



Agenda and Reports for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting



St Stephen on trial. From the window in our Chancel

Held in the Church and online via Zoom
Sunday 16 April 2023 at 11.45 a.m.

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Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023

Agenda

- 1 Prayers
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of meeting held on 24 April 2022
- 4 Election of Churchwardens
- 5 Election of PCC
- 6 Approval of Sidespersons and Senior Sidespersons
- 7 Discussion and approval of the following reports:
 - a The Electoral Roll
 - b The Activities of the PCC, its Committees and related Parochial Operations
 - c The Churchwardens' Report
 - d The Activities of the Deanery Synod
- 8 The Financial Statements for 2022
- 9 Appointment of the Independent Examiner of the Accounts
- 10 Questions and Announcements
- 11 Closing Remarks



Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

24 April 2022

The meeting commenced at 12 noon in the Church after the morning service. The Rev'd Kevin Maddy and 34 parishioners were present in the church, with 3 joining online.

PRAYERS were led by the Rev'd Kevin Maddy.

APOLOGIES were received from Dr Peter Toon and Jane Huxley.

THE MINUTES of the meeting on 30 May 2021 had been published online. After one amendment had been announced, Mrs Jean Baker proposed, and Miss Alex Knight seconded, that they be signed as a correct record, and this was agreed unanimously.

MATTERS ARISING. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

VESTRY MEETING. Mr Stephen Barker and Miss Shirley Hagger had been duly proposed and seconded; no other names were put forward, and they were unanimously accepted to continue in their role as the churchwardens.

REPRESENTATIVES ON DEANERY SYNOD. Dr Philip Knight remained the church's representative, having been elected two years previously for three years.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL 2022–2023:

Dr Peter Toon had laid down his ministry as a Reader and was thus no longer on the PCC after this meeting. However, Sally Waters as our Reader was *ex officio* a member of the PCC, as were the churchwardens, and Philip Knight as Deanery Synod representative. Eight other people had been duly nominated and seconded before the meeting to serve on the council. No other names were put forward, and these eight were unanimously voted into office:

Mrs Jean Baker	Mr Peter Brown	Miss Enid Dixon
Mrs Angela Doe	Mrs Barbara Jackson	Miss Alex Knight
Mr Robert Mathews	Mr James Taylor	

SIDESPERSONS. All who had helped last year were willing to continue, although since the Covid-19 pandemic it was not usually necessary to have more than one person on duty. Others however, were willing to step in occasionally.

(Senior Sidespersons marked with an asterisk):

* Peter Brown	* Brian Kennett	* Libby Nichols
Rosie & Jeremy Barford	Angela Doe	Rhiannon Evans
Graham Jackson	Rita Kennett	Alex Knight
Rita Lockwood	Robert Mathews	

These were approved unanimously.

ELECTORAL ROLL. This was stated by Enid Dixon's report to be 80. Sally Waters proposed and Mrs Jean Baker seconded that this be accepted by the meeting; this was unanimously approved.

REPORTS ON THE WORK OF THE PCC AND OTHER GROUPS.

These had been distributed beforehand. A question by Dr Philip Knight as to the likelihood of the church's buying its own Zoom licence was answered by the Rector: we intended to continue with services in the church and also broadcast online, and it was realised that we should have to get an internet connection in the church. Barbara Jackson proposed, and Margaret Horwood seconded that the reports be accepted by the meeting and this was unanimously approved.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT.

This had also been distributed beforehand; there were no questions, and it was proposed by James Taylor, seconded by Libby Nichols and unanimously approved.

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT.

This report, by Rosemary Walters, was also received, there were no questions and it was proposed by James Taylor, seconded by Libby Nichols and unanimously approved.

The Rector announced two visits to the church by the Bishop in her visits around the Deanery in the coming week: for Evening Prayer on Thursday and Evensong on Sunday.

FINANCE. The Treasurer, Miss Alexandra Knight, had also prepared and circulated her report and accounts for the previous year, 2021, during which the impact of Covid had continued to be felt.

Income had not kept up with expenses. Income had been about £60,000 and expenses about £90,000. The deficit was thus about £30,000 for the year. The income in 2020 had been topped up with a Gift Day, but this had not been repeated in 2021, and Planned Giving had been about 8 per cent below 2019. The pandemic had caused gaps in the income, but it was hoped that the gradual return to normality would lead to increased income, especially from the church hall. We had however benefited from the Government's Job Retention Scheme. Unlike most previous years we had no cash balance to help us out.

