

All Saints' Church, Shepreth



Courtesy of Mr Peter Homent

Annual Report and Financial Statements of
The Parochial Church Council
For the Year ended 31st December 2024
Incumbent
Rev. David Lee
Independent Examiner:
Mr. Chris Neild

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1. Rector's Introduction

“2024 will almost certainly be another eventful and transitory year.” That was a line I included in what was my Associate Priest's introduction to the 2023 Annual Report, and gosh, wasn't it just! As we went through our transition period after Angela's retirement at the end of 2023, what was vital, and the Archdeacon certainly made sure we did this, was that we went through a thorough and proper process in deciding who the next rector should be. This led to us reviewing our Benefice profile, asking the bishop permission to consider me as a single candidate for the post, and then a full interview which, believe you me, was anything but a formality! All this led to my service of Induction and Institution on 5th August which was one of the most memorable and uplifting evenings of my life. All I can say is another thank you to everyone involved in the arrangements for my appointment and that evening, and for giving me the opportunity to serve you as your rector.

And then we got moving! One of the advantages of having served as curate, and then associate priest, here is that as I started as rector, I already had ideas about how we could work together to grow our church – and I deliberately say 'our church' because that is the most significant change that we have made. Whilst the 4 churches still exist legally as 4 separate parishes, and so there are 4 PCCs (even though they now often meet together) and 4 Annual Reports, we are more and more working together as 1 church serving 4 villages with 4 church buildings. And much of the second half of 2024 was spent working out what first steps we should take to achieve that set up.

And what better place to start was there than with the activity which is the centre of our very existence as a church – and that is our Sunday Morning worship. That is why we exist: to worship the God who created us, and so it is vital that we make that worship as good as we can. When looking at the options we had we considered what we currently did, and that was to hold either 2 or 3 services each Sunday in different churches meaning we had 2 or 3 small congregations. But then when we did meet to worship together, in January and over the summer holidays, everyone seemed to enjoy it more. So, we took the decision that from the start of 2025, we would worship together every Sunday, whilst giving ourselves the option to hold some separate services on feast days. That looks like a good decision as early in 2025, we have more people gathering to worship God in a single place each Sunday than we had in total worshipping in separate churches.

At the same time, we now have the ability to offer children's church each Sunday, wherever the service is held, and the St Mary's Fowlmere choir has in effect become the Benefice choir as it helps lead our music wherever the service is held. So, thank you to our children's team, all our musicians, and to you for being willing to accept change and travel to a different church from, 'your' church on a Sunday morning.

The other major thing we did in 2024 was to hold a stewardship campaign, or a Giving campaign as we called it. We contacted everyone on our electoral roles, and others in our church family who were not then on the electoral roles and asked them to consider how they could give to the 4 Churches, both financially and in terms of time and talents. The results financially were very encouraging, but I have to say the offers of help in terms of time and talents were disappointing. And that very much leads me on to the biggest challenge we face as a church in 2025.

When I talk about growing our church to the churchwardens and to the PCCs we seem to have lots of really good ideas, but somehow very few of them get put into action. We seem to be running at capacity in terms of what we can introduce, and somehow, we have to increase that capacity. Yes, we are hoping to open a public facing 4 church office at St Mary's Fowlmere run by an employed administrator, initially two mornings a week, which will help, but there are many other things that we could introduce if only we had people who would put up their hands and say – yes, I could lead that, or I could help with that. Could one of those people be you? Perhaps as you read this you are thinking, “but what could I do?”. Believe

you me, if you have some time, and the desire to help, it is simply a question of finding which is the most appropriate project for you to help with. Have a think. Pray about it. And if you then think, even maybe, you could help more then let me know and we can have a chat.

2024 was a great year for our church, but also a year of challenges. 2025, I believe, could be a really exciting year. So as I conclude the introduction to this report I say a huge thank you to everyone who already contributes in any way to the life of our church, the 4 Church Benefice. When we count up we are always surprised by the number of people who are involved in some way in operating our church, so for whatever it is that you do, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, for what you did in 2024, and what you are continuing to do in 2025.

Every blessing, Rev'd David Lee, Rector, the 4 Churches, April 2025.

2. Aim and purposes

All Saints' Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend David Lee, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. We aim to promote the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England.

3. Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church community. In association with the Four Church Benefice, the PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and particularly the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus Christ.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of All Saints' Church.

Regular activities

As part of a Benefice, not all of the activities are provided at All Saints but also at the other churches and they include:

- Sunday services are recorded and posted online via YouTube
- Morning Prayer on a Tuesday via Zoom.
- We also edit and burn an audio CD of the service for those without internet access and deliver weekly as needed.

- The website provides communication of all our activities including a link to the recorded Service,
- We continue to care pastorally for those who are for a variety of reasons no longer able attend church to worship but continue to belong to the church.
- We publish our service and activities on social media thus increasing the profile of the church within the village.

4. Achievements and Performance

Worship and prayer

The PCC aims to offer a minimum of one service per month; and a range of services that our worshipping community finds both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

Following the Appointment of Revd David Lee as rector we reviewed the existing service pattern of a regular fortnightly services across the Benefice. We decided that as the trials of one service per Sunday in Januarys and the summer month were successful and well received, from January 2025 we would, on a trial basis, have one Rector lead service per Sunday throughout the year. The main service each week is at 10:15am and is a Communion service with children's church available. During early 2025 discussions were continuing as to how to provide some All Age worship, whilst maintaining our requirement to hold a Communion service in the Benefice each week. Lay led informal worship services have been rostered for feast days such as Mothering Sunday. This new service pattern appears to be successful; before the trial the regular average attendance was 14 adults at Communion Services and 16 adults at All Age Worship (30 per month); during the trial attendance has increased to 40+ per month.

The Christingle Service on Christmas Eve was less well attended this year, but we still had 60 adults and 19 children. There was an Act of Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial led by Bethan Smith.

There was one funeral service in church followed by burial.

Children's Work

Our monthly services are advertised as being with children's church and toddler toys. However, the lack of a separate room in the church means the activities that can take place during a children's church group have to be carefully controlled. Such activities are accommodated at the rear of the church. During 2024 we have also introduced a children's area towards the back of the church with toys and books aimed at younger children. We also encourage families to be involved in sidesmen duties and children enjoy doing this. This remains one of our key areas to build on in 2025.

Members of our church work with the Orwell Benefice helping to deliver the RE Active Church (Connecting Every Primary School Child with the Christian Story) at Barrington School.

Pastoral care

A continuing challenge is keeping in touch with and caring for church members and members of the community, especially the elderly and vulnerable. We are most grateful to those regularly keep in touch with our housebound members by delivering the CDs of our weekly services and Church Newsletters.

Social Awareness

As with Pastoral care, Social Awareness is a challenge making contact and being able to offer support to those whose social situation is causing them distress. The Shepreth in Need Charity is able offer financial support to those in need in the village and 5 of the seven trustees are members of the Church. A monthly village coffee morning organised by the church continues to be very well received and attended. The Shepreth Newsletter is regularly delivered to every house in the village and continues, for some, to be a key source of information and communication. The Newsletter Editors actively engage with the community seeking new advertisers and contributors. A Saturday Coffee morning for dog walkers in the church has got off to a slow start. We have an on-going dialogue with the group Sustainable Shepreth. They have used the Church as a resource and are keen to continue our dialogue and “eco” initiatives.

To date they have used the church to stage an exhibition, Shepreth Past Present and Future, on the 9th, 10th and 11th August and as a studio for several 'Art in the Church' mornings for local people.

Mission and evangelism

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. The PCC is not currently able to regularly support any mission or aid society. However, food donations collected at Harvest service were shared between Jimmy's in Cambridge and a local foodbank. The collection at Christingle service went to The Children's Society.

Community and Ecumenical relationships

There are no other worshipping community in Shepreth.

Foundation Governor

Shepreth village does not have a primary school, which closed in the 1980's. The village is within the catchment area of Barrington C of E (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School. The constitution of the school allows for a foundation governor for Shepreth who is nominated by All Saints PCC. The school currently has 157 pupils on the roll, a number which is expected to rise when the new housing development, at the old cement works, is complete and occupied. The school PAN (Published Admission Number) is 30, and the capacity of the school is now 186 pupils*. The quality of teaching is good (Ofsted 2022) with the pupils largely meeting or exceeding the national average. The percentages are caveated, though, as low pupil numbers mean that 1 pupil is only slightly more than 1%.

*<https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>

5. Deanery Synod

The continued poor health of the Rural Dean again curtailed the activities synod and part way through the year they resigned the post.

2025 a new Rural Dean was appointed and at the 1st meeting the vacant posts of Secretary and Treasurer were filled. For several years, due to an issue with account signatories, the Deanery has been unable to access its monies which has inhibited its ability to operate effectively. Resolving this is one of the major priorities of the new officers.

6. Church Buildings and Churchyard

During the last year no major tasks or changes have occurred. Regarding health and safety, the church and churchyard are in a reasonable state of repair with no obvious defects or hazards which prevent or inhibit the everyday use and/or access to the premises. The Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect the change of Rector.

Routine tasks have been carried out to preserve the premises and keep it fit to use. The safety inspections on the stability of the memorials (with particular emphasis on the crosses that can be moved on their bases) continued, During the year one cross was found to be unsafe and laid flat, two parishioners subsequently repaired and restored it.

The major projects that require doing, as previously reported have not yet started. We are preparing the faculty application (planning permission).

7. Financial Review

In 2024 the church income was only slightly up compared with 2023 which meant that once again we were unable to pay our full Parish Share. Our outgoings in 2024 were mostly in balance with our income, which combined with a rise in the value of our investments resulted in a rise in the total assets available to us.

Reserves policy

It is not PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on free reserves. A portion of Parish Share is paid monthly into the Benefice account and at the end of the financial year we review the balance and contribute as much as we are able towards our Parish Share.

8. Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At All Saints' the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our rector), churchwardens and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

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

9. Administrative Information

Volunteers

As in the Rectors introduction We would also like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the welcoming community it is. In particular we thank Bethan Smith who organises the rota of volunteers who clean the church, and Pat Stigwood who organises the rota of volunteers who ensure that we have beautiful fresh flowers in our church throughout the year. The maintenance of the churchyard continued throughout the year and we are grateful to those who have joined working parties to maintain the churchyard and church building. I would like to thank all those who have helped in many ways in supporting me, the churchwarden, in the running the church.

Electoral Roll

The Electoral register has been completely revised this year with everybody needing reapply, we now have 22 members on the Electoral Roll, compared with 29 the last year. This decrease is due to people not reapplying and deaths.

PCC Membership 2024

Name	Role	Basis of Appointment	
Revd David Lee		Team Rector	Ex-Officio
Mr Malcolm Price		Churchwarden	Ex Officio
Mr Stephen Homent		PCC Member	Elected
Dr Frank Salmon		PCC Member/Lay Chair	Elected
Mrs Bethan Smith		PCC Member/Treasurer	Elected
Mrs Catharine Salmon		PCC Member	Co-opted 2024
Mrs Annette Sheldrick		PCC Member	Elected
Martin Smith		PCC Member	Elected
Vacancy			

Sidesmen 2024

Mrs B Smith	Mrs C Pepper
Mrs L Gray	Dr A Sansome
Mr P Sansome	Dr F Salmon
Mrs C Salmon	Mr A Cartmell
Mrs A Sheldrick	Mr D Stigwood

All Saints' Church is situated on Church Lane and off the High Street in Shepreth. It is part of the Four Church Benefice in the Diocese of Ely within the Church of England.

The correspondence address is Dove Cottage
 37 Church Street
 Harston, Cambridge
 CB22 7NP