to act. Add love, and we can change the world!

"To give rather than take. To put others' needs above our own. To 'Go and do likewise'"
Luke 10.37

Our vision is rooted in the parable of the Good Samaritan and our Christian values of "Perseverance, Hope, Courage, Kindness, Honesty and Forgiveness". The school's termly CARE awards, awarded to the boy and girl who have especially demonstrated these values in action has now reached its one-year anniversary. Our vision is further celebrated within our strapline "At Packington we CARE" where C is for community, A for Achieve, R for Respect and E for Enjoy.

This Christian Ethos is now firmly embedded within the school, among staff and pupils alike, as can be clearly appreciated by a personal visit to the school. This is so encouraging and, incidentally, should mean that our next SIAMS¹ inspection will be a celebration rather than a concern.

Although not now 'hot off the press', I am delighted to confirm that Ofsted continues to judge Packington C of E Primary School as a 'GOOD' school. This is a great credit to the care and dedication of the headteacher and staff. Here are two paragraphs from the report, touching on the attitude and behaviour of the children, and the school curriculum:-

“Pupils are happy, enjoy attending, and feel safe. They are ready to learn and enjoy their lessons. Pupils behave well. The school is calm, and pupils concentrate on their learning. They play well together at playtimes and show respect for each other and for staff. One pupil explained, ‘Our golden rule is to be kind and to treat someone as we would like to be treated.’”

“Packington Church of England Primary School has high expectations for every pupil. The school ensures that the subject curriculums are well thought out and ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).”

Here is an overview of our most recent pupil testing outcomes:-

- End of KS2 results at or above the national level in all subjects.
- Average scaled score for all subjects is above the national level.
- End of KS1 results in line with national results.
- Phonics results - 100% passed yr 1 phonics.
- 80% of EYFS² children achieved a good level of development – national result 68%

For a school with small class numbers, where any individual’s poor performance can seriously bring down class averages, this is a very pleasing indication of consistency.

This year, we have taken two areas identified by Ofsted for possible improvement, to inform our School Development Plan. In addition, for a third area, we are focusing on financial stability. These SDP priorities are

- Review and revise the curriculum for foundation subjects to ensure it includes appropriately challenging content that promotes the development of knowledge, understanding, and skills.
- Ensure that formative and summative assessments are consistently and effectively implemented across all subjects to accurately identify pupils' learning progress and knowledge gaps.
- To build a financial foundation that ensures long-term stability, enabling continued growth and the ability to effectively support educational programs and resources.

Mrs Burton and her staff are working diligently on each of these, with oversight from select governors, and are regularly reporting progress back to the Board of Governors. This initiative can be seen as a push towards an ‘Outstanding’ school.

The first curriculum focus has been on History, whilst the school is working on creating a robust assessment system across all the foundation subjects. Reading is prioritised across the school with a sharp focus on ensuring younger children gain excellent foundations in the early stages of reading. This ensures they gain the phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read, and the skills to communicate as fundamental foundations. Maths is taught in a consistent way, developing fluency, problem-solving and reasoning across the school.

Financial pressures are magnified when admission numbers are down. This year Mrs Burton and some governors set up a marketing working party to address this issue, coming up with new ideas to promote the school. I am very pleased to report that we have recently learnt

that our intake this September will be at the maximum permissible. Currently there are 87 pupils on role.

This year we have welcomed back Miss Carter from maternity leave. She is teaching year 6 for the first time and has taken on the role of RE leader. On the Governance side, we have had great recruitment success, bringing our number up to a full complement of 12, until very recently, when we have had to say goodbye to Mrs Sutton, one of our Foundation governors and joint chair. Her sterling work for the school has been very much appreciated and she will be sorely missed. New to our number are, Rev. Phil White (Foundation), Anna Fisher (Co-opted), Russell Powell and Barry Alldread (Parent) and returning to the fold, Mel Dyche (Staff).

Recently, the Governors have adopted a new working methodology, namely Circle Governance. This provides for each area's oversight to be the responsibility of a single 'Link' governor and their assistant. This arrangement is working very well and has dispensed with the need for sub-committees. We are feeling very positive about the direction of the school's travel under the stewardship of Mrs Burton and are trusting that the relatively high turnover of governors in recent years is now behind us.