The Parish Share had reduced very slightly in 2021, but we were still five months behind in paying it. The Deanery had asked for churches to commit to pay the 2022 Share in full, but this was something we simply could not do.

The clock had been repaired, thanks to donations.

If we were to build toilets, which would greatly contribute to the letting of the church for public events, we should need to raise considerable funds, despite the availability of some grants. This scheme could not detract from the day-to-day running expenses of the church.

Alex stressed the importance of legacies to the church, and appealed to anyone writing a will.

The Budget for 2022 was explained with the visual aid of a long paper chain, with each of the 88 links representing £1,000. Coloured links represented our income, our bank account, and the amount out of this year's income needed to pay last year's Parish Share. This brought out the need to raise funds, as well as day-to-day expenses, and would clearly be an uphill struggle. About £2,000 to £2,500 per month extra was needed just to stand still. A Stewardship Campaign was needed, but would even this be enough? We needed to be more radical.

More hall lettings, and a 200-Club were two things but much more was needed. Possibly the Committee Room could be let out to generate long-term income. Closer work with Blean could perhaps lead to savings.

However, we had come through a difficult period with deep faith and a dedicated congregation.

Val Thistleton asked how we compared with other parishes. Alex said others were also struggling.

Jeremy Barford asked about Restricted Funds. Alex replied that there was a Churchyard Fund, but most was in the Fabric Fund. Normal Quinquennial repairs would cost about £30,000. The Furnishing Fund had been used for the new lighting.

We had a card reader as many people now had little cash on them, but it was not used much—one time was the Carol Service. Many of the congregation now paid with standing orders. There were donation buttons on the website.

QUESTIONS: Sally Waters asked if we would return to having collection plates passed round, as is happening again in the cathedral.

— The Rector said we would be discussing it again at the next PCC.

Angela Doe said she felt we needed to publicise the running costs of the church.

—Steve replied that this information was on the website.

Shirley Hagger proposed that the Financial Reports and Accounts be accepted. This was seconded by Angela Doe and agreed unanimously.

The Rector expressed everyone's thanks to Alex for the many hours of hard work she put in, and also to Peter Brown who helped greatly with the money. The meeting expressed its gratitude with applause.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER.

The Independent Examiner of the accounts, Peter Barton, FCA, was said to be happy to continue. Barbara Jackson proposed him, Alex Knight seconded him and he was unanimously reappointed.

RECTOR'S NOTICES:

Kevin said that there were some positive financial points: There was to be a new 200-Club, with draws after Pentecost, and the Romanian congregation was able to use our church on Tuesday mornings, for which they gave us a donation. There were also concerts coming up in the church.

We had had 8 baptisms, 7 interments of ashes, 1 wedding and 6 funerals. Sunday congregations were around 50 people, and he hoped for further post-Covid progress, and for more children to join those who came now.

Relationships with the schools needed to be reestablished after the pandemic; the infants were coming in in the following week. The Archbishop's School was not at present using the church.

He paid tribute to Dr Peter Toon's ministry over the years and thanked him in his absence.

There would be no Evensong on 15 May as there was a farewell Evensong for Dean Robert in the Cathedral that day.

The Christian Aid service would now be held on 22 May at 6 p.m. in lieu of Evensong.

Appeals were made for more people to become intercessors (maybe simply reading intercessions prepared by someone else), holy dusters and bellringers, and to help with the flowers (not even necessarily arranging them themselves) and with baptisms. There was also a need for another representative on Christians Together in Canterbury after Christiane Crabtree's death.

Enid Dixon asked for members to suggest to others that they join the Electoral Roll, as numbers were dwindling.

The 8 a.m. Holy Communion was in danger of ceasing to function, and Kevin said he would have a conversation with the few people who attended to see if they wished it to continue.

An account on TripAdvisor had recently opened.

QUESTIONS:

Jean Baker asked how many people joined in the services online. Steve Barker said there were five streams live that morning, and there were usually 10–15 during the week, but one could not tell how long they watched for. YouTube sent figures each month. The last figure was 918 in 28 days.

The Meeting was closed at 1.00 p.m. with the Grace.



St Stephen. Mosaic in the cathedral of Monreale, Sicily

THE ELECTORAL ROLL FOR THE YEAR 2022

We have 80 persons listed on the Electoral Roll

We have said goodbye to Don and Ruth Niblett who have moved to be nearer their family, but we welcome Alex Lister and David Woods.

A PLEA: We are gradually diminishing in numbers and 'boots on the ground' are becoming limited due to age or infirmity. I am not permitted to approach individuals personally and tout for business but should any current members of the Congregation—new or old—wish to consider becoming enrolled on the Church Electoral Roll and have not already done so, would they please make themselves known to me?

