



Stretton Parish

STRETTON PARISH
ST LAURENCE, CHURCH STRETTON
ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, ALL STRETTON
ALL SAINTS, LITTLE STRETTON

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022/23

STRETTON PARISH
ST LAURENCE, CHURCH STRETTON,
ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, ALL STRETTON
ALL SAINTS', LITTLE STRETTON.

Independent Examiner
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Whittingham Riddell LLP, Chartered Accountants
Shrewsbury

Bankers
CAF Bank
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West Malling

Barclays Bank
Shrewsbury

Architect:
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Broomyfields Farm House,
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Worcestershire
WR6 6SJ

Churchwardens:
Marion Shuttleworth & Steve King

Deputy Warden – St Laurence's
Julie Lawton

Deputy Warden – St Michael's
Malcolm Forbes

Deputy Warden – All Saints
Moira Matthews

PCC Treasurer
Graham Vince

PCC Secretary
Jo Aze

The Parish Office
The Parish Centre
Church Street
Church Stretton
SY6 6DQ

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022/23

BACKGROUND

The Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, in promoting the Mission of the Church.

The PCC is also responsible for the care of the Church property and fabric. It is charged with framing an annual Budget.

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected in accordance with the Church Representation Rules under Synodical Government by those on the Electoral Roll at the time of the Annual Meeting. During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Clergy: (*ex-officio*)

The Revd Steve Johnson, Rector

The Revd David Andrews, Curate

The Revd Christobel Hargraves, Associate Minister

LEP Minister (*non-voting*)

The Revd Hazel Allen

Churchwardens: (*ex-officio*)

Marion Shuttleworth

Steve King

Deputy Churchwardens (*ex-officio*)

Julie Lawton, St Laurence'

Moirra Matthews, All Saints

Malcolm Forbes, St Michael's

Treasurer (*ex-officio*)

Graham Vince

Deanery Synod Representatives 3 year term expiring 2023 (*ex-officio*)

Janet Wilcoxon

Julie Lawton

Kimee Cleaton

Mike Edmunds

PCC;

Elected for 3 year term expiring 2023

Louise Jackson

Elected for 3 year term expiring 2024

Daniel Wallis

Lorraine McCrohan

Elected for 3 year term expiring 2025

Cathy Watson (2nd term), St Laurence

Daniel Robinson, St Laurence

Sue Forster, St Michael's

Anne Braddick, St Michael's

Pat Gregory, All Saints

Finance Committee:

Rector

Marion Shuttleworth

Steve King

Jenny Church

John Bennett

Christine King

Graham Vince

Dan Wallis

Standing Committee

Rector

Marion Shuttleworth

Steve King

Chris Hargraves

Graham Vince

Louise Jackson

The PCC met 7 times during the year and the average attendance was 16.

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

Church Electoral Roll Officer: Jo Aze

The numbers on the Electoral roll are:

St Laurence's 204

St Michael's 34

All Saints 39

Total on Roll 277

The number on roll has reduced from 284 in 2022 to 277 in 2023

RECTOR'S REPORT, Steve Johnson

As I write, we have once again walked the way of the Cross and celebrated our Risen Lord, what joy! And there was indeed such joy in our Churches, as we celebrated the hope of New Life through the Resurrection. I was so thankful to God after our Easter Sunday service, that I found myself with Psalm 92, for what we do in this Parish is for God and because of him.

*"For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done."*



So, as together we read the reports in this booklet and reflect on the last year and the new life we see around us, we take this opportunity to thank God for what He has been doing among us, in us and through us. Seeing God at work has been so exciting as we follow His way for us as his Parish.

As we reflect on the year, the ministry team & I are conscious of the faithfulness, the commitment and the hard work of the army of people in the Parish who are involved in building God's kingdom here in a variety of different ways and we are heartened and encouraged by the support we receive. A big thank you to all. In turn, we commit ourselves afresh as leaders to serving you in Christ's name.

Looking back, as we have continued to rebuild out of the pandemic, this past year we undertook the Service review, where so many of you fed back your thoughts on our worship and as a result, we created our new service pattern.

- We saw the development of the Parish 5 Year Plan, which came out of a wonderful Ministry team time away in November and which then followed two consultation sessions with the church family. The new LEP agreement for St Michael's was signed this year and now clearly embeds it within the Parish and the ECC acts as the DCC for St Michaels and reports to the PCC.
- We have continued to develop our Lifegroups, as we develop new patterns of life together.
- We have seen growth in our work with young people, through toddlers, Messy Church and Youth Lifegroup.
- We have seen new people join us, we had said goodbye to those who have moved away and we gave thanks for the lives of those who have died, who we miss.
- Other works continue with those who are hungry and in need through the Food Bank and continue to work amongst the older generations. We also hosted our first Christmas Day lunch, which was a great success!

- We also have seen the launch of the Bethel Programme, which continues to seek God's way forward, as we reach out into our wider community.

Looking forward, there is so much wonderful work being done as we Make Jesus Known and our 5-year plan recognises that all our mission and ministry must be grounded in prayer, God's word and the Spirit at work in each of us and amongst us.

- But as we look forward, we recognise that there are still challenges as we continue to follow God. Globally the church is in a new place, things have changed, and God is doing a new thing. That is why we dwelt on the passage from Ezekiel and the Living Water bringing life, throughout the last year.
- We have the challenges of finances and our need to make sure that all of our mission and ministry must be set upon a firm financial setting, but we must also balance this with the need to be stepping out in faith where God calls us- trusting Him. I really believe that our finances must follow our mission and not the other way round.
- We are also aware that as with other parishes in the diocese and beyond, the ministry team has its small number of detractors – which does take its toll on us. But Nehemiah reminds us that leaders have faced detractors for millennia - there's nothing new under the sun!
- We also recognise that we are not a perfect Parish, but we follow One who is and He is clearly at work among us.

