

Greater Whitbourne Parochial Church Council Annual Report April 2025 for the Year 2024 Parish of Greater Whitbourne

St. Mary - Edvin Loach



St. Michael and All Angels - Upper Sapey



St. James - Tedstone Delamere



St. John the Baptist - Whitbourne



Annual Report – Revd. Preb. Dawn Hyett

Throughout 2024, 3 people received home communions regularly offered by Chris Evans or by Dawn Hyett.

During the Christmas period, for the first time, we were unable to offer holy communion to all four churches on Christmas Day. Two churches held a service of the word lay lead and Chris offered communion by extension. This arrangement was well received, and it is with much gratitude that I thank the leaders of worship and the congregations for embracing this. A similar arrangement will be ongoing for the two major festivals so that we are able to cover services even when clergy are not available.

Baptism and funeral preparation was offered to all who required these pastoral services and a wedding preparation day was held for all the couples married in the greater parish.

Linen from a closed church in the Frome Valley group is being transferred to Edvin Loach. The linen at EL was eaten by an uninvited guest. Measures have been taken to secure the new linen from a similar fate. New linen for Upper Sapey has been made and commissioned for use. These have been entered onto the terriers for both churches.

A full day safeguarding training took place in January, leading to the reissuing of the safeguarding certificate required of all ministers. All safeguarding documents are up to date with thanks to our safeguarding officer for booking and encouraging attendance and for maintaining the high standard of safeguarding in our parish.

A long-standing boundary issue has been resolved and the original boundaries of the Upper Sapey churchyard are being reinstated in the correct position. Fencing and land registration for this is being finalised.

Deanery reorganisation discussions and plans are well underway and a strategy for the future is still being discussed and monitored. Group Ministry and the further training and commissioning of lay worship leaders continues. Soon I hope each church will be equipped to hold services even when an ordained minister is not available.

The new initiative to hold regular healing services has been trialled at Upper Sapey and this was well received and attended. The correct time of day and day of the week is still being trialled to encourage attendance. Thanks to all who have helped with music, prayers and a short homily at these services.

There are so many others to thank. I wish to voice my appreciation for the hard work and support of the Greater Parish offered by the ministry team; Andrew, Alexandra, Chris and Jan.

For our hard-working churchwardens, who hold the churches at a high level of maintenance and readiness.

For the people who do the flowers in the four churches.

The people who keep the churches clean and the gardens maintained so beautifully.

The people who provide refreshments after services.

Those who welcome worshippers.

Each of our churches has people who are willing, trained and very competent acting in the role of Sacristan, to whom I am very grateful.

Our 4 organists and the Greater Whitbourne choir who have contributed mostly to Whitbourne services but in other churches too. Thanks to Hilary the choir conductor.

The DCC members from each church who work tirelessly to maintain each church and to fund-raise for the ongoing expenses.

To our young people's officer and the team who support her on Fun Days and in other ways.

The administrator who has begun work so well and is making the day to day running of the Greater Parish much more manageable. Also, for his ongoing work across the deanery.

The PCC secretary who among other things keeps us all informed of what the diocesan office has for us to take on board.

Well done to all for your work.

Church Warden Reports

St John's Whitbourne Annual report for 2024

We start with a word of gratitude to a few members of the congregation who are no longer with us. Especially to Jerry Cummins, probably one of the longest serving wardens of Whitbourne church and fixer supreme to many hiccups and obstacles that come with the stewardship of a listed building. Also, to John and Sylvia Bland, who moved house during 2024 for their practical overview of many details around the parish. They have left a fine template for others to follow. Thank you too to the volunteers who generously give time to maintaining many tasks including the weekly clock winding, fresh flower arrangements, housekeeping, Sunday morning refreshment rota and the care of the rose beds. The choir practice weekly and regularly contributes to the Sunday morning services with an anthem.

Our usual Sunday morning attendance number is about 30 adults including children with 1 or 2 of the 4 members of the Ministry Team leading services. A variety of services have been held over the year. On Good Friday we had a time of reflection, music and readings. The choir provided the musical heart to a choral evensong in October. Two themed services were held at the village hall - a service to bless Pets and Music Lovers service. At some of these services both financial and food donations were made for Bromyard Food Bank.

The main fundraiser for the upkeep of the church fabric was the harvest supper evening in the village hall. Always popular and well supported. The evening included quizzes and a raffle.

The Quinquennial report highlighted items for attention and over the last months some exterior pointing has been completed, a repair to one window louvre in the bell tower window and moss removed from the Lychgate roof. The annual inspections for fire hydrants, electrical plugs, and servicing the organ and clock were satisfactory and a periodic electrical installation inspection.