If enrolled on the Church Electoral Roll, members have voting rights at the APCM and if enrolled on the Electoral Roll for 6 months may be voted on to the PCC.

Please think about this for the coming year (during which the Church will also enter into an interregnum) and maybe the numbers for the Electoral Roll may increase and new faces will appear on the PCC.

Enid Dixon, Electoral Roll Officer.



ANNUAL REPORTS

Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council has continued to meet regularly. As we left the most dangerous phase of the Covid pandemic arrangements were gradually relaxed: the seating in the church, the entrance and exit of the choir, the giving of the Eucharist and the wearing of masks. The PCC meetings continued to be held on Zoom however, although the May meeting will be in church.

It was decided to keep the Pews News in the online format rather than revert to the production of paper copies, which had been very time-consuming.

Safeguarding of our members and visitors is both a moral and a legal concern nowadays, and we have now found an experienced person to take over as safeguarding officer for the future. This also affects access to the hall (and toilets) by people using the church at times when groups are hiring it, and thus the use of our hall and committee room as a source of necessary church income—all matters for the PCC.

The PCC was glad to authorise the use of the church by the Romanian congregation in Canterbury, and agreed to the new Parish Giving Scheme and to the new names to assist at the Eucharist. Another matter discussed was the use of offering tokens, as several people who contribute to the church by electronic payments like to have something to put in the plate instead of letting it pass by them. It is understood that new tokens are being designed and arrangements may soon be made to use them.



St Stephen above our south door

The old 200-Club has been run again, as the 100-Club, and despite the present continuous demands on everybody's money has raised some useful income.

We also gave consent to house the Catching Lives Winter Shelter in the hall, as before the pandemic, but the Catching Lives ran into problems of insurance and the scheme was unable to use churches this last winter.

Arrangements for what will happen here after Kevin's retirement have remained uncertain—the decision is largely made by higher authority—but things seem to be becoming slightly clearer at last! One thing is certain—we shall miss his calm guidance and his friendship.

Robert Mathews, PCC Secretary

Acorn Community Café

We enjoy our Wednesday mornings—there are usually about 25–30 people there although people don't necessarily come every Wednesday, so in fact we have about 35 to 40 people whom we see at various mornings. This last year we have seen an increase in people from the community joining us—which has been our aim. We have renamed the coffee mornings 'Acorn Community Café' in the hope that it has a wider appeal—so it is rewarding to have more friends from the community joining us. It's great to hear all the chatter and laughter. Two people have offered to join the team—it's lovely to have more help in running the mornings.

We should quite like to have a banner that could be put up along the hall wall outside to help advertise the morning each Wednesday.

We continue to have smaller charity mornings, which seems to work well, and manages to raise funds for both local charities and for church funds—

23/3/2022—A sale of books and puzzles raised funds to help towards the loop system in the church hall.

18/5/2022—Christian Aid sale: £217.40.

21/9/2022—Macmillan sale of books, unwanted gifts, cards and baked goods: £270.11.

25/1/2023—Sale of unwanted gifts, paperbacks and baked goods: £190.30. This was shared between the Baptist church food bank and St Stephens's church.

Each week coffee money and the sale of baked goods raises £50–£60 which is for church funds.

A big thank you to all who help with the running of the mornings—you are a great team to work with.

Jenny and Libby

Bellringing

Although we are back to ringing regularly again unfortunately, we still have to arrange Sunday ringing to ensure we have enough ringers and rely heavily on the St Dunstan's ringers. I think last Christmas was the first Christmas I can remember that our bells were not able to ring due to lack of numbers. This meant a recruitment drive and I am very pleased to say we now have 9 learners of whom 5 can ring unaided, but not quite up to Sunday service ringing standard yet. May I take this opportunity to thank Paul Davis (Vice-Captain) and Len Huckstep (St Dunstan's Captain) for all the hard work they have put in assisting me to teach these learners. Unfortunately, we will be unable to ring this Easter too for the same reason. Hopefully, if all our learners stay, we will be back to ringing for these festivals next year.

During 2022 we rang a total of 95 times throughout the year and 43 were for Sunday Service ringing; 41 quarter peal attempts of which 32 were successful. This is an excellent result, and many were new methods which we have learnt. We also rang for one wedding, 49 Monday evening practices and 2 special events which were for the Funeral of Her Majesty The Queen and the other on St Stephen's Day.