We are an Evangelical Anglican Parish. With our Purpose of Making Jesus Known, we are rooted in our love of God's word, a desire to be led by God's Spirit and be open to how he might lead us- growing as an authentic, vibrant community centred around Jesus.

CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT, Marion Shuttleworth and Steve King

As we tentatively emerged from the pandemic, 2022 saw our activities increase, with Covid precautions gradually being relaxed. We thank God for our Rector, Associate Minister, Curate and the Ministry Team for leading us through these changes and we are grateful for the support and understanding of our congregations.

The pandemic gave us the opportunity and impetus to review the pattern of our services across the Parish, and there was a very encouraging response to our questionnaire, with many positive and encouraging suggestions and sharing of views. In the autumn we introduced our new service pattern, with a variety of service types across our three churches, including a monthly Choral evensong at All Saints, an Iona service at St Michael's and Deeper at St Laurence's – a service offering time for a more reflective and charismatic time of worship. We thank God for providing the people to provide these services and ask for his continues blessing on our worship.

Our weekly online service, which was established during Covid, has continued, with its own regular congregation and is also valued by those who are temporarily unable to get to church services. Now that the AV system in St Laurence's has been upgraded, livestreams of some of our services will enable those at home to be part of our worshipping congregation.

At St Laurence, children have their own teaching on Sunday morning and the young people on Sunday evening; residential time away has given the opportunity for the Christian Faith to be further explored. We hold our Curate, David, and Children & families Worker, Sally, in our prayers, and we pray that God will provide more leaders to assist with this vital work.

We continue to reach out to our community and to those outside or on the edges of our church family. Our Rector and Curate regularly lead assemblies in the Primary School, bringing Christian teaching into the lives of the children, and we are grateful to God for this opportunity. This is enhanced by Messy Church, led by our Family and Children's Worker assisted by a talented team of volunteers from across the Parish. The Parents and Toddler group continues to make contact with young families and there are many links from there to Messy Church. Further contacts are made through CAMEO, coffee mornings at All Saints, Flower festivals at St Michaels, Teas to Please and other such activities throughout the year. Alpha and Lifegroups give the opportunity to explore our faith – whether we are new to it or have been emersed in it all our lives – there is always something new to learn. We thank those who work with these groups and pray for God to bless and help those relationships to flourish.



The Newcomers' Lunch and our Stretton Feasts have helped to build new friendships, whilst our Lifegroups strengthen our support for each other. It was wonderful to be part of our Curate's ordination at Hereford Cathedral in the summer, and to have the Bishop of Hereford lead one of our United Parish Services.

Our churches continue to be important to our communities, as demonstrated by our services of celebration for the Queen's Jubilee and marking the death of Her Majesty, when many local people came to St Laurence to record their thanks for her life of service to our country. The Christmas Lunch, Foodbank and our Warm Welcome have shown practical and loving care of our neighbours who are in need. Plans are now underway to mark the coronation of King Charles III, with church services, flower festival and a celebratory ceilidh in St Laurence's for the whole community.

The Local Ecumenical Partnership at St Michael's between the Anglican Church and United Reformed church has been reviewed and a new LEP agreed. The District Church Council for St Laurence has become established, leading with the day-to-day business of St Laurence. At all three churches we are blessed with many dedicated volunteers who look after the buildings and grounds and serve in many and diverse ways in our services. Special thanks must go to those who unlock and lock our buildings daily, making them

available for any that wish or need to come to experience the peace of God. Finally, our thanks go to Jo in the Parish Office for her constant support and help.

ST. LAURENCE'S CHURCH, CHURCH STRETTON, Julie Lawton

The celebrations for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in June, including a service and afternoon tea for residents of some of the town's nursing homes, were followed within three months by a time of mourning for her death, during which a large number of people visited St. Laurence's Church to sign the book of condolence and to pay their respects. The significant role played during that time by our bellringers was much appreciated across the town.



Following a full review of the format of our church services, a new service pattern was introduced in September. It will take time to become established, and some slight changes have already been made where aspects were discovered not to be practical, but on the whole feedback has been very positive and services are well attended. The music provided by our various groups has been an absolute joy, whilst the "Deeper" service on alternate Sunday evenings provides a new and different way to worship God and to receive His word.

After a period of inactivity during Covid, the Maintenance Working Parties have now restarted, and we are grateful to those who are willing to give of their time to carry out a range of tasks to support the upkeep of our beautiful church, the churchyard and the Parish Centre.

We have learned much through our experience of the Covid pandemic, including the ways in which technology can help us to reach out to make Jesus known in our community and beyond. The recent upgrading of our audio-visual equipment will enhance those opportunities, whilst also enriching our worship, and helping those who still feel unable to attend to feel included.

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, ALL STRETTON, Hazel Allen

After an unsettling year as we waited for the decision on the future of the Local Ecumenical Partnership Review we are delighted that the LEP will continue with an ECC and a new Constitution. We look forward to the two denominations continuing to work together in the ministry at St Michael's and across the Parish.

Church activities have been able to resume as the year progressed as congregational numbers returned to pre-pandemic times. The church is open daily for prayer and our prayer meeting continues at 8.30am each Friday.



We have held a Flower festival, a Harvest Lunch, and Lent Lunches, all of which have attracted visitors to join us. We are very grateful to the team who regularly contribute their floral skills to decorate the

church and help to enhance our Worship. This year more members are contributing to our services as welcomers, readers, and intercessors.

Over a quarter of the congregation attend various Life Groups within the Parish and it is hoped that more will do so in the future.