A very warm thank you to all who contribute financially or in practical ways to maintain the ability to have a church here in Whitbourne.

Report prepared by Anne Evans – Church Warden

St Mary's, Edvin Loach Annual Report for 2023

Two Churchwardens were in place for the year, Lis Morris and Jeff Salt.

The year saw a continuation of the regular Church service attendance of around 11 people. Again it should be stressed that this is an excellent attendance given the population and location of Edvin Loach.

Services continue to be held on the third Sunday of each month and include our usual and very popular Stir Up Sunday service, our Christmas and Easter services are well attended. A confirmation service was held St Mary's in October hosted by the Bishop of Hereford, Rt. Revd Richard Jackson.

A wedding service was held in June with a marquee and refreshment provided by St Mary's DCC.

One fund raising event, cake decorating, was held at Saltmarshe and District Village Hall, which was well attended and great fun.

Work and activity competed during the year:

Bell tower inspected and found to be in excellent condition with little bird mess or nesting material present. Repair may be needed to one of the wooden bell wheels and consideration is to be given to the re-instatement of at least one of the bells in 2025.

Inspections were carried out on the lightening rod/conductor system and the 5 year electrical test, both successful without any issues raised

Slipped roof tiles put back in place.

200 daffodils were planted near the churchyard entrance gate.

There are a number of small issues to be addressed from the 2023 quinquennial inspection and hedging and stock fence around the churchyard needs to be tidied

Report produced by Lis Morris and Jeff Salt – Church Wardens.

St James, Tedstone Delamere Annual Report for 2024

Financial and services

The planned pattern of services was held in 2024 including a Remembrance Day service. Generally, the attendance was reduced from pre-dry rot work levels.

The purchase of electricity was switched from Scottish Power to the group scheme (Total Energies) and this resulted in about a 25% cost reduction.

VAT payments, made for the dry rot repair works, were recovered. Whilst Collection and donation income was less than 2023, there are sufficient funds in the account to do most of the repair works specified in the 2024 QI. The exception to this is repairs to the boundary wall, and whilst we have already received some donations towards the cost of these, more will be needed.

A special service was held in June to re-open the church after the dry-rot works were completed. This was well attended and very much enjoyed. Thanks go to Kathleen Harris for the catering.

Building and Churchyard

The QI was carried out by James Phillips of Apec Architects Ltd in January and a first-class report was prepared; this details all issues, each with a brief description and photograph and so a very useful working document.

The main issues specified in the QI are pointing works on the church walls – both filling gaps and replacing hard material with lime mortar. The other issue is repairing the boundary wall which has several areas where the wall has completely collapsed. Finding resources to quote for this work is challenging.

The Dry Rot works were completed in early Spring and the only item remaining to be done is to cover the new concrete on both sides of the organ with tiles.

The churchyard was maintained by several volunteers on several occasions.

The safe was removed and sold for scrap.

Report produced by W A North and ratified by Kathleen Harris – Church Wardens

St Michael & All Angels, Upper Sapey Annual Report for 2024

We had our regular service on the second Sunday of each month and usually managed a congregation into double figures. The regular festivals were well attended. This is the first year when we have had our own organist and this has added greatly to the service and the singing.

We had our regular Garden party in the summer and the Carols round the tree at Christmas. This was preceded by a group of hand bell ringers organised by Maureen Williams, making a lovely start to the event and helping to lead the Carol singing afterwards.

These are both Community events which raise a small amount of money for future events but are enjoyed by all who came.

We didn't have a Carol service this year, but we did have the pleasure of welcoming the Bishop of Hereford the Rt. Revd Richard Jackson. to take our Holy Communion service. He and Deborah braved storm Darragh to take the service and to deliver his sermon. It was a real privilege to have him in our little church.

Owing to a shortage of priests we had a Christmas day service, taken by Mark Maddock, but no Holy Communion.

We have had two funerals and one baptism this year.

Film-nights in Olly's Friendship Room have continued with some excellent films being chosen on a rota basis. Attendance is around 12 and thanks to a grant negotiated by Dawn of £380 from the Addenbrooke, Nash and Winnington United Charity and a reduced licence fee negotiated by David Roberts, the future of the film club is secure.

In addition to the monthly coffee mornings Mike and Marion Symmons have held a number of very successful children's and adult fun days in Olly's Friendship Room at half terms and holidays.

Broadband is now a reality, and John Grove has installed a new router and a new cable has been put in the lighting duct to the gate light, terminating in the toilet below the fuse board. The next stage is to set up a Sum Up device.