Monday evening practices have continued to be very popular for ringers from other towers to attend and on sometimes we have had 25 ringers present. This is wonderful, but hard work to ensure everyone has an even go at ringing. A variety of methods have been rung, from beginners to advanced.

If you would like to continue to hear the bells, we still need some more ringers. Anyone interested in learning to ring should contact me for more information. Anyone from the age of 10 is able to learn to ring. You could even make it a family activity!

My thanks go out to all the support I have had, and particularly to the St Dunstan's band who regularly help us out.

Jane Huxley, Tower Captain



St Stephen's church, Calgary

Children's Work

We run St Stephen's Seekers based on when the children are planning to attend church rather than putting it on every Sunday, and use a WhatsApp group to communicate attendance. On Sundays when we run seekers we have a steady group of around 6–8 children, with ages ranging from babies to teens. Activities that take place across in the hall have included butterflies, Valentine's Day cards, and treasure maps. They are really enjoying sharing what they have learnt with the rest of the congregation and their contributions are often thoughtful as well as entertaining. Several of our Sunday School children are now part of the trebles in our choir and therefore take an increased active role in our services with encouragement from the rest of the choir and congregation. Please think about if there is anyone else you could encourage to join us as newcomers or visitors who might want to explore taking part in Sunday school. Finally we continue to run festival events such as Good Friday and Christmas Eve family services. We appreciate your continued support and prayers for our children and young people's work at St Stephen's.

Sophie Barker

Churchyard

The Churchyard Steering Group exists to enhance the churchyard and to improve the experience of those visiting St Stephen's. We have cleared some areas and planted native species to improve natural barriers while ensuring that people can walk around the churchyard in safety.

Special mention must be made of the Churchyard Working Party which meets on the first Monday of each month to carry out general gardening and maintenance tasks. This is a group of stalwart volunteers who have made an enormous difference to the appearance of the churchyard. Their work has been recognised and much appreciated by visitors whether to visit a grave, to enjoy the peace or to explore the history and ecology.

Our 'Adopt-a-Grave' scheme has worked well but, during the pandemic, it was difficult to get more people involved. However, we are now keen to re-launch the scheme and would encourage anyone who is interested to contact us by emailing: churchyard@ststephenscantebury.net.

We have submitted a faculty for an extension to the New Garden of Remembrance to the South of the church and for a Quiet Garden below the East window. A further faculty will be submitted for an information board which will aim to provide an explanation of what visitors will see as they walk around.

Angela Doe

Church Hall

This is a slightly happier Hall Report than last year.

Despite losing the Classroom who went totally online following the pandemic, and the Hackington Horticultural Club and the Over 50s folding, and the City Church Youth Group moving into new office premises which has enabled them to host their Youth Group there, the Hall has had a successful year.

New Groups have come and gone, due to the lingering legacy of the financial impact of the pandemic. But we have been lucky that other groups have emerged that have filled the gap and financially the Hall has had a reasonably successful year, and has returned financially to pre-pandemic days (see the Treasurer's Report). But it has meant the Booking Secretary using some logistical creativity in order to keep the money flowing in (although this would probably have been true in any case).

However, the hall is now beginning to experience the fallout from the cost-of-living crisis. Hence the departure of some short-lived bookings, and children's parties not taking place, and it is noticeable that some are waiting until payday before they pay the booking fee; whilst others upon being told of the fee decide not to take the booking enquiry further.

The Hall itself is also being hit with ever-increasing bills, so the Hall Committee have proposed an increase to the current fees which will come into effect from September 2023. The increase is a balance of covering our energy bills and not causing the groups already in place to fold.

Enid Dixon (Hall Booking Secretary)

Eco Church

My first full year as Eco Church rep has been a veritable eye-opener. Until I assumed this role, I didn't realise how much we'd done at St Stephen's to become more eco-friendly. Among other things, I knew nothing about our recyclables collections or our laudable efforts to save energy, and I knew little about the excellent work of our churchyard group.

Likewise, until I joined the deanery eco group, I had no idea what other churches were doing. I'm pleased to report that they're doing a great deal.

I have attended two meetings of the Canterbury Biodiversity Network, which gave me a clearer idea of what is being done to counteract the alarming loss of biodiversity in our region. I also visited Wildwood with the CBN, where I learned about their exciting project to introduce bison and Iron Age pigs to Kent.

For me, however, the highlight of the year has been the Lenten collection for the excellent charity Tools with a Mission, which provides tools and Bibles to Africa. I've already delivered three large carloads of donations to the TWAM collector—and I still have at least one more delivery to make!