We have been able to contribute in a small way to the ongoing scheme in the village to help lower the speed of traffic for the safety of all users of the Shrewsbury Road.

Our recent Quinquennial has recognised that the church building is in good order other than regular maintenance jobs requiring attention and the need to attend to large bushes growing close to the retaining wall bordering the road. We are at present investigating the possibility of new heating for the church.

We are indebted to the dedication and hard work that Malcolm our Deputy Warden contributes to the day to day running of St Michael's as well as those who willingly support the upkeep of the building and the garden.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, LITTLE STRETTON, Moira Matthews

We are very pleased to report that recent services have attracted large congregations. The introduction of quarterly Choral Evensongs has been particularly successful, when we have been treated to beautiful contributions from the Stretton Parish Choir under the excellent leadership of Ru Trew. We were delighted to host the Advent Carol service which attracted a full capacity congregation for the candlelit service, whilst the Epiphany service proved to be an excellent addition to the programme. The choir led the singing at both services and deserve real thanks for the joy they bring to our congregations.

Our refreshment team has become well-accustomed to supplying refreshments at these services but we were astonished by the record numbers who attended our St Valentine's Day Coffee Morning. Our visitors were extremely generous, the event raising over £1700 for the DEC Turkish/ Syria Earthquake.

This year has also seen significant progress in our work for the Eco Church scheme. In August we transferred our energy contract to a renewable fuel supplier, Ecotricity. Wildflowers have been planted, a pond dug and small plant identification signs are ready to be placed around the garden. As a result, we are now the proud holders of the Eco Church Silver Award.

CONDOVERY DEANERY SYNOD, Janet Wilcoxon

The Deanery Synod forms part of the governance of the Church of England, meeting three times per year.

Our members are Kimee Cleaton, Mike Edmunds, Julie Lawton, Janet Wilcoxon (Lay Co-chair)

22nd June 2022 The synod was held at Dorrington Village Hall. The speaker was Elizabeth Wilde Diocesan Local Ministry Team Leader and Warden of Readers.

Elizabeth announced that as from 1st August four new Local Ministry roles in addition to Reader Ministry were to be introduced thus enabling lay volunteers to be commissioned for various types of ministry in their benefice or deanery. These roles are:

- local worship leader
- local pastoral visitor
- local missionary
- local minister (which incorporates all 3 roles)

20th October 2022. The synod met in the Greene Room Wistanstow. The speaker was the Rev Mark Melliush, the newly appointed Diocesan Mission Enabler. This is the first time the Diocese of Hereford has appointed a Mission Enabler and makes a significant step forward in embracing missional transformation in the Church of England in this rural diocese. Mark has been heavily involved in the leadership of New Wine England for over 30 years, as well as a vicar in Ealing for 29 years and prior to that in a parish in Surrey. His role is to inspire and encourage mission across the diocese, reaching out to people who do not come to church and building good relationships. As part of living out our Christian values in every corner of the diocese Bishop Richard has called us to join in a year of prayer in 2023. each month to explore a different way of praying. Mark spoke movingly about the power of prayer and how prayer changes things. We need to come out of the church buildings and meet the people of the community, communicating in language they understand. We need to change - we have been called to go out into all the world.

20th February 2023 the synod took place in Much Wenlock Parish Church and began with an Act of Worship led by Rev Preb Matthew Stafford celebrating St. Milburga, founder of Wenlock Abbey and Patron Saint of Shropshire. This was followed by our speaker the Rev Canon Sarah Brown, Dean of Hereford Cathedral. She told us how she came to faith and how God puts you where he wants you to be.. We also learned that the Cathedral is integral to the diocese, it is not part of the diocese and is funded separately. Much of what happens in the cathedral is focused on raising money for mission and the challenge is "keeping Jesus smack in the middle of all that is going on." What ever we do ought to speak of God , his mission becomes our mission. We do not know what he is calling the church to look like. We should just keep doing what he calls us to do and God will make it clear.

2022 Deanery Parish Offer = £287,843 was paid to the diocese. This was £4,500 above the original offer. Six parishes had paid above their offer and only one was unable to pay in full. A huge thank you was given to all concerned.

Please pray for appointment of a new Deanery leadership Team as the Rural Dean will be retiring in July and the Secretary and Lay Co-chair are standing down.

We are grateful that the Treasurer Richard Rhodes is willing to serve for another three year term.

SAFEGUARDING, Chrissie Pepler – 01694 771888

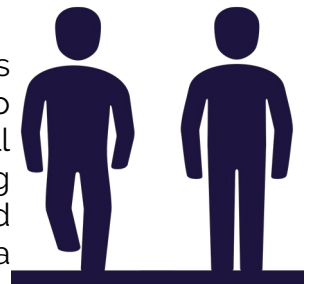
After the disruptions of the pandemic years, it has been good to have so many church activities now able to happen regularly. We can't manage these things without the

support of all our volunteers. Many thanks to all of you who help in this way and especially for helping as we implement the national Church of England guidelines on how we recruit new volunteers in a safer way. Safer recruitment is just part of the changes that the Anglican church is making in response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the Anglican church. As a parish we continue to follow the guidelines on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults provided by the national church and the Diocese. The PCC continue to keep safeguarding on their agenda on a regular basis to ensure we do all we can to be a church which is safe and caring for those who are more vulnerable.

In the last few months, we have moved from obtaining DBS checks on a paper-based system to online. This is something that has happened across the Diocese. Margaret Benson has been implementing this and, so far, it has proved to be a quicker system with less room for errors/mistakes. Those people who have applied for their DBS in this new way have found it to be quite straightforward and the DBS certificate is arriving more quickly than in the old system. For those who may not have access to a computer we can help, to ensure that a DBS check is obtained where needed. In the next year we hope to have a more automated system of reminding people when they need to update their safeguarding training and their DBS check, both of which need to be renewed every three years. Many thanks to Margaret Benson for all her work in helping people obtain a DBS check and keeping track of who needs to update their training.