The ground on the right-hand side of the path where the laurel hedge used to be, has now been successfully seeded with grass. This opens up a view of the church as you walk up the path.

The boiler house is being regularly monitored for dry rot.

The Quinquennial Report items that are urgent have been attended to, but the gutters and downpipes will be painted this year.

The churchyard has continued to be kept in a tidy condition by Andrew Wilde and Bruce Eddie, and others in the gardening team, and we are grateful to them for doing this.

Chris Amphlett and Val Burness continue to do a great job in keeping the church clean and tidy and we must mention Kathleen Harris who provides the most beautiful flower arrangements for all the services, from her own garden.

As well as those just mentioned we would like to thank all those who have helped in various capacities during the year with the working parties, general maintenance and cleaning.

We would also like to thank all those, behind the scenes, who support our services and the general running of the Church but especially Revd. Dawn Hyett who is a regular supporter at all our events, and of course the supporting clergy and many others.

Dawn has produced two magnificent runners for the altar which display the four liturgical colours for the various seasons. They are exactly right for our little church – so thank you Dawn very much.

We now have a signed Settlement Faculty and an accepted quotation for the fencing to the Churchyard boundaries with 2-4 Church Close. Fund raising is in progress to pay for the fence and this will enable the fencing to be completed. An application to Land Registry has been made but they are taking 4 to 6 months to carry this out.

We have managed to honour our commitments to Parish Share for 2024 but our regular income will not be sufficient to meet the costs of running and maintaining the church without substantial additional funding. So, no guarantees can be given over the amount of Parish Share for 2025.

Several new people have moved into the Parish and are taking an active part in the Church, so the future looks bright.

Report produced by David Roberts and Mark Maddock – Church Wardens

Electoral Roll

The Parish of Greater Whitbourne electoral roll stands at 118.

The roll was fully renewed prior to the annual meeting of the PCC 2025 and the next revision will be in six years. 18 people have been added and 10 have been removed.

Anne Evans, Electoral Roll Officer

Financial Report 2024

For a year that started with steeply rising prices and many questions about how the parish would manage financially, the outcome has been a cause of much gratitude.

Tedstone Delamere and Upper Sapey, the churches with fewest reserves, but each recorded a small surplus of income over expenditure, even though Tedstone Delamere only returned to full operation after major dry rot repairs during the year. Edwin Loach and Whitbourne both used reserves to carry out needed maintenance projects, which resulted in deficits for the year.

Advertising in the magazine (£4,047) covered the printing costs (£3,892) with £155 to spare, and we were able to meet our target for Parish Share (£25,200), paid to Hereford Diocese to help cover ministry and many other costs.

During the year a grant was received of £5,853 from the Mustard Seed Fund, a fund run by Hereford Diocese to support church initiatives. As well as supporting the children's Fun Days and other outreach, this will cover the costs of a production of 'Joseph and his amazing technicolour dreamcoat' at the Conquest Theatre, Bromyard in October 2025. It will be a scratch production in which all in Bromyard Deanery, young and not so young, are invited to take part, both onstage and behind the scenes. You will find the relevant entry in our accounts under Common Purse income.

2024 also saw the introduction of a new system in which we pay a part-time administrator to lift some of the admin load that otherwise falls on the Rector. The cost during 2024 was £1,818, and thereby hangs a tale.

A donor, who would like to remain anonymous, has some Premium Bonds. After years with no luck at all, a year ago the right number came up and there was a pay-out. They told me in March 2024 that on the strength of this good fortune, they would like to fund the administrator costs for what remained of the year - £1,470.

Later I found that this was only half the story. The Premium Bond payout last March was only £100. They gave £1,470 on the strength of a £100 payout!

And did God bless this generosity? Remember, this was the first payout that person had received for years. Since that generous gift, they have received a payout every month. By February 2025, the total of payouts reached to within £150 of the £1,470 gift. And what happened next? You guessed it – another payout, of £150.

I have checked these facts. What is going on here? A series of coincidences? How has the law of probabilities been suspended? You will have to decide for yourself. Either there is a benign glitch in the Premium Bond computer, or some higher power is approving a generous, uncalculating donation. As we sometimes say, when we pray coincidences often happen, when we don't, they stop happening.

Both prayers and generosity will always be needed to keep the churches active and well maintained, and they certainly are in the coming year. It is amazing that the four churches and all their activity rely on the efforts and donations of about 100 people. Warm thanks and appreciation are due to each one.

Chris Evans. PCC Treasurer.