To all donors: many, many thanks. I'm genuinely overwhelmed by your generosity.

James Taylor

The Friends' of St Stephen's

After an absence of over two years because of the pandemic, we were delighted to join the Residents' Associations at the celebration of Her Late Majesty's platinum jubilee in June 2022 and to re-introduce ourselves to everyone. We produced an exhibition of her life, offered tea and scones on Friday 3 June, and greeted people at our stall in the field behind the hall on the Sunday, welcoming new members.

We began our events again with a Nosh and Knowledge Quiz in October. The evening was well-attended, and it was lovely to welcome everyone back for a fun evening.

An annual newsletter is planned each January for members outlining our plans for the coming year as well as some historical context for the works we hope to support, and we have been raising funds to help towards the cost of repairs to the stained-glass windows and hope that work can begin soon.

We look forward to several events during 2023 and hope to see you at as many of them as possible. If you are interested in joining us, please contact: friends@ststephenscanterbury.net

Angela Doe

Mothers' Union

It has been a better year for the Mothers' Union with life getting back to some normality. We have been able to meet face-to-face all year which makes a lot of difference. We have had a varied programme including meetings in the hall as well as outside activities. We had our annual lunch meeting to start the year, followed by our Annual Meeting where officers were elected and the accounts adopted. We had our Lenten Reflection led by the Rev'd Dr David Vannerley and on Mothering Sunday distributed little handmade boxes with handmade chocolate hearts in them and Simnel Cake after the service in the church hall. Other meetings included the Festival Service in the Crypt to welcome the new Trustee Board—we have no Diocesan President at the present time. We had a couple of Speakers, Jennifer Llewellyn on her 50 years in MU and why she joined and Daniele Ligneau-Wilton who is our Diocesan Action and Outreach Officer, giving us an update on our link branches in South Sudan and Nigeria. A couple of us helped in different ways at the Lambeth Conference, which was very rewarding. We visited the Fifth Trust by bus for our outing to look round and then have lunch, then a Fish and Chip Supper on Tankerton Slopes, as well as general meetings in the church hall. We unfortunately lost three members during the year—Aileen and Martin to Australia and Kathleen Vinten who died just before Christmas. They are all greatly missed and we give thanks for their time and devotion to the MU during their membership in St Stephen's. We welcomed towards the end of the year Julia Tunnicliffe to our branch from St Dunstan's.

We provided knitted knee blankets for parishioners to use during the cold weather when the church was not too warm. We were helped by one or two parishioners who joined in and we thank them for their help. We did a sponsored Knitathon at the beginning of the knitting of blankets and raised £295 of which £145 went to the church and £150 went to MU Funds.

We would welcome anyone who would like to join us in our work to support and encourage marriage and family life and help those in adversity. We have members in 84 countries with some 4 million members worldwide and it would be good to see it continue to do this work for years to come, but we cannot do it without new members, particularly younger people, and our members can be married, single, divorced, male or female as we are an all-inclusive organisation, coming forward to carry on the good work.

We have been well supported by the Rector and hope that any future Rector will support us and become a member if they are not one already!

Margaret Horwood, Branch Leader

Music

2022 saw our choir back at full strength, singing two services each Sunday throughout the year (apart from a holiday break in August), supporting the worship of St Stephen's through the leading of hymn-singing, anthems carefully chosen to match the readings and theme of services, psalms and canticles for Evensong, and Mass settings for our Eucharist.

We have welcomed a small number of new members to the choir in the past year, and our group of Trebles are finding their voices at their Wednesday evening rehearsals. They have sung in a couple of Sunday services and will be doing more as they become more confident.

As well as our services at St Stephen's, over the past year the choir have also sung services in Canterbury, Rochester and Southwark Cathedrals, and finally got to sing in Exeter Cathedral which was postponed from 2020.

I'd like to thank Kevin for his constant support of the musical life of our church, and to thank every member of our choir; they really are an amazing group of musicians—and there are not many parish churches that can offer the level of choral music that they achieve week by week at St Stephen's. If you enjoy their music and it uplifts your worship, please let the choir know!

Stephen Barker, Organist and Choirmaster

'Nutkins' Toddler Group

We have a good team heading this group with one coming in before the session to set up the toys and activities, and one who then helps with the general running of the group. I am there as the Leader to oversee everything and provide the refreshments every week with the help of a grandmother who comes with her husband and granddaughter. Our numbers fluctuate but we have a good nucleus of mums and children each week and they all seem to get along well. We also have several nationalities with us who are always welcomed to our group. We have been able to give a donation at the end of each term as rent for the hall which comes out of our weekly fee which is only £1.50 per family, which is quite good. We did have a visit from Father Christmas again this year and each child was given a book as a gift. We hope to continue to go from strength to strength and continue to provide this important service to the young mums. Perhaps in 2023 we can get something set up to involve the actual church for perhaps a short service.