PASTORAL CARE ACROSS THE PARISH, Tricia Palin

The pastoral care team in Stretton parish supports church members who are no longer able to attend church. These regular visits aim to give fellowship and encourage people to know that they are still valued members of the church. This would usually include keeping them up to date with church affairs and offering Bible reading and prayer. Sometimes, shorter term support is undertaken when there is a particular need, e.g. following a difficult life event.



The team meets regularly to support each other and to undertake training to enable us to respond well to the needs of others. Recently Liz Bryan has been helping us to consider "end of life" conversations. We are also in the process of recruiting some new members and are continuing with the confidential recording of visits in order to comply with safeguarding guidelines. This is working well.

Leaders of life groups are also encouraged to be involved in the pastoral care of their groups, ensuring that anyone who has a need is catered for, either within the group or, if appropriate, referred (with the consent of the individual) to the pastoral care coordinator or a member of the licensed clergy.

Much pastoral care is also carried out informally as members of the congregation look out for each other. This works very well at St Michael's and All Saints.

It has been encouraging to me, as someone new to the role, to realise how much awareness members of our congregations and life groups have of the needs around them. This should mean that, going forward, we can work together to ensure that no one in need is overlooked.

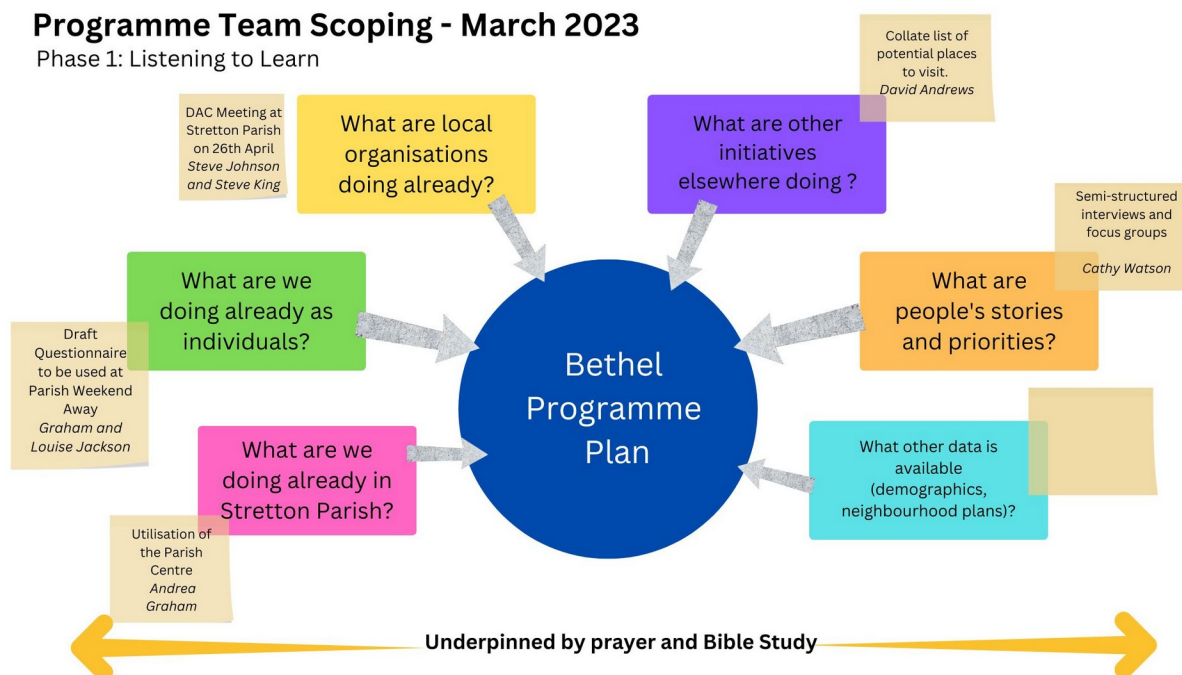
BETHEL PROGRAMME, Cathy Watson

The Bethel Programme was initiated in July last year following a session at the APCM on the 'serving' aspect of our Parish vision to *Make Jesus known*, and building on long-standing discussions about the possibility of having a physical presence in the town to further serve the community. The working title of the programme is 'Bethel', meaning 'house of God'. The initial focus was on renting or purchasing a vacant building in The Square, but prayerfully shifted to considering whether we could use our existing facilities (in particular the Parish Centre) for the same purpose.

The Bethel team met for the first time in early November 2022, and developed a plan for the first phase, which was presented at the Parish Purpose workshop in early December. The programme vision is to *'serve families and young people in practical, social and spiritual ways'*. Phase one of the programme focuses on 'listening to learn' – a scoping exercise to gather information about what is already being done, by individuals, the church as a whole and by other organisations, and on what the priority needs and gaps may be, underpinned by prayer. The different aspects of this scoping are led by the various members of the Bethel team, as follows:

Programme Team Scoping - March 2023

Phase 1: Listening to Learn



Much of this information has already been compiled. To understand the stories, needs and priorities, of families and young people in the Strettons, interviews and a questionnaire are currently being carried out with a range of groups and activities, including Messy Church,

Parent and Toddlers, and the Youth Life Group; and with the wider community through the community and school messaging emails. In addition, at the Parish Weekend at Home, participants will be encouraged to complete a questionnaire and/or talk to members of the Bethel team, so that we can understand what people are already doing to support families and young people in the Strettons.

The results of all the scoping activities will be compiled and analysed by the Bethel team and based on this, a draft Phase 2 plan will be developed, to be presented to the PCC in July.

The Parish Weekend at Home presents an opportunity for everyone to find out more about the Bethel programme, to share views and experiences, and to become more involved in the programme.

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG FAMILIES WORK, Sally Clilverd

This year has been a time of growth in all areas of Children's and Families Ministry. It has been wonderful to welcome back some familiar faces after a break over the pandemic but also to meet many new families at our activities.

On Sunday mornings we have mainly followed the Bible readings being used in the service. Attendance averages 15 children each week with ages ranging from 3 – 12 years. Unfortunately, earlier in the year we lost a couple of our regular helpers so most weeks we have operated with one group, but have recently recruited some new volunteers so are hoping to return to 2 age groups in the near future.

We aim to use a wide variety of media and teaching so that something hopefully appeals to everyone.



At Messy Church we have continued to enjoy monthly meetings with numbers gradually increasing. To tie in with the Bible in One Year, since January we have been looking at Old Testament Bible Heroes and plan to do this for most of 2023. With the completion of the AV work in church, we are hoping to return to having our Celebration Times in there which also means we can quickly transform the tables in the Parish Centre to share our meal together as one large family, as we nurture each other in our walk with Jesus.

Our Parents and Toddlers group has a baby boom since the New Year and it is wonderful to watch the mums use the groups to support each other and grow friendships. We also have several dads and grandparents who regularly attend with their children. Most children are under 2½ years of age so we have modified some activities to reflect this. We again share our snack time together and it is a great joy to see the children all sat around large tables being 'family'.

In November instead of holding a Christingle we held a Messy Light Adventure as part of the Town's Light turning-on events, and welcomed almost 150 people into the church to

take part in 10 stations all celebrating Jesus as the Light of the World. We then finished with a short Celebration time together.

Steve and David continue to visit St. Lawrence's Primary School each Monday and Wednesday respectively to deliver an assembly. We have again been privileged to welcome the children into the school for Leavers, Harvest, Christmas and Easter services. As always, none of these activities would be able to take part without a huge number of people who tirelessly volunteer each time; thank you so much for everything you do. Also thank you to those of you who faithfully pray for the children, families and all of the events.

YOUTH WORK, David Andrews

The Youth Life Group have continued to meet in the Parish Centre on Sunday evenings at 5pm to 6:30pm. The group has grown in numbers since the last report from an average of 7 to around 10.

In September 2022 the Youth Alpha course was run for the group. Each session was run by the Rector with a view to helping the group to explore the Christian faith and to think about topics such as: Why did Jesus die? Why and how do we pray" and healing and the Holy Spirit.



In October we had a very successful Youth Weekend Away at the Pioneer Centre. The group took part in a number of activities including: Aerial Trek Course, Inflatable Challenge, Indoor Caving and evening campfires. As well as the activities there were also sessions that focused on teaching from the Bible. It was an excellent weekend and something we will look to repeat in the future.

Recently our evenings have had a focus on discussing big questions that members of the group have proposed. The questions have ranged from 'How was the Bible written', 'Why did Job suffer' and 'What are Angels'.

Looking ahead for 2023, in May we will be running sessions based on a Bible Society resource called 'Six Beats One Story' which is "*a brand new creative devotional that takes you through the whole Bible story. Summing up the Bible narrative in just six scenes, Dai Woolridge unpacks the big story through colloquial prose, social media-type posts and spoken word poetry*".

A big thank you is in order for Rochelle, Romaine, Louise and Graham, without whom the group could not run.

LIFE GROUPS, Neil Sanders

There are currently 16 Stretton Parish Life Groups, with 20 co-ordinators and a combined membership of more than 140. Groups are diverse and individual within a shared vision and governance. Each chooses when and where to meet, and what/how to study; all share our duty of care and methods to secure this. We learn together, pray together, support each other, have fun, and work together. That this happens is down to the

commitment, skills, and experience of members, and especially of our co-ordinators and facilitators. Thank you all.

Our aim, and prayer, for the coming year is that the Groups thrive, both individually and together; that we learn from each other, honour beneficial tradition and embrace necessary change; that we mature in both diversity and structure, and learn to respond to the needs and opportunities of individuals, Parish, and community.

STRETTON FOODBANK, Richard McCrohan

Stretton Foodbank was established as a Churches Together initiative and is now operated by Stretton Parish (agreed in 2017). The Foodbank takes place every Friday afternoon from 2.30pm to 4.00pm at the Parish Centre in Church Street, with emergency food supplied during the week when needed.



The demand for food banks has increased across the country and Stretton Foodbank is no different to this. In 2022 we assisted 256 people (including 112 children), compared to 2020 when we assisted 170 people (which included 69 children). It is also worth noting that 2020 included 34 men from Oakbank which closed in 2021. The start of 2023 has continued the upward trend with record months in January and then February.

Support from the community continues to be excellent with a good response to our Community Messaging / Facebook requests with the collection basket at the Coop being emptied and the food delivered to the Parish Centre 3 times a week by Rotary volunteers.



Financially, we have been blessed with generous donations and grants in 2022 amounting to £21,600, which almost covered our expenditure of £21,900. This expenditure relates to food purchased to cover the shortfall in physical donations, including fresh fruit and vegetables, eggs, cheese, bread, etc. As well as the purchase of £10 meat vouchers from our local butcher. 2023 is likely to see further increases due to larger numbers of people needing help and increased food costs.

Last year we reintroduced providing tea, coffee and biscuits or cake. This has been well received and increased the level of interaction amongst clients and volunteers.

We also work closely with a number of other agencies, including Mayfair, CAB, NHS Mental Health, Shropshire Council. Marches Energy Agency has been a major help to clients struggling with energy debt. Local schools (St Laurence's CS and Longnor) also got involved running reverse advent campaigns at Christmas, which provided us with enough Christmas related items to give all of our clients an additional special Christmas bag.