Safeguarding

There are one or two DBS applications in progress at the moment, otherwise everyone is up-to-date.

Members of the ministry team have completed Domestic Abuse Awareness training and again, C2 training is up-to-date.

All PCC members completed C1 Foundation training on 18th January this year.

In the Diocesan Office, Carl Steventon is the Safeguarding Advisor and his deputy is Lisa Anderson. I am grateful to them for their support and guidance. I believe that a new administrator is being appointed in a full-time post which will make the DBS process considerably quicker.

Report prepared by Revd. Jan Webb - Parish Safeguarding Officer

Deanery Synod Report for 2024

Main interest has been to clarify and develop a plan for group working across the Deanery. This appears to have the purpose of meeting many of the needs of the churches while there is a reduction of 'paid' clergy available and to seek ways of building work. Communications have been active with offerings from the Archdeacon and Diocesan staff.

Whilst there will still be ordained priests associated and available in the recognised Parishes work can be shared as appropriate where 'willing and able' by other folk with recognised

knowledge, skills and principles also. There is hoped that increased Lay and Clergy training and support continues to be available to meet such Mission in the future. Already to assist group working there has been appointed an Administrator between some of the churches at low cost. To encourage family and children's work supporting each other has started across the Deanery. Clergy and others interested in this development have gained resources to increase activities, work together in schools and develop groups. A community production of Joseph is targeted for October at the Conquest Theatre.

Report prepared by Mike Symmons - Synod Rep Greater Whitbourne Parish

Children's and Youth Work Report for 2024

Christmas Craft Day

We had 14 people attend the craft day, making rag-wreaths, sock snowmen, poinsettias and icing gingerbread. We collected £75 donations which will be used to cover expenses and use of the friendship room. Thanks to Melanie, Mark, Mike and Matty for running the activities.

Christingle

We had a Christingle service at St John's Whitbourne, 18 people attended/took part, 4 were children. Lots of positive feedback. Thanks to Bromyard Co-op for donating the cakes and to Legges for discounted oranges.

Mustard Seed Grant

The shed is still awaiting faculty. This looks like being an *extremely* long process. I had been delaying purchase of other equipment hoping to have somewhere to store it. However, I am now going ahead anyway.

Through the parish office, with Steve Curtis' help, I have put in several orders including the mini-cooker and heatproof stand, parachute, small pool, etc.

Fun Days

Easter fun days will be 14th & 15th April at Upper Sapey

Spring fun days will be 27th & 28th May at Whitbourne Village Hall.

Report prepared by Marion Symmons

Choir Report 2024

The choir has continued to make good progress and has extended its liturgical repertoire adding a couple of more light-hearted secular pieces including an extract from "Captain Noah", performed at the Pet Service in the village hall on the 8th September.

Our core members are stalwart in their support of the choir but sadly, we have not attracted any new singers and John Bland was a great loss when he moved from our community after the Good Friday service. We wish John and Sylvia all the very best and thank them for their support. Despite limited numbers the choir continue to perform an anthem most Sundays and should be congratulated on the quality of tone, pitch and commitment!

Our year started with a tribute to Rick Freeman when we sang his "King's Carol" on the 7th January. We spent several weeks learning music for the Good Friday service put together by Alexandra and Andrew Bullock. The contemporary take on the traditional reproaches worked very well and the service was moving and poignant.

We sang at Tedstone Delamere's service to commemorate the re-opening of the church on the 23rd June and the unaccompanied "Alleluia" and "Jubilate Deo" choir anthems captured the mood of celebration. Whitbourne patronal festival followed on the 30th June with the uplifting "Cantate Domino" Pitoni.

The Pet Service and the Music Lovers Service took place in the village hall on the 8th September and 24th November respectively. Both services were successful in reaching out to a different audience and it was good to welcome contributions from the wider community. Thank you, Chris, for organising this. The autumn also saw our Harvest choral evensong when the choir sang Psalm 150 and the anthem "Thou visitest the earth". This event was not particularly well supported and if we do another evensong, it certainly should not be on a festival day. We sang the beautiful "For the fallen" Sammes for Remembrance Sunday and our Christmas season started with Longlands on the 8th December where we sang Darke's "In the bleak midwinter" and "There is no rose" by Graham Ellis. We ended our year with a selection of biblical and contemporary readings and carols celebrating the Nativity.

The digital baby grand piano on semi-permanent loan via HM from Michael and Louise Fisher is a huge bonus and the organ continues to be maintained by David Gallicher and his new colleague, Colin Willis. There have been a few minor problems always expertly and almost instantly fixed by David.