Margaret Horwood, Leader of the Toddler Group



East wall of our chancel

Pastoral Group

Group Members: Margaret Horwood (convenor); Mary Brown, Libby Nichols, Enid Dixon, Sally Waters, Shirley Hagger and the Rev'd Dr Kevin Maddy.

During this last year we have met for times when we discussed events over the last year and we all managed to keep in touch with the majority of parishioners who the members felt might be isolated and need help.

We have since lost two of our members, Aileen Gardham who now resides in Australia and Peter Toon who has retired although still on the Prayer Chain.

'TEA @ 3' has been a great success with around 25+ people attending each month. We have a quiz each month set by Sally Waters and tea and cake is served at 3.00 pm. We had an excellent Christmas party where Christmas fair was served in between entertainment from an excellent jazz singer, Dulcie May Moreno who was accompanied by Steve on guitar and three lay clerks from Canterbury Cathedral who sang carols for us. We are getting more people coming along through advertising, word of mouth, or being invited to come along.

THE PRAYER CHAIN has been updated and continues to provide emergency and much needed prayer for those in need. Margaret Horwood oversees its work along with Libby Nichols and anyone who would like prayers offered either for themselves or on behalf of someone else should contact either one. Messages are now sent by email or WhatsApp to ensure the same message is received by everyone as one or two had got slightly altered in passing them on. If anyone would like to be part of this important ministry, please speak to either Margaret or Libby.

THE COMMUNITY LUNCHESES: We had two lunches in 2022, one in July rather than the Afternoon Tea offered in May at 1.30 pm. It was felt this was not a good time for most people who go to the lunches and a Christmas Lunch at the beginning of December. It is hoped these connections with the school continue as they did before but with two part-time headteachers and a new cook is not on the same wavelength as it was in Stuart Pywell's time. Just watch this space.

ANNIVERSARY CARDS have continued to be sent to those who have been baptised in our church as well as cards for other occasions for which we are extremely grateful to a member doing this on behalf of the parish.

Members continue to either visit or telephone parishioners who are unwell or housebound to make sure they are kept in touch with the parish life, and the numbers have increased quite a lot over the last year.

Margaret Horwood, Convenor



Bedale church, Yorkshire

Property

QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

The quinquennial survey was carried out in July 2022 by Clague Architects. Overall, the report did not highlight any major building problems but the ongoing programme of stone replacement and masonry repairs will continue through 2023. The other major expenditure will be a programme of repairs and cleaning to the stained glass windows and a survey has been arranged with Cathedral Glass, to be carried out during spring 2023.

OUTSTANDING FACULTIES.

Two Faculty applications are outstanding, one more important than the other; the Faculty submission for an extension to the Garden of Remembrance is urgent because the existing area is nearly full. However this was discussed with the DAC Secretary in March 2023, so hopefully the scheme will now go ahead within the next couple of months. The other Faculty, removing the choir stalls in the chancel, has still to be agreed.

FLOOD TO NAVE

Following torrential rain in November 2022, the nave was flooded for three quarters of its length and there was no option but to remove and dispose of the carpet. Although there was exceptional rainfall the road gullies in Hales Drive should have been adequate to take the volume of water if they had not been blocked. However, because they were blocked rainwater found its way to the South Porch door and then into the Church.

The KCC Councillor for Canterbury City North was invited to the Church to look at the problem and he was very helpful in contacting KCC Highways to complain about the standard of maintenance to the road gullies. Hopefully this has now been dealt with.

Within the churchyard the four soakaways were inspected and all were clear; the comment from our architect sums up the problem: 'The Church storm water drains can cope with the rain falling on the path from the gate to the south porch but cannot cope with the water flooding down Hales Drive'.

A small improvement has been made at the first gully to direct water into the gully and the soakaway. New carpet was fitted to the ramp from the porch into the Church.

RIDGE TILES

A number of ridge tiles were lost in a storm in October but have now been replaced.

SMART METER

A Smart meter has now been fitted to the gas supply in the boiler house—a job originally booked for 1 February and fitted 21 March 2023!

CHURCH WASTE BIN COLLECTION

Although this may seem a minor issue it became a major problem earlier this year. Following the change of the Council contract for waste collection, the new contractor, who happens to be an in-house team, refused to collect the Church landfill bin arguing that the Church was not domestic and therefore should be charged for the service, but despite numerous calls to the Council it was not until the local Councillor got involved that the problem was overcome.

EVERYDAY MAINTENANCE

The boilers and fire extinguishers have been serviced regularly and the portable electrical equipment tested.

CHURCH HALL

A hearing loop has been installed and is available to all those hiring the Hall. The gas heaters were serviced in September 2022, and the fire extinguishers and the portable electrical equipment tested.

Peter Brown



St Stephen, holding stones and a martyr's palm.
St Stephen's church, Norwich

Theology Group

St Stephen's Theology Group continues to flourish. We have met in person and on-line in the months of the year where the darkness of night and the cold prevent people from venturing out. In May and June last year we had talks on Edith Stein and Etty Hillesum—two women who briefly met in the hell of a Nazi concentration camp in 1942. Since the new academic year in September we have had talks and discussions on analogies between medical and theological language, the possibilities and impossibilities of lay presidency at the Eucharist, contemporary pilgrimage and what might motivate it and tried to answer the question 'what are church schools for?'. The Canon Librarian of Canterbury Cathedral introduced us to the theological poetry of Anne Ridler and Father Kevin explored the question of whether Christians are meant to affirm or deny the self. A full programme is being developed for next year.

Dr Philip Knight

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

2022 was the year in which we began to think about life after the covid pandemic, and moving to a position where things felt more back to how they were before. Any remaining restrictions on the way that we worshipped together were lifted, and the PCC decided that those who felt comfortable doing so could share the common cup during communion again, that we could receive communion at the altar rail, and that there was perhaps less need to leave rows of pews empty throughout the church, gradually leaving just a couple of more distanced areas on the south side of the nave. In such an unprecedented situation, it's difficult to balance the feelings and concerns of everyone, but hopefully we've managed to tread a line that works for most of you.

We have continued to live-stream our services, and this has become a much-appreciated offering for those who are unable to get to St Stephen's, whether because of ill health or being away from Canterbury—and also those who enjoy seeing members of their families taking part.

We have a wonderful community of people who work behind the scenes at St Stephen's to make our worship and other events run smoothly—many of these events you'll read about in other reports presented here, but special mention to those who read and lead the intercessions, bellringers that call us to worship each week, members of the choir who spend many hours preparing music for our worship, flower arrangers, Sophie who leads the Seekers, the Holy Dusters who keep our church clean, members of PCC and sub-committees—especially Peter Brown who chairs the Property Committee, ensuring that St Stephen's building is kept in good repair. Our churchyard provides an oasis of calm within the local community and a haven for wildlife; thank you to Angela and the team who work tirelessly at the beginning of each month.

One of the legal responsibilities of the Church Wardens is to ensure that the inventory is checked, and we can confirm that everything is duly accounted for.

We have been very lucky over the past years to have Rev'd Dr Kevin Maddy as our Rector and we give thanks for his ministry amongst us, along with Sally, our licensed Reader. We also thank our retired clergy, especially Rev'd Dr David Vannerley.

The next year is going to be challenging in a number of ways, but especially so as Kevin will be retiring in October, and we enter a period of interregnum of unknown length. There will be an opportunity to give thanks for Kevin's ministry amongst us later in the year, and we have already been assured of the Archdeacon's support throughout the process.

Stephen Barker and Shirley Hagger, Churchwardens



*The stoning of Stephen
Altar
Fayence church
Var, France*

RECTOR'S REPORT

It does not seem possible that this is my last report for an APCM, and I am very grateful for the privilege of having being able to serve St Stephen's for the last nine years. Despite our falling numbers and aging congregation we continue to be a busy parish, and I am sure that will stand the parish in good stead as it looks to the future. At the beginning of 2022 we were just beginning to recover from the Covid epidemic and things moved quite slowly last year. However, into 2023 we have started to pick up speed and this year we have four weddings booked and some baptisms in the pipeline. Our finances have improved slightly, and I think there is now optimism about the future. Our pastoral activities provide some of the highlights of our parish life, and I would like to thank Margaret, Libby and Sally for all that they do in this respect. The preaching at St Stephen's continues to be of a high quality, and my special thanks go to my colleagues, Fr David and Sally, together with our regular visitors Stacey Rand and Peter Clough. Music plays a most important part in the life of our Church and I would like to thank Steve and the choir for the way in which they inspire us with their quality weekly contributions. There are many others I need to thank for making our parish life so varied and invigorating: Angela and those who work tirelessly to keep our Churchyard looking so well; the Friends and their activities to support the work of the Church; Philip and all those who keep our minds fed through the theology group; Jane and Paul and their team of bellringers who grace us with their call to worship; Ann and our serving team, together with all those who read, intercede, act as sidespersons and assist with worship. We are lucky at St Stephen's to have a small group of children who attend when they can, and I am grateful to Sophie for leading the work of our Seekers and to Steve for fostering our young ones in the young choristers. There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes and I would like to thank Steve and Shirley for their work as wardens; Alex and Peter for their work with our finances; Peter and Brian for keeping our property in order; and Robert and the members of our PCC for all their careful deliberations and decisions, as well as those who clean and decorate the Church. Although I should not single out a particular individual, I have to thank Steve for going above and beyond in his support for the parish in addition to his work with the choir and as a warden. Not only is he absolutely indispensable as our resident technical expert, producing our weekly internet Services, but he also looks after Pews News, produces posters and advertising, and organises and prints out Service booklets. No doubt, as usual, I will have forgotten someone in my list of thanks, but I do thank you all for whatever you do to support the life of this parish and to make it such a lovely place to serve.

As you know, I will retire from active ministry at the end of October this year and we will be moving on to pastures new in West Yorkshire. I wish the parish of St Stephen's every blessing as it seeks to move into the next chapter. There is every reason to hope that, as we continue the recovery from the Covid years, the life of the Church will expand and grow. The Church of England has set a target of doubling the number of young people in Church by 2030, and that should not prove too difficult. As families and young people start to move back into Hales Place, there are opportunities for mission and for creating links with that bit of the parish that were lost when the houses were sold into multiple occupancy. I think that the parish should look forward with excitement to what comes next, and I know that the Archdeacon of Canterbury will be very supportive in that journey. Thank you all for making my time here so happy and fruitful, and I pray every blessing for the future of St Stephen's. God bless you all.

Kevin



Picture of St Stephen at St Stephen's House, Oxford

DEANERY REPORT

Celebrating the Deanery: 2022–2023

MEETINGS: Deanery Synod met at:

- **St Peter's** in June when we explored successes, developments and new ideas for the Deanery Mission Plan.
- **St Nicholas Sturry** in October with a positive presentation by Rev'd Nick White, our Deanery Mission Estates Enabler, and a General Synod report by Neil Logan Green.
- **St Michael and All Angels Harbledown** in February which included the installation of Rev'd Jo Richards as Area Dean, contributions on various aspects of the Deanery Mission Plan by the members of the Deanery Mission and Ministry Team and a General Synod report by Holly Adams.

PERSONNEL:

- In the course of this year we said farewell and thanks for all his hard work at All Saints' and, as Assistant Area Dean, with the Deanery Mission Plan, to **Rev'd Phil Grieg**.
- We thanked **Rev'd Mark Griffin** and **Janet Bentley** for their caring and conscientious terms as Area Dean and Co Lay Chair as Mark handed over to Rev'd Jo Richards and Janet stepped down from the Lay chair role.
- We welcomed **Rev'd Preb Gillean Craig** to Sturry in a part time role in collaboration with a Methodist colleague.

Bishop Rose visited the Deanery in April and encountered a variety of people and places. A letter of appreciation for her experiences and the initiatives suggested in the Deanery Mission Plan followed.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Working together on aspects of the Deanery Mission Plan this year, Deanery highlights have been:

- **Living Lent Together:** a Deanery Lent leaflet encouraging folk to join groups across the Deanery.
- **Caring in a Crisis:** the first of a series of occasional networking events bringing together many of the support agencies in Canterbury for sharing and encouragement.
- **Deanery Eco meetings** to support and develop positive ways forward in each parish.
- **A Deanery Newsletter** publicising information and good news.
- **Regular General Synod Reports** keeping us up to date with national initiatives.

PUBLICITY: A Deanery Facebook page and Easter and Christmas services advertised in local media in the press and online. Parish pew sheet/magazine editors are given updates of Deanery and CTC events. Parishes have been circulated with the new Deanery Mission Plan to discuss, and the next stage in its development will consider the feedback from them.

FINALLY:

Thanks go to **Harry Macdonald** our administrator, **John Morrison** our treasurer, **Liz Morrison**, Lay Chair, **Rev'd Jo Richards**, and our **Mission and Ministry Committee** for carrying us forward through 2023 and into 2024 as we move on in good heart.

Rosemary Walters



*Notre Dame de Paris:
John the Baptist
St Stephen
St Geneviève
St Peter*