

# 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

*TO BE ADDED WHEN FINALISED*

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 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> April at Upper Sapey

Spring fun days will be 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> June and the unaccompanied “Alleluia” and “Jubilate Deo” choir anthems captured the mood of celebration. Whitbourne patronal festival followed on the 30<sup>th</sup> June with the uplifting “Cantate Domino” Pitoni.

The Pet Service and the Music Lovers Service took place in the village hall on the 8<sup>th</sup> September and 24<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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