We can't operate without our volunteers, who do a great job ensuring everything goes smoothly every week. During the year we needed to increase the number of volunteers to serve more clients and our introduction of tea and coffee. Doing this has also given us the ability to spend more time talking to clients. Currently we have 25 volunteers on our rota.

The area covered by the Foodbank includes the surrounding rural communities and we currently have clients from Plaish, Rushbury, Hope Bowdler, Marshbrook, Ratlinghope and Picklescott, so it is really nice to have volunteers from the surrounding areas too.

ECO CHURCH, Isabel Carter

During this past year St Michael's gained their Bronze award and All Saints celebrated gaining a Silver Eco Church award. Their churchyard has seen lots of positive change including a new pond and wildflower area. St Laurence's gained Silver in December 2020 but has slipped back rather than made progress, mostly while waiting for the new Environmental sub-committee to be formed as Eco-church Gold has to be led by the ministry team - it's a considerable challenge and commitment.



The Church of England is moving ahead with its remarkable resolve to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2030 and has a range of clear and practical guidance resources available. Our parish-wide Environment Sub-Committee had its first meeting in April with representatives of the three congregations. Its remit will be to help the parish to achieve Net Zero Carbon and hopefully also move us all eventually towards Eco Church Gold Award. We are in a global climate emergency and sincerely pray for our parish to be part of responding to this.

MOTHERS' UNION, Marian Goulder

Our branch continues to meet monthly and we have welcomed a variety of speakers this year, hearing about Telford Street pastors, recycling, the work of the Archdeacon and how to make pot pourri. We had a Summer garden party, a Christmas tea as well as a Lent reflection on the theme of stones. A group of us attended a Diocesan service in Bishops Castle and we were able to welcome members from a wider area to St Laurence's for this year's Lady Day Service.



We support various practical projects, collecting Easter eggs and Christmas gifts for families in crisis locally and providing welcome packs for families joining our primary school. We have also been able to help fund household goods for families in need through our Diocesan Crisis Intervention fund.

As part of a worldwide movement, active in 84 countries we actively pray for each other, especially those in our linked dioceses. This Winter one of our members, Sylvia Loader, visited Australia and brought us news of Hervey Bay which is linked to our branch. She came home with a beautiful banner which they have made for us and can be seen under our Mothers Union banner in our church. We are also developing their idea of making blessings bags to give to people at times of need to encourage and support them. If you would like to join us, all are welcome at our meetings. To find out more do visit our website www.themothersunion.org

REPORT ON THE FABRIC OF OUR BUILDINGS Marion Shuttleworth and Steve King

St Laurence's Church, Church Stretton

Storm Damage

The wooden louvres in the Tower that were damaged in December 2021 have been repaired.

AV equipment

The review of the AV equipment has been completed, quotes obtained, and a contractor appointed that installed the new equipment in the Spring of 2023.

Electricity Supplier

Quotes for a 100% renewable electricity contract are being actively sought and assessed, with the intention to move to such a contract as soon as a suitable contract is identified.

General Maintenance

The fixed electrical wiring test and inspection have been carried out, as has PAT testing of electrical equipment in the church.

The annual gas service and safety inspection for the church heating has been carried out. The Tower clock has had its annual service by Smiths of Derby.

Bat urine has been particularly problematic, and protective covers for the brass lectern and keyboard have been made.

A team of valued volunteers have undertaken various small maintenance tasks to keep the building in good repair, and regular monthly working parties have been re-established.

Box Tomb

After receiving the faculty for the repair of the collapsed Minton Box Tomb, the stonemason found that some of the stone walls have further deteriorated so he was unable to undertake the planned repair. Further permissions have been sought from the Diocese. In the meantime, the stonemason has made the tomb safe and presentable.

Churchyard

A dedicated team of volunteers keep the churchyard well maintained throughout the year, including a good display of wildflowers and informative signboards.

The tree surgery recommended in the survey of 2021 was carried out in the beginning of 2022.

All Saints Church, Little Stretton

Pew replacement

After many delays due to Covid and supply issues, the new wooden chairs to replace the pews were installed.

External Repairs

The repairs to the external rendering and paintwork specified by the Quinquennial of 2019, have been undertaken by a specialist historic building contractor,

Wildlife area

A wildlife area including a pond has been created to the rear of the church.

Electricity Supplier

All Saints church has moved to a 100% renewable electricity contract.

Tree surgery

Following storm damage, some emergency tree surgery was undertaken to remove damaged and weak branches.

Wall damage

A vehicle belonging to a builders' merchant damaged part of the wall around the All Saints grounds. The repair is being handled by agents acting on behalf of the builders' merchant, who is being regularly chased to get the repair done as soon as possible.

General Maintenance

Annual testing and servicing have been carried out. We are grateful to the volunteers who care for the building and the grounds.

St Michael's & All Angels Church, Little Stretton

Quinquennial Inspection

The QI was carried out at the end of 2022 and the report is currently being studied.

Heating system

The heating system has been inspected, and options are being considered.

Snow damage

Falling branches following heavy snow, has damaged the lychgate, repairs to which are being planned. The broken and weakened branches have been removed by a professional, who has also removed the weak laburnum branch overhanging the highway which was identified in the report of 2021.

General Maintenance

Annual testing and servicing have been carried out. We are grateful to the volunteers who care for the building and the grounds.

Parish Centre, Church Stretton

Purchases

A new dishwasher has been installed in the kitchen. Four large collapsible tables have been purchased for the upstairs room to avoid the need for carrying tables up and down stairs.

Water Heater

The gas water heater in the kitchen has become unreliable and has had to be serviced on several occasions. Options for a permanent solution are being considered.

General Maintenance

The fixed electrical wiring test and inspection have been carried out, as has PAT testing of electrical equipment in the Parish Centre.

The annual gas service and safety inspection for the water heater and cooker have been carried out.

A team of valued volunteers have undertaken various small maintenance tasks to keep the building in good repair, and regular monthly working parties have been re-established.

The Rectory

Although The Rectory is owned by the Diocese, the PCC paid for a log burner to be installed to improve the heating for the Rector and his family.

5 Sandford Avenue, 'The Flat'

This flat was purchased in 2015 originally to provide housing for a church youth worker. As it is no longer needed for that purpose, it is rented out privately, with the rental income partly funding our youth work. As responsible landlord's and following the annual inspection, the PCC has funded the replacement of a number of windows which have deteriorated.

FINANCE REPORT, Graham Vince

For full financial statements, see separate document

Stretton Parish

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES for the year ended 31 December 2022

		Unrestricted Funds							
		St Laurence £	All Saints £	St Michael's £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £	
INCOME AND ENDOWMENT FROM									
<i>Donations and legacies</i>									
	<i>Incoming resources from donors</i>	2a	157,430	13,844	16,531	43,358	0	231,162	194,886
	<i>Other donations and legacies</i>	2b	500	7,169	1,109	0	0	8,778	7,593
	<i>Income from charitable activities</i>	2c	10,934	732	948	0	0	12,614	10,158
	<i>Income from investments</i>	2d	7,888	65	245	224	1,736	10,158	7,597
TOTAL INCOME RESOURCES			176,752	21,810	18,833	43,582	1,736	262,713	220,233
EXPENDITURE ON									
<i>Charitable activities</i>									
	<i>- Grants, Donations & gifts</i>	3a	15,743	3,831	1,900	9,077	0	30,551	24,492
	<i>- Activities directly relating to the work of the church</i>	3b	192,622	26,324	18,485	34,025	225	271,680	248,518
	<i>- Governance costs</i>	3c	1,625	182	182	0	0	1,989	2,464
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED			209,990	30,337	20,567	43,102	225	304,221	275,474
NET INCOME / EXPENDITURE BEFORE									
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES			-33,238	-8,527	-1,734	480	1,511	-41,508	-55,241
GAINS/LOSSES ON INVESTMENTS		5b		0	-588	0	-7,488	-8,076	785
TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS			2,400	-1,200	-1,200	0	0	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS			-30,838	-9,727	-3,521	480	-5,977	-49,583	-54,456
Balances brought forward at 1 January 2022			410,083	40,960	27,133	41,572	74,098	593,847	648,303
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER 2022		8	379,245	31,234	23,612	42,053	68,120	544,264	593,847

Stretton Parish

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 December 2022

	Note	2022 £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible fixed assets	5a	234,167		239,067
Investment assets	5b	57,411		65,486
		<u>291,578</u>		<u>304,553</u>
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors & prepayments	6	3,906		13,685
Short term deposits		234,538		264,984
Cash at bank and in hand		47,517		38,203
		<u>285,961</u>		<u>316,872</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Amounts falling due within one year				
Accruals & creditors	7	33,275		27,578
		<u>33,275</u>		
NET CURRENT ASSETS			252,686	289,294
NET ASSETS LESS LIABILITIES			<u>544,264</u>	<u>593,847</u>
Represented by				
ACCUMULATED FUNDS				
Unrestricted	12		353,688	380,913
Designated	9		80,403	97,264
Restricted	10		42,053	41,572
Endowment	11		68,120	74,098
	8		<u>544,264</u>	<u>593,847</u>

Signed on behalf of Stretton Parish

on

Marion Shuttleworth
(Church Warden)

Steve King
(Church Warden)

The notes on pages 9 - 16 form part of these accounts

Stretton Parish

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Stretton Parish

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022 which are set out on pages 7-17.

Responsibilities and basis of the report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

T Lunt BA FCCA MIRPM

WR Partners

Chartered Accountants
Belmont House
Shrewsbury Business Park
Shrewsbury
SY2 6LG

MINUTES

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

1.	Opening Prayers The Rector opened in prayer and read from Isaiah 61.
2.	Elections of Churchwardens The nominees were Marion Shuttleworth and Steve King. They were duly elected with everyone in favour. Rector gave huge thanks for all their work in the last year.

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1.	Apologies for Absence Simon & Ginny Baldock, Janet Wilcoxon, Julian & Lynne Hargreaves, Daniel Robinson, Liz Bourke, Manney Harrison, Barbara and Keith Bell, Neil & Amanda Sanders, Jackie Banfield, Moira Matthews, Malcolm & Helen Loft, Helga Holden, Rob and Marion Webster.
2.	Elections a) To the Deanery Synod. There were no nominations received. b) to the PCC for Stretton Parish. There were two nominations to represent St Michael's and All Angels, from Sue Forster, and Anne Braddick, There was one nomination, to represent All Saints received from Pat Gregory. There were two nominations to represent St Laurence's, received from Daniel Robinson and Cathy Watson. They were duly elected to the PCC. Everyone in favour. They were welcomed to the PCC. Thanks were expressed to Julian Hargreaves and Chris Jones who have stepped down. c) To the roles of Deputy Churchwarden: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for St Michael's and All Angels, Malcolm Forbes • for All Saints, Moira Matthews • for St Laurence, Julie Lawton They were duly elected, with everyone in favour. .d) To the District Church Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for St Laurence, James Foster • for All Saints, John Bennett and Liz Bourke They were duly elected, with everyone in favour. St Michael's has an ECC which will continue.

3.	Prayer of Commissioning for Churchwardens and the new PCC and DCCs The Rector led in prayer.
4.	Approval of Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 17 th May 2021 were approved and signed.
5.	Matters Arising None.
6.	Rector's Report <p>There is much to give thanks for over the last year: Easter Experience, the recent day of prayer, the consecration of All Saints, the work of the Food Bank, new Life Groups, social events, Messy Church, Youth Life Group, eco church, our new mission partners and more.</p> <p>At the Chrism service at the cathedral the Bishop said that as a church we have to be real where we are. Covid has left a mark on us and things aren't going back to where we want them to be.</p> <p>We need to be honest and open about what it is like ministering in this parish. - there are a few people spoiling things for everyone else, with spiteful gossip and nasty emails distracting us from the work God has called us to do. These are repeated patterns of behaviour with power games at the centre which the Parish has seen before and these actions are nasty and have consequences: they have to stop. The Church of England has structures that we work within and where the Rector's authority comes from and where we are all kept safe in terms of safeguarding. The Rector has been assured of the full support of the Bishop and Archdeacon, but he has questioned his call because of the actions of a few. We need to take a stand against this – it is spiritual attack. We need to pray and be prepared to call out these actions.</p> <p>We have to be praying prophetically and asking where God is calling us to be working. Are we prepared for some pruning? It will be painful but if we are to grow and thrive we must prune.</p> <p>Some items for the coming year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Michael's LEP review will take place later this year. • We have sent out a service review questionnaire, which everyone is encouraged to complete, as we think about our worship. • Welcome – how are people welcomed into our services and events – what more can we do? • Gifts – we will be looking at our gifts and how we can use them • Stewardship – money, time and resources • Environmental challenges – we need to be prophetic and lead the way. • There will be a change in personnel coming, with Barbara Oakley and Romaine Thompson both leaving the parish. <p>The Rector is excited and feels that God is on the move and is doing a new thing</p>

here. He challenged us to get praying, putting into practice what we've learned on the prayer course. Let's keep walking in His ways.

7. Governance

The governance proposal voted on at the 2021 APCM will now come into effect.

8. Finance

The treasurer presented the report for the financial year which is the twelve months ending 31 December 2021:

St Laurence's general income was £148,214

Expenditure for St Laurence's was £166,002 – this has gone up slightly due to increasing our Parish Share.

The general income and expenditure for the 3 churches is as follows:

St Laurence's showed a deficit £17,788 covered by unrestricted funds.

St Michael's showed a deficit of £1,722

All Saints showed a deficit of £3,375

Last year was not an easy year. Many churches and charities are running deficits, and giving was affected with the closure of the churches for several months.

Our unrestricted reserves stand at £141,846 – this is our "rainy day" money, which is what we are using to cover the deficit and for the ongoing maintenance of the buildings. This total could quickly dwindle.

There is a deficit of £5k for the current year to date for St Laurence, with both All Saints and St Michael's being much nearer to breaking even.

The treasurer estimated shortfall for 2022 as follows:

All Saints £1,500

St Michael's £2,500

St Laurence's £20k

In the past St Laurence's used to receive ad hoc one off giving which helped the finances but this has not been the case recently. Our parish share is £99k and we've given more than we can really afford to pay. Gas and electricity are very expensive. We can't really cut costs any more without effecting our ministry. We are aware there is a lot of pressure on people's finances, and we look to the Lord to see how we can respond.

The treasurer explained the varied ways of giving: cash and cheques in the plate, standing orders, BACS, debit and credit card, direct debit. Gift Aid forms are available. We now have a contactless card reader and we'll buy more to put in all our churches.

The auditors have written that they have no concerns in connection with the examination of the accounts.

Proposal of acceptance of the accounts: Proposed by Graham Vince, seconded by Mike Edmunds. All in favour.

Proposed reappointment of Whittingham Riddell as the independent examiners: Proposed by Graham Vince, seconded by Julie Lawton, all in favour.

The comment was made that it is good practice to change the independent examiners every few years. The treasurer will consider this for next year.

The treasurer concluded by thanking John Bennett, treasurer of All Saints, and Jenny Church, treasurer at St Michael's. He also thanked members of the finance team, Tony Peck and Graham Heath and the sidespeople, churchwardens and auditors.

The Rector offered thanks to Graham on behalf for everyone, for all his hard work as treasurer.

9. Electoral Roll

The numbers on the Electoral roll are:

St Laurence's	213
St Michael's	31
All Saints	40

Total on Roll	284
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The number on roll has reduced from 290 to 284.

10. Annual Fabric Report

The full written report is in the annual report booklet.

Steve King thanked everyone who works hard to keeps the churches open, warm and welcoming.

He gave particular thanks to Chris Jones for her hard work on securing the replacement chairs for All Saints.

11. Deanery Synod Report

The full written report is in the annual report booklet.

12. Safeguarding

Chrissie Pepler introduced herself as the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Activities have opened up after two years and it's important that we're up to date with DBS checks and safeguarding training. She thanked everyone who has completed these. She reminded us that Jesus cared for the vulnerable and so must we.

The Trustees have a duty to protect in all we do. We need clear lines of accountability so there are very good reasons why we need to keep safeguarding in mind in all we do. Things will continue to change in our recruitment processes. We need to care for those who have experienced abuse.

She thanked Margaret Benson for her hard work on processing the DBS checks and Julie Lawton for being the safeguarding link on the PCC.

13 Questions /Matters to be referred to the PCC.

The Rector thanked the Ministry Team as we've journeyed together through the Covid roller-coaster. He also thanked everybody who has contributed to the life of the Parish.

Martin Benson thanked Steve and Lindsay for all their work over the last three years.

14. Closing Prayer

The meeting closed in prayer, led by Revd Hazel Allen.