The children have experienced a wide range of daily collective worships this year. In addition to teacher-led worship, Rev. White has kindly led some whole-school gatherings, two different Open The Book teams have come into school regularly to dramatise a chosen Bible story, much to everyone's enjoyment, and there have been regular services held in church for the Christian festivals. Another link to Holy Rood, via Anne Wathes, has allowed the children to engage in ECO-church this year. This has involved pupils helping to plant bulbs, clean around the graves in the churchyard and set-up and replenish bird feeders. We were also delighted to be able to take the whole school on Faith Visits to Derby, providing them with a valuable cultural experience. Here the children were able to visit a Hindu Temple, Islamic Mosque and Sikh Gurdwara.

Teachers and the PSA³ have worked tirelessly to provide our children with a wide range of events and activities. These have been advertised on the school's communication app. 'Weduc'. The school also advertises to parents here, other village events, thus further integrating our school into local community life. The full year's list is too long to set out here, but highlights include a Christingle Service at Holy Rood, a variety of Children in Need fund-raising events including a wonderful talent show, various cross-country races around the district, a surprise visit from Ben Fogle, and the story of the Nativity, told by the 'Fleece Force'! We hope that you were able to join us in some of the open events this year.

Concerning our premises, following the installation of new fencing and gates, the school site is now more secure. New door fobs have now been added to the front entrance and the old front door, to ensure that these are secure. Over this Spring, old, carpeted flooring has continued to be replaced by wood effect flooring. This is smarter, safer as regards trip hazards, and significantly easier and quicker to clean.

Finally, may I add our annual appeal from Mrs Burton that she is very keen to expand our volunteer team, so please do consider or encourage others to get in touch with her to see

what opportunities could be available. We are most grateful for your support and prayers for our church and village school.

Keith Pound, Foundation Governor

Notes:

1. Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools
2. Early Years Foundation Stage (to age 5)
3. Packington School Association (parental support)

PCC Secretary's Report

A brief report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council for the period January 2024 to December 2024.

Meetings: Scheduled meetings were held in January, February, March, April, July, September, October and November.

Council Membership: The PCC has a total of 10 members

Ex Officio Members:

Ivan Bowers	Church Warden
David and Elizabeth Harrison	Evangelists

Other Members:

Stephen Hill, Faye Bowers, Peter Last, Wendy Jones, Anne Wathes, David Manton and Jane Manton

Coopted Member

Revd Lesley Birtwhistle Retired Minister with permission to officiate

In Attendance: -

Noreen Mewies	PCC Secretary from September 2023
---------------	-----------------------------------

PCC Members elected/re-elected on 8th May 2024:

David and Jane Manton, Peter Last and Faye Bowers

Standing Committee:

David Harrison, Stephen Hill, Anne Wathes and Ivan Bowers

Typical Agenda Items:

- Welcome and Prayer
- Apologies for absence
- Review of Minutes from the previous meeting
- Matters arising from those Minutes
- Matters arising from the Standing Committee Minutes

- Specific items for discussion or information
- Reports Clergy, Treasurer's, Church Warden and Safeguarding
- AOB and notices
- Date of the next meeting
- Closing prayer

Key Issues, Decisions and Events:

January

Financial update and related matters, Reorganisation of Vestry, Belfry and Shed, Repairs to boundary wall and tombs, Electrical work and History Board, Incumbents Board, New Rector Appointment, Household Support Scheme, Services and Events, Minster Community and Safeguarding.

February

Topics discussed included, Finance, Minster Community, Kitchen and fabric repairs, Reorganisation of Vestry and Belfry, Services, Community Engagement.

March

Fabric and Churchyard, Boundary Wall, Repair to the Tombs, Eco-Church, Future Services and Events.

April

15th April –Minster Community update in great detail, Quinquennial Report and follow-up, Fabric and Churchyard, History Board and Incumbents Board, Activities for Children, Open Gardens Day, Safeguarding, Prayers of Love and Faith.

16th April via Microsoft Teams – Annual Report and Financial Statement, Financial Update, Budget and Insurance.

May

Church APCM 8th May

July

Church Accounts and financial matters, an update of the progress of Minster Communities, Prayers of Love and Faith, Quinquennial Report and follow up, Eco Church Bronze Award.

September

6th September – Various Financial Matters, Minster Community, Quinquennial Report, Fabric and Churchyard, Services and Speakers.

27th September - Several items regarding fabric and churchyard, Footpath Lighting, Safeguarding, Eco-Church, History Board Come and See and services.

October

Nomination of Foundation School Governor, Repair of Tombs, Clock Repairs, Graves in new burial ground.

November

Clock Dial Refurbishment, Diocesan Finance and Parish Contribution, Tithe Giving, Minster Community, Churchyard and Graveyard matters and Foundation School Governor.

Noreen Mewies
PCC Secretary

Safeguarding Annual Report

In 2018 the PCC adopted the model Diocesan Policies for the Safeguarding of Children and Young Adults, and also for Vulnerable Adults. These policies are reviewed and updated annually. We also follow the Diocese policy for the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders. A Policy relating to Lone Workers, and also a Complaints Policy, are in the process of being reviewed and approved.

Once approved, copies of the Policies will be available at the rear of the church, together with any other relevant Safeguarding information.

The Diocese has issued a National Safeguarding Standards document setting out 5 criteria for PCCs to consider in order to evaluate their own standards. The overall aim is to promote a healthy and safe culture within our Church. We are in the process of working through and evaluating our own standards. These will then be entered onto our Church Database which is held by the Diocese.

The majority of our PCC members, and members of the Bell Ringing team, have completed the required Safeguarding training. Group training is being arranged at a future date for 'Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse'. The Diocese recommends this training for all PCC members.

All necessary DBS checks are up to date. In line with Safeguarding rules, a register of names and relevant details is kept for all Children's activities held within the church. Risk assessments are also carried out.

Safeguarding is a standard item on all our PCC agendas. I'm pleased to say that we haven't had any incidents to report during this last year.

Our standard Annual Report on Safeguarding will be submitted to the Diocesan Office following this meeting.

Wendy Jones
Safeguarding Officer

PARISH ACTIVITIES

Breakfast Church

After three trial sessions of Breakfast Church in 2024, it was decided that they would replace the first Sunday services. We started in February 2025 and our numbers have been between the mid-teens to low twenties. This is a very relaxed event. Starting with a breakfast of toast, crumpets and croissants followed by approximately twenty minutes of poems or a meditation, prayers and hymns. No music as although, it is probably easier to sing along to, it stops the spontaneity of people choosing hymns. This is another occasion where we offer friendship, company, and food but with some form of religious contact.

We are all learning as we go and we don't always get it right but the people who attend like what we are trying to do!

Anne Wathes

Eco-church

Over the last year we have encouraged the school children to set up feeding stations for the birds. These are near the boundary hedge which allows the children to view the birds as they feed. They are also in charge of re-filling and looking after them.

Year six have also started clearing some of the grass covered gravestones giving them an insight of the history of how old some of these are.

We also planted bulbs again with the reception class. These were placed by the bench near the old vicarage. Bedding plants will be planted for the summer.

A plan of the churchyard for restricting the mowing in certain areas to allow wildflowers to flourish is also being implemented this year. Hopefully this will encourage wildlife back and increase the children's interest in caring for their environment.

Holy Rood has achieved the A Rocha bronze award, and we are trying to maintain what we have already achieved and improve on other aspects.

Anne Wathes

Ladies Group

Looking back over 2024 a year in which we celebrated 60 years of the group – but sadly lost a friend and committee member for many years, Carole Hallam.

The meetings have been varied, interesting and well-supported.

We started the year with the popular coffee morning. The Bring and Buy stall raised £74.

During the year we heard about the work of Derby Mountain Rescue Team, Canine Partners, Bright Hope House, Ashby Street Pastors and Dementia UK including the work of the Admiral Nurses.

In September we celebrated 60 years with an Anniversary Afternoon Tea in the Memorial Hall enjoyed by 32 members. Fine Cuisine of Ashby prepared and served afternoon tea followed by a celebration cake. Also, in September for the first time we held our Open Charity Event in the afternoon. Over 60 ladies came to listen to our guest speaker, Gill Thomas. Gill gave a talk of how she started to learn to sew to being on the Great British Sewing Bee. She is now known as the One-armed Sewist! An inspiring and moving talk!

In February we met on Valentine's Day, Sue Peyton gave a demonstration and talk on the 'Language of Flowers'

The following month we welcomed Dave Andrews who gave an entertaining talk about his time at Radio Leicester. Over the years he had reported on visits by the Queen to Leicester to Richard III's discovery and Leicester City winning the Premier League.

In May we had a very entertaining afternoon with 'The Baroness of Bolsover' who in her exquisite dress, hat, bag, gloves and fan took us through the do's and don'ts of afternoon tea in the reign of Queen Victoria.

The following month we had the opportunity to put into practice what we had learnt when we met at The Pot Kiln Café for afternoon tea.

During the year some members visited Bright Hope House and were given a very good presentation and tour of the new premises.

The year ended with 36 members enjoying Christmas lunch in the Memorial Hall, prepared and served by the committee. During the year we welcomed Pam onto the committee. Donations of £862 have been made throughout the year to 9 different charities and organisations; this amount includes 5 donations to local organisations.

I thank Eileen for preparing the accounts and the committee for their help over the year with the buffet lunch, programme planning, the monthly meetings and the charity event, without their help and support I couldn't continue.

Also, thanks to the ladies that help with serving tea and washing up each month.

As I conclude my 26th report thanks go to you for supporting our meetings and I ask for your continued support for another year.

Finally, I hope and pray our group will continue to provide opportunity for fellowship and friendship for Packington and the surrounding area within the life of Holy Rood Church.

Doreen Gasson

PACKINGTON & NORMANTON CHURCH LADIES GROUP
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1ST JANUARY 2024 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2024

<u>INCOME</u>	£
Subscriptions and visitors	747.00
January 'bring&buy'	74.00
Donation	6.00

Pot Kiln Afternoon tea	520.00
Collection for Carol Hallam	97.00
Open Evening ticket sales	670.00
Open Evening raffle	116.00
Payments for 60 th Anniversary Tea	640.00
Donation for Anniversary Cake (Joan R.)	76.00
Payments for Christmas Lunch	274.00

TOTAL INCOME	<u><u>3220.00</u></u>
--------------	-----------------------

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	£
Speakers' expenses	448.60
Pot Kiln Afternoon Tea payment	639.00
Flowers in Church for Carole's funeral	35.00
Memorial Hall booking fees	76.50
60 th Anniversary Cake	76.00
60 th Anniversary Lunch expenses	54.00
Milk, coffee, tea & biscuits at meetings	59.53
Payment to Fine Cuisine for 60 th Anniversary	704.00
Donations to Charities	862.00
Programmes for 2025	18.50
Christmas Meal expenses	195.53

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u><u>3168.66</u></u>
-------------------	-----------------------

Excess of Income over Expenditure	£	51.34
Balance B/F from 31 st December 2023	£	104.86
Balance C/F to 1 st January 2025		1056.20

Funds at this time: -

Balance in bank at 31 st December	1054.78
Less outstanding cheque for	43.00
Cash in hand	44.42
TOTAL	<u><u>£1056.20</u></u>

Eileen Taylor

Monthly Coffee Mornings

We continue to thrive! Over the last year numbers have consistently increased reaching to the high twenties with a maximum of 37.

Our ladies and gents come along to meet friends and enjoy a catch up with most staying all morning. Most are villagers but also quite a group from Ashby. We feel that we are succeeding in reaching out and offering friendship and company to people who otherwise

would be on their own. The books and jigsaws are also still popular particularly during the winter months. Our poppy project seems to be going well with quite a few of the ladies taking up the challenge and are quite keen to put together a display.

Lunches

Our other events have been equally successful particularly the New Years Day lunch. Another occasion when people would probably be on their own. We are a soup event down this winter mainly because of the heating situation. Hopefully the VE Anniversary lunch will make amends.

Toasties

Toasties, overall, are still growing and are very much worth continuing. Numbers vary but are usually in the high teens with some extra adults just coming for lunch. 15 children and 26 adults attended the Easter Event. The crafts consisted of Easter cards and rabbit plates, decorated eggs and Easter cross biscuits. Vernon constructed a tomb with an impressive exercise ball used as a boulder. Each child took home Easter story cards to colour. Donations have just about covered expenses.

Anne Wathes

Open the Book

Open the Book started in Bedford in 1999 with one man's vision. That man was Dave Todd and he recognised that children didn't know Bible stories and he wanted to change that, it started with a small group of Christians who had experience working with children and in schools.

There are now more than 7,500 Open the Book Storytellers who form more than 2,500 teams. These teams go into over 3,000 primary schools across England and Wales and is also growing in another 18 countries spread across Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

We have the privilege of being a small part of that in the Woodfield Team. There are 8 of us on the team and we currently visit 6 of the 7 schools in the team, twice a term.

In September/October we presented The Annunciation and then "On to Bethlehem" before Christmas. We began the Spring Term with "Where is Jesus?", Twelve-year-old Jesus at the Passover and up to Easter with "The Last Supper".

There are always plenty of volunteers to be part of the story, whether that is Jesus aged twelve, friends and neighbours on the way to Jerusalem or the "man" carrying the water jar!

Open the Book takes time, energy, commitment but the rewards are great.

To hear the excitement when we are spotted in school and to see the new intake each September sitting cross-legged, wide eyed and open mouthed is rewarding and inspiring.

If you would like to be part of Open the Book, please do speak to me or one of the team. Acting skills and learning lines are not necessary! We do have narrators and non-speaking

“walk on” parts! If you would like to pray for us (a vital part of OTB), please make that known and you can be informed of what, where and when we are in action!

David Harrison

North West Leicestershire Deanery Synod Report 2024

Revd. Gillian Pinnington was licensed as Area Dean in 2020, the Assistant Area Dean is Revd. Laura Jackson.

Representatives to Deanery Synod are elected at the APCM and may stand for two terms of three years, currently Holy Rood has no elected representatives. Ruth Salt attends meetings in her role as Woodfield Team Administrator, but as a non-elected member she has no voting rights.

Key note speakers at each Synod in 2024:

March 2024

Cost of Living Crisis

Rev Gill welcomed Phil Antill from Hope67, a community money advice service with Christian values, who are based in Coalville. Hope67 are partnered with Coalville Foodbank.

Phil talked about the type of help they offer, the number of households they have helped and how people get to hear about their services, this is usually via foodbanks and the council.

Phil concluded his talk by asking us to pray for Hope67. Needs are increasing and support is decreasing. He asked we pray that the local authority will use money wisely, to pray for the team, most of which are volunteers, and to pray that people will find them.

Questions were invited, Phil confirmed that his leaflets are distributed to foodbanks.

Christ Church – Rev Gill talked about the Camerados group who meet in the church hall every Tuesday morning where people come along with their crafts and have a cup of tea and enjoy the companionship and warm space. At the same time, an “essentials table” is set up for the community to purchase household items such as cleaning products, personal hygiene items – shower gel, toothpaste, soap etc., toilet rolls and laundry products. These can be bought for much less than in the supermarkets and is funded by donations from the congregation.

A new “Caring Café” has started on a Tuesday afternoon, and this offers a warm space, in a quiet environment for people to come along and have tea and cake and a listening ear.

Foodbank – Jean M. Harrison talked about her work with the Ashby Foodbank. At that time they had helped 2,153 people and this was rising. The Ashby Foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust, and they work closely with Coalville Foodbank.

Rev Gill invited people to talk about what their churches are doing for their communities to help with the Cost-of-Living crisis; -

- Whitwick have food boxes in church for donations and a “sharing shed”.
- St Helens offer warm spaces at the Heritage Centre.

- Broom Leys have bags which their congregation fill and they get taken to foodbanks.

People were reminded that Morrisons have bags which are made up with food items to purchase and this is a simple way to help others.

- If Hope67 know what our churches are doing, they can signpost people there.
- Thringstone have a warm space on a Thursday. They also have a church allotment, and all produce from this is given to the community for free. They also collect toys at Christmas time which are donated to the Marlene Reid centre.
- The Woodfield Team have coffee and chat sessions and a lunch once a month.

Rev Gill was impressed with the wonderful things that churches are doing and we had a moment of quiet to think and pray about what we had heard.

June 2024

Outdoor Worship - OWL, Forest Church and Muddy Church

Rev Gill welcomed Anne Scott our speaker from OWL. OWL supports and encourages outdoor worshipping communities and inspires new ones. They held their first conference in October 2023 and 50+ people attended. The 2024 conference was held in September at Launde Abbey. Some examples were given about how churches can get involved in outdoor worship.

Outside Blessings, Communion and Services of Praise all held around a campfire, Pilgrimage and Prayer Walks, Meditation, Biodiversity, and messy, muddy and forest church.

Anne gave some examples of what was happening, in Long Whatton there had been a walk around the village which ended with reflection and prayer. At Bottesford there is Windmill Church. Souls in the Wild at Swithland Woods starts with an inspirational quote and a walk, at the end of which they share their thoughts and enjoy food together.

October 2024

Diocesan Finance – Simon Wilson, Diocesan Finance Director

Simon began by saying that the Diocese currently has a deficit of 2.2 million pounds and that steps are being taken to address this involving cutting roles both clergy and support staff which will lead to a reduced service from the Diocese.

He said that an aim to increase income is the best way to solve the deficit but that Parish contributions over the past eleven years had reduced considerably.

Simon reiterated that clergy posts have been cut and that vacant posts are not being replaced. Also there had been staff redundancies in St Martins House and the book shop has now closed.

Parish contributions should be viewed as a gift from parishes to the Diocese, rather than a subscription and Parishes should be encouraged to properly assess these in a fair-minded manner.

Simon also said that the way the Diocese operates in the future will be affected by the formation of Minster Communities.

Simon took a number of questions from the meeting including:

‘Who controls the expenditure?’ – there are various committees and a board of trustees, and ultimately the Bishop of Leicester is in control from a mission perspective.

‘Other sources of income?’ – from the National Church but this has to be applied for and spent on specifically identified projects.

There are also endowments in the Diocese.

A point was made about the well-being of clergy especially in the light of job uncertainty and living in ‘temporary’ rented accommodation which made them feel disposable.

It was felt that creativity was missing from the Diocese for forming solutions to the financial problem.

Simon said it was vital that the Diocese needs to get the bidding right when applying to the National Church.

‘Is the Diocese genuinely expecting more income?’ – Simon said that parish contributions may or may not increase – all the Diocese can do is ask!

He pointed out that the Diocese could well be bankrupt in five years especially as church attendance is down by 45% currently.

A point was made that as the National Church is sitting on 12 billion pounds, that surely some of this could be distributed to allow more priests and split administration into workable areas.

Simon said that if anyone had further questions to contact him via email or ask Avril to contact him.

Gill thanked Simon for coming to the meeting.

December 2024

This was a short business meeting, an opportunity to view the refurbishment of St John Donisthorpe and its transformation into a beautiful community space and hear a little of how this was achieved.

The meeting concluded with Advent Worship led by Red Steve O’Rourke and tea, coffee and mince pies.

Laity Meetings

Four meetings were held during 2024, mostly well attended, they offered the opportunity to listen to each other, to hear and share good news stories and raise concerns and worries all kept confidential. More meetings will be held in 2025.

Newsletter

Three newsletters were produced in 2024, with the next edition planned for March 2025, it will include good news, what’s happening in our churches, and things to pray about etc.

Church reps are asked to send their items to Avril (Deanery Secretary) who would collate the items and produce the newsletter.

Prayer Walks 2024

Over the summer Gill, Noreen, Jean and Geoff took part in several Prayer Walks in the Deanery. Each walk was very different, but all started with worship and short talk before setting off, all offered the same opportunity to talk to people passed on the walk, the time to listen to each other, to pray together and enjoy wonderful hospitality.

One of the walks was from St Helen's along Market Street to Holy Trinity, from there to Ashby Methodist Church to join Ashby Youth for Christ for their monthly Team Prayer Time, this was enjoyed by everyone, before going to the Courtyard Café for coffee.
More walks will take place in 2025.

Deanery Event 2025

It has been proposed that a Deanery event be held on Saturday 21st June starting with breakfast at 9.30am, the day will include bible study, worship and workshops, the venue has yet to be arranged and information will be sent out as soon as it is available.

Minster Community

During the first three months of 2025 the Parish Transition and Ministry team will be leading vocational conversations with existing ministers, both lay and ordained, to talk about how their ministry might look in the future Minster Community (A2A).

There will also be an open session for those not yet involved in ministry and for those interested to find out how they may be able to serve their local church and community as part of a Minster Community.

Parish Contributions for 2025 would, on paper, appear to be sufficient to support four stipendiary posts.

There will then be some key process sessions to help us get from the Working Groups to a point where a proposal can be drafted:

1. A Coordinating Group session on 23rd January 2025

This is a session for the Coordinating Group to study the collated summary of the Working Group reports, and look at the opportunities and challenges arising from the reports. This will then be shared with the parishes.

2. A session for Parish Reps – February 4th 2025 at St Helen's Heritage Centre at 7.00pm

This is a session for parishes to send reps to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Working Groups. The aim will be for parishes to share their feedback on the reports, to state anything they think is missing and to begin to articulate a missional direction for the Minster Community.

3. A service of prayer and reflection.

The aim is to gather all of the work done so far before God – to lament the hard stuff, to thank God for the opportunities, and pray for the proposal-writing stage.

The next step is for the Coordinating Group to begin to draft a Minster Community proposal with support provided by the group facilitators, with the aim to get a first draft of the proposal ready by spring 2025.

The proposal can then go out to PCCs and the Joint Archdeaconry Mission Committee (JAMC) so that a final version could be worked on in time for the summer.

The hope being that the Minster Community will have approval to move into the next phase towards the autumn.

Noreen Mewies

NWL Deanery Lay Chair

Community Outreach

Ashby Foodbank

Work at Ashby Foodbank continues. We are still busy although we have had fewer clients in the year 2024-25 than in the previous year, which hopeful means that people are beginning.

We have a good team of volunteers who serve our community through this project as well as the steering group who help in our strategy decisions. Our Duty Managers and Warehouse Manager work incredibly hard to ensure the smooth running of the foodbank as well as our Administrator who helps so much in doing the extra jobs that need to be done!

We are thankful to all who support us through donations and by giving us support. We particularly thank our trustees, Measham Baptist Church, Emmanuel Church at Swadlincote and of course Ashby Congregational Church, who provide so much physical and prayerful support to us.

Revd. Catherine Booton

Ashby Youth for Christ

2023-2024 was a positive year for AYFC as we were able to strengthen relationships with local schools and invest time and energy with young people.

Our youth groups were well attended, and Rock Solid played a large part in developing young leaders who are now too old to attend the group.

We have also developed and grown our outdoor activities programme, which has been a popular and positive way of growing young people's confidence and interests.

We were able to hold a number of fundraising activities and strengthen relationships with local churches.

Helen Davis
AYFC Centre Director

Packington Ringing Report

Packington has 6 bells, with a tenor weight of 6-2-19cwt in Bb, making them a relatively light ring of 6 in comparison to the rest of the world.

Regular Packington bellringing was re-established in August 2021, (after having no associated band for over 20 years), by Caroline Stewart and the support of Moira Johnson, who is a qualified ringing teacher, mentor, assessor & tutor for the Association of Ringing Teachers.

After the initial teaching of many students, regular practices were put in place on Monday evenings 19:30-21:00, which continue today. Ringing now takes place prior to most church services too, subject to ringer availability.

The band consists of seven associated Packington ringers aged from 10 upwards, and eight supporting/visiting ringers. Packington ringers also attend & support other towers locally – Lullington, Measham, Coleorton, Ticknall & Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Packington is part of the Loughborough district of the Leicester diocese guild of church bell ringers that has been dormant since the pandemic. Good news however, with the election of some new officers a programme for 2025 is in place and a district practice is planned at

Packington in July.

All learners are enrolled onto the Learning the Ropes structured training scheme, run by the Association of Ringing Teachers.

As well as ringing for practices & services, there is usually a quarter peal attempt each Monday evening at 18:30. A Quarter Peal is a performance of non-stop change ringing that lasts approximately 40-45mins and has at least 1260 changes (a Peal being 5040 changes, lasting approximately 2hrs, 45mins).

In 2024, Packington was the leading tower in Leicestershire for the most quarter peals rung in a single tower (42 performances). Of the 94 performances logged online, 82 of which are since the revival of ringing in 2021.

There has been a leadership change this year with Caroline Stewart stepping away from ringing and her role as Tower Captain. Dave Gammon has now taken on this role (subject to PCC approval), supported by Moira Johnson as Ringing Master.

Safeguarding training and DBS checks are all up to date with at least half of the band DBS checked.

The band is still very much thriving and developing, but recruitment will be very much needed soon to increase numbers, as there have been several ringers over the last year or so that have decided to cease ringing.

Dave Gammon
Tower Captain