Singing is not only pleasurable, but it is capable of being cathartic and therapeutic; I hope our contribution to the Sunday services at Whitbourne enhances the experience of worship for our congregation.

Report prepared by Hilary Markland

2024 Belfry maintenance report

All appears in good order.

The Whites (of Appleton) Service report from 2023 is yet to be acted on regarding oversized stays which could potentially cause damage to the bells if the stays don't break appropriately. Whites can provide a pattern (sizes).

The Chimer was tested too, and is functioning correctly.

It had been turned off, despite the warning sign to the contrary, but seems to have retained its data. I turned it off again after the test, assuming there may be a legitimate reason it was deactivated.

Some adjustment may still be required to prevent the N°4 bell hammer from chiming erratically after a period of use. Whites are also able to advise.

Report prepared by Ady Taylor

Parish of Greater Whitbourne
Consolidated Accounts 2024

RECEIPTS	Edvin	Tedstone	Upper	Common		TOTAL	EXPENDITURE	Edvin	Tedstone	Upper	Common		TOTAL
	Loach	Delamere	Sapey#	Whitbourne	Purse*			Loach	Delamere	Sapey	Whitbourne	Purse*	
Tax efficient planned giving	1,312	2,210	1,665	10,835	9,224	25,246	Fundraising activity	86	0	0	200	0	286
Collections at services	1,283	2,300	1,493	4,627	0	9,703	Mission	436	0	0	316	0	752
Other voluntary income	254	0	887	1,200	0	2,341	Parish Share	1,200	2,200	2,000	13,625	6,175	25,200
Tax recovered	544	2,950	1,038	3,419	0	7,951	Organist, verger, ringer	325	0	150	3,647	1,260	5,382
Grants	0	17,000	0	1,250	5,853	24,103	Clergy expenses	0	0	0	0	939	939
Legacies	0	0	0	4,000	0	4,000	Church running exp.	2,658	1,161	3,030	5,245	1,203	13,297
							Utility bills	360	382	788	1,687	0	3,217
TOTAL Voluntary Receipts	3,393	24,460	5,083	25,331	15,077	73,344	Cost of trading	0	0	0	0	3,892	3,892
							Parish administrator	0	0	0	0	1,818	1,818
Fundraising income	110	132	257	1,008	0	1,507	Fees paid on to DCCs	0	0	0	0	2,204	2,204
Interest etc	2,560	0	161	2,385	757	5,863	TOTAL Regular Exp.	5,065	3,743	5,968	24,720	17,491	56,987
Fees (weddings, funerals)	0	0	1,068	929	6,848	8,845	Major church repairs	2,293	17,823		8,082		28,198
Trading/magazine	7	0	0	0	4,040	4,047	Other major repairs	0			0		0
Agency income	0	0	0	942	0	942	Wolverlow churchyard repair	0			0		0
Other eg. rent, tax refund#	70	0	978	419	271	1,738	Agency	0			869		869
							Diocesan Bd of Fin.	0			0	1,612	1,612
TOTAL RECEIPTS	6,140	24,592	7,547	31,014	26,993	96,286	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	7,358	21,566	5,968	33,671	19,103	87,666

* excludes Parish Share income from the 4 churches, £19,025.

Upper Sapey 'Other income' includes income received through use of 'Olly's Friendship Room'. 2024 Income £975.

I confirm that the above gives a true and fair picture of the consolidated accounts for the Parish of Greater Whitbourne.

Signed:

Date:

Parish of Greater Whitbourne
 Consolidated Accounts 2024 - Balances

	Edvin Loach	Tedstone Delamere	Upper Sapey	Whitbourne	Common Purse	TOTAL
BALANCES						
Brought Fwd 1.1.24 Current	8,469	5,843	10,410	12,116	8,197	45,035
Deposit 1	5,000		847	44,939	255	51,041
Deposit 2	44,176		4,016		3,604	51,796
Deposit 3						
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	57,645	5,843	15,273	57,055	12,056	147,872
surplus/deficit for 2024	-1,218	3,026	1,579	-2,658	7,890	8,620
Carried forward 31.12.24	56,427	8,869	16,852	54,397	19,946	156,492
Carried Fwd 31.12.24 Current	7,251	8,869	5044	7,073	15,330	43,567
Deposit 1	5,000		847	47,325	269	53,441
Deposit 2	44,176		4176		4347	52,699
Deposit 3			6785			6,785
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Total carried forward to 2025	56,427	8,869	16852	54,398	19,946	156,492

I confirm that the above gives a true and fair picture of the consolidated accounts for the Parish of Greater Whitbourne.

Signed:

Date: