

**The Parish Church of Saint Cuthburga,
Wimborne Minster.**



**Reports presented at the Annual Parochial Church
Council Meeting 22nd May, 2025.**



APCM Reports for the year 2024 - compiled March 2025

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Rector's Report – Rev'd Canon Andrew Rowland

Having compiled this year's report, that follows, I begin by giving thanks to God for all that it describes and indeed many activities and acts of service from church members that are not featured this year.

Wimborne Minster – and the two other parishes that comprise our benefice - is a huge co-operative organisation founded on the Lord Jesus Christ. We exist and work together to present and embody His gospel to all.

The wider world is full of woes and worries and we are not without our own concerns, but we are not anxious. There is every reason to be encouraged and enthusiastic about the mission in which we all share. I note our wonderful Church Wardens (to whom we are all indebted) have offered a 'highlights of the year', so I will not duplicate this. It was another successful year.

From my perspective a major change was the departure of Revd Suzie Allen to a new ministry, and the reorganisation that followed. Reducing to a single stipendiary minister across the three parishes has reduced the financial burden which brings welcome relief in a time when costs increase, and we need to be especially thoughtful of how we marshal all our resources. The team are is? our most important asset. It feels unwise to single anyone out because we are all equally called by God, but I must pay tribute to many colleague ministers, Revds. Heather (my principal Assistant), Bill, Nigel, Derek, Elise, Michael and Sharon, who, together with others, support all the services around the benefice. Here at the Minster De and Andrew are active Lay Worship Leaders. We are also blessed with our Lay Pastoral Assistants and extensive pastoral and outreach ministry spear-headed by Family Outreach Worker, Claire Lehmann.

The Standing Committee (Bruce, Andrew, Richard, Peter and myself) together with the PCC have managed us through a time when we are able to develop our staff team, with at the end of the year, significant developments in prospect. Together we are a team, all apostles and servants of our Servant King. Like any team we need to call and develop new leaders to fill the diverse set of rules roles? that our parishes need.

As well as Rector, I have continued to serve as Rural Dean of Wimborne and as a non-residentiary Canon of Salisbury Cathedral (serving on the Environment Committee). I am trustee of many trusts, mostly associated with The Governors of Wimborne Minster, of which I am one. I serve as trustee of Dorset Historic Churches Trust. By virtue of my office, I am a Local School Committee Member at Queen Elizabeth's (Upper) School. A role which I resumed in 2024 was that of Training Incumbent, as Revd Marianne Mangham came to serve the benefice as Assistant Curate. I also act as Chair of the SDBF Building Company.

Celebrating all that has gone before and looking forward to all that lies ahead I conclude by paying tribute to my beloved wife and partner in ministry, Zahra.

Church Warden's Report – Bruce Jensen & Andrew Patrick

A growing Church

We thank God that attendance at services is up, there are new activities and groups, and the church is in reasonable physical and financial health. We typically now get around 100 for Parish Eucharist and 50+ each for Minster Praise, Messy Church, and Muddy Church, including children. Easter and Christmas bring many more: 2024 attendance at special Christmas services was 1530, 37% more than 2023. (excluding 930 at Carols in the Cornmarket, not normally in the Minster).

Our very wide range of worship, from the beauty of the Anglican Choral tradition, through to the uber-informality of Minster Praise, Messy Church and Muddy Church, is drawing in a growing number of new people, including new families. The Diocese has thus designated the Minster as a Mission Hub.

It's all teamwork

That the Minster is a thriving institution in an age of church decline is thanks to its dedicated staff and army of volunteers, willing to give their time and talents to God. It is not possible to thank every individual or even every group: you know who you are. It has been a pleasure working with you.

In February we said goodbye to two great assets to the Benefice: Revd Suzie Allen, who moved on to serve as Associate Priest at St. Lawrence near Salisbury, and Parish Secretary Jane McCaig, who retired. We welcomed Ruth Marshall as new Parish Secretary, and in July we had Revd Marianne Mangham join the Minster team as curate. Marianne quickly adapted to all aspects of her role and has proven to be a great boon to the ministry of the Minster.

On May 13 Sheila Soper left this world, a great loss to the Minster and to our sister diocese of Yambio. Her funeral was June 17. On September 2 Colin Feltham, former churchwarden and active PCC and Fabric Committee member, died in hospital. His funeral was Sept. 19.

We extend our thanks to Colin Davey and all the musicians and singers, professional and amateur, who continue to maintain the exceptionally high standard of music at the Minster. Thanks are due to Peter Cook for organising our very popular summer series of Monday lunchtime recitals and many other musical events.

Our gratitude goes to the God's Acre team who continue to meet on Mondays and keep the area looking beautiful for those people who use it for an outside meeting place. Inside, the Flower Team continues to astound us with beautiful decorations for the Minster.

During 2024 we welcomed quite a few new volunteer tour guides and Chained Library guides. We appreciate the efforts by Gordon Edgar, Judith Monds, and Mike & Jayne Twomey for their recruiting work, and for all the guides.

We also appreciate our strong team of bellringers. The introduction of 'bell cam' in the bell chamber means the general public can now get a view of what bellringing is all about.

Highlights of a very active Minster year

On January 27 the Minster again hosted the Holocaust Memorial Service.

On February 4 Archbishop Samuel Peni Enosa of Yambio, South Sudan, was a guest speaker with a Q & A at the 9:30 Eucharist. His visit to Wimborne included a trip to St. Michael's Middle School and meetings with local supporters.

Lent started with the Pancake Race and the Ash Wednesday service, and finished in Holy Week with Compline, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services, and a Bun Walk and family-oriented service at St. Stephen's Pamphill on Good Friday.

On March 5, 2024, the Jacobean oak pulpit at Holt Church was returned to the Minster after more than 150 years. It now resides in St. George's Chapel.

On May 4 there was a meeting of representatives of 5 different House Groups, to share and exchange ideas and resources, co-ordinated by Revd Derek Butler. This led to a successful campaign to renew and grow our house groups.

On Climate Sunday, June 2nd, led by the Minster Environment Group, the Minster renewed its commitment to Creation Care, to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, and to pursuing the goal of Net Zero by 2030.

Folk Festival weekend saw a successful Minster Fair on Saturday June 8 and Ecumenical service on the Green on June 9. The Minster itself was a venue for one of the Folk Music Concerts on the Saturday evening.

On Saturday August 10 our Families Worker Claire organised a family-friendly fair on the Minster Green.

The 14th of September had two big events: the annual Ride & Stride for Dorset Historic Churches and the first of the planned annual Haywood organ recitals, in aid of Minster Makes Music.

There were three big Remembrance events in November: the Royal British Legion Service on Remembrance Sunday (10th), the 11 a.m. ceremony at the War Memorial on Minster Green on Armistice Day (11th), and the Lewis-Manning "Candles on the Green" event on the 16th.

December saw the usual intensive programme of Christmas concerts and school carol services, where we welcome large crowds of people into the Minster, many of whom were not ordinarily church-goers.

Keeping the Minster safe and secure

A trend we saw in 2024 was that large public events like the Remembrance Service or Carols in the Cornmarket seem to have higher crowds than in past years. As a consequence, we are reviewing our ability to handle large crowds safely, especially in the light of impending legislation requiring us to include potential terrorism in our Risk Assessments.

In response to security issues PCC resolved that both doors of the Outer (Verger's) Vestry must be locked every time it is unoccupied, to protect AV and IT equipment and personal property. Although this is onerous and inconvenient it is sadly necessary. Please take care to observe this requirement – thank you.

For safeguarding and "P.R." reasons PCC also introduced a requirement for some of us to wear photo-lanyards, either when on duty, or, in the case of staff and the Church Warden team, whenever on Minster property. Thank you to those who organise these, and to everyone concerned for wearing them.

Maintaining the Minster

Detailed consideration of the fabric, fittings and fixtures is carried out by the Fabric Committee, chaired by Senior Church Warden Bruce. This is the subject of a separate Report.

A key issue is that one of our two elderly boilers failed in 2024 and is beyond repair. We are relieved the other boiler has kept going so far (March 2025) but its replacement for 2026 is a top priority.

Otherwise, we are glad to report that in general terms the fabric of the Minster is in good order. All immediate repairs recommended by the 2000 Quinquennial Report have been carried out or are in hand, although one or two additional repairs have arisen which are being processed in appropriate ways. A new Quinquennial Survey will need to take place during 2025.

Modernising the Minster

This is headed up by Church Warden Andrew. 2024 has been a year of frustratingly drawn-out consultation on our vision. Following that, PCC agreed to take the process forward in manageable phases: 1 A, a welcoming and accessible entrance, Served, and accessible toilets; 1B, more storage, dais for the Nave Altar, and Chapel of Remembrance and Reflection; 2, big-enough Choir Vestry and Music Library, with the development of a Heritage Zone evolving through all 3 phases.

The consultation revealed that replacing the existing Vestry Block with a new Choir School, Music Library, toilets and Vestries would be contentious, throwing significant doubt as to whether anything like this would be achieved, and, if so, whether it would be worth the time, hassle and cost. In view of the urgent need for toilets, PCC therefore made a carefully considered decision to install them in a "pod" in Trinity Chapel, which is no longer used for prayer or worship.

All being well, the hope is to carry out a formal consultation on Phase 1 A with the congregations and other users of the Minster, and the Town community, in the run-up to Easter, with a view to submitting Faculty applications to the Diocese in May. We have no implementation timetable yet, but live in hope!

Financial Report – Richard Knott, Hon Treasurer

Looked at purely in financial terms, 2024 was another encouraging year. We finished the year with a surplus and have been able to transfer further funds into our reserves which now hold the recommended amount of six months' expenditure. We also received good news about our Parish Share for 2025: now that we only have one minister with a stipend (the Rector – all the other priests are volunteers), the amount we pay has been reduced significantly, which should allow us to complete a significant part of the work we are expecting to be told about in the 2025 quinquennial survey of the building.

Without wishing to sound too much of a Jeremiah, all this comes with a warning. If, at some time in the future, we need to have a second paid minister, our Parish Share will revert to its previous level. More immediately, two of our employees are sponsored by generous donors and a grant, none of which is guaranteed in the long term. We are a much richer church with those people in post, but we need to ensure that we can continue to employ them in the future. The regular giving from our congregation and the monies we raise from visitors will continue to be a crucial part of our income, but other sources are needed.

Much of what the Minster does depends on the generosity of benefactors and it was with great excitement that we learned that another very generous bequest will allow us to employ a Buildings Manager to do a great deal of the work that Churchwardens now have to do. There was a time when Churchwardens could fulfil the obligations of the role while holding full-time employment elsewhere, but the demands have become excessive. This new role should cut their workload significantly and encourage others to come forward as Churchwardens in the years to come. The reality of that will form part of next year's report but we already know that vergger Martin Smith has been appointed to this new role and we will have three part-time verggers in 2025, giving us added flexibility.

Although financially secure, we finished the year without a Finance Manager. Jackie Morgan has been an excellent FM for the last few years, but left us in early November. At the time of writing (late February) Monika has just started as our new FM and is faced with the daunting task of catching up while preparing the 2024 accounts for the auditor. We wish her well and hope that she remains in post for many years.

2025 will, we hope, bring about the planned changes to the interior of the Minster, including the long-awaited toilets and improved entrance. We pray that we can raise the necessary costs and that the changes take place.

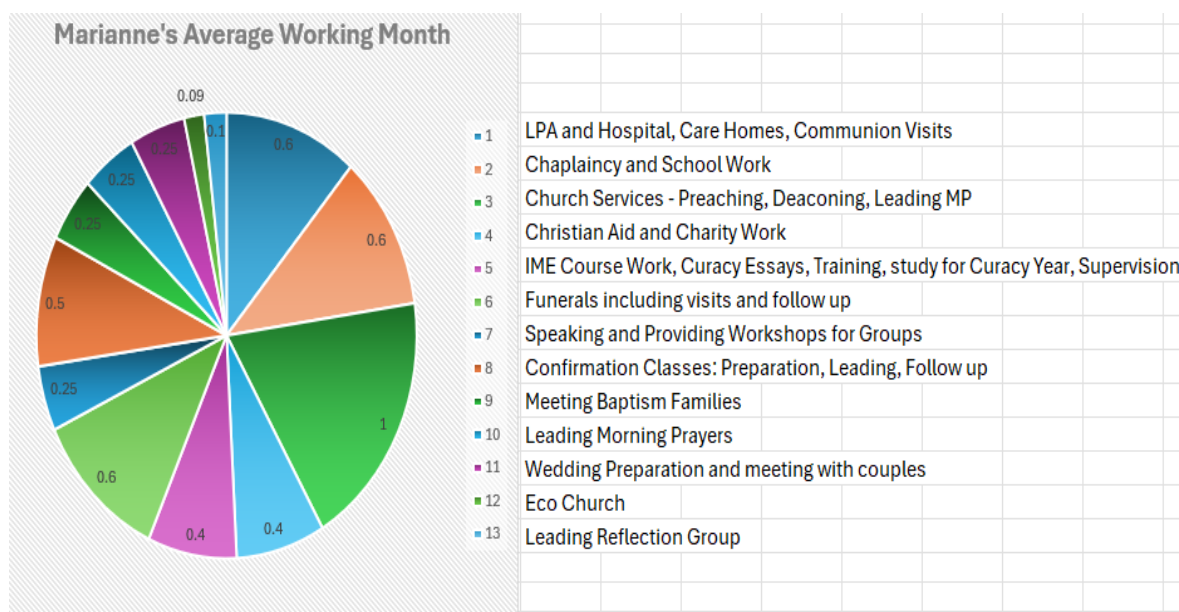
Safeguarding – Jane Davidson, De Ashton

The Wimborne Minster Safeguarding team are continuing to ensure that all volunteers have appropriate DBS checks and complete the correct level of Safeguarding training. All front facing volunteers are wearing photo lanyards to identify them to the public.

It is important that all PCC members and volunteers understand that the safeguarding and care of all individuals is everybody's concern.

Bishop Karen of Salisbury reflected on 2024 as an "Annus Horribilis" for the Church of England, highlighting the urgent need for self-examination, transparency, and support for abuse victims and survivors. She called for honest discussions on challenging topics and declared 2025 as a year to "banish fear", emphasising reliance on faith to overcome challenges.

Assistant Curate's report – Revd Marianne Mangham



I have been blessed to be part of The Minster and Villages Team now for 8 months. My days are varied, and I have been learning, at a fast pace, on my feet. The graph shows the time-spread of the various activities that I have been engaged in, over the course of my Deacon year so far, using data from January and February 2025 specifically.

The Youth Confirmation Classes have gone well. I wrote and collated specific creative sessions for our Minster and Village Youth, supported by Claire Lehmann: we have been preparing 6 Young People and Canon Andrew has prepared 4 adults. The Service of Baptism and Confirmation will be held on Saturday 12 April 2025, 5pm at Kingston Lacy.

I have enjoyed: Leading Minster Praise; assisting as Deacon at 8:00am and 9:30am services; preaching at Village and Minster Services; enjoying the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass Service and All Souls in particular.

I have taken 4 funerals; engaged in School Chaplaincy, supporting youth and children in distress; made LPA visits, home communion and pastoral visits including end of life care. I have been engaging in ECO Church and embed Eco Praxis into my schoolwork and conversations. I will be taking the Chair of our local Christian Aid in the next few months and am liaising with QE School regarding CA assemblies and fundraising.

Having worked closely with Canon Andrew assisting at weddings in the Summer of 2024, I am very excited to be taking my first weddings in the summer months; it will be good to marry some of the couples that the team engaged with in the on-line Marriage Preparation Sessions.

As you can see from the graph, my time is a good split between 'Church' and 'The World'. A Deacon's ministry is a bridge from the world into the Church and back again:

"Deacons are to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God's purposes of love. They are to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people".

Thank you all for your kindness, support and collaboration as I have embedded myself in all the teams.

Aspects of Spirituality – Heather Butler

Having agreed to take on ASPECTS OF SPIRITUALITY last year, I asked Gilly Snaith and Paula Reckless to join me plan and deliver the 4 sessions. We met (over a meal, of course), prayed, shared ideas and ruminated until the idea of looking at how yesterday's spiritual giants might have reacted to today's issues emerged. Having decided Moses, Miriam, Jonah & Elijah would be our target giants we stalled over who could take on the subject. Ann King's gracious comment was along the lines of pray, trust, God will provide, stop fretting.

A few weeks later I had coffee with De who showed me a book by Amy Scott-Robinson. It looked interesting so I borrowed it. The first few pages included an analysis of Moses, Jonah, Elijah and Amy's blog address; and that's how we found our speaker. She was interested in speaking but lives in Bury St Edmunds and couldn't physically get here; so Derek got involved and he and I headed east to film her.

She was delightful, as the 50 or so who came to the Aspects evenings discovered. After a brief summary of the prophet's life we watched the short films that we had made with Amy before the event then gave space for individual reflection. The evening ended with us zooming Amy and asking her really difficult questions that we thought of during the space between her talk and the zoom. She was honest, challenging and thoughtful in her answers and each evening was deemed worth doing.

This is not the Oscars, but there are lots of thank yous – for Gilly and Paula's ideas and support; Derek's shooting, editing films and technical support behind the scenes; Bruce's zoom calling (and other things); Ruth's calm admin; Martin and John's help with setting-up; lovely people who showed up to do

refreshments and make the book stall happen. And thank you to Ann King, too, who has previously organised this event.

Evaluation sheets at the end of the 4 weeks showed that people who came were glad they made the time to be there. We have listened to comments about Aspects happening in dark November, so in 2025 the dates we have booked the church for are September 29th, October 6th, 13th and 20th – before the hour change. Please note those dates in your diaries now! The proposed theme is prayer.

Bellringers – David Warwick, Tower Captain

2024 was a year of good progress for the band at Wimborne Minster. Sunday ringing has followed the previously established pattern of general ringing in the morning for the Parish Eucharist and quarter peals for Evensong. Methods have ranged from call changes on twelve, Grandsire, Erin and Stedman Cinques, and Bristol, Cambridge, Yorkshire and Zanussi Surprise Maximus. 52 quarters were successful, of which 37 were of either Cinques or Maximus – making Wimborne for the second year running the leading 12-bell quarter peal tower in the country by a significant margin. James Cheshire rang his first quarter, Esther Davey her first on 8, Ben Avery his first on 10 and Holly Kilgour her first on 12 and there were several other firsts achieved through the year.

One local band peal was successfully rung – Stedman Cinques at Easter – an SRCY peal of 4Spliced Surprise Maximus with six Wimborne ringers in the band at Christmas, and two other visitors' peals.

Wimborne came second in the Guild 8-bell and third in the Guild 6-bell striking competitions and third (out of 7 bands) in the South-West 12-bell competition at Withycombe Rayleigh in October. At the National 12-bell competition we rang at Portsmouth Cathedral, coming 7th (out of 9).

We held Open Days to demonstrate ringing at the Minster Fair in June and again for Heritage Week in September – both occasions attracted a good range of visitors to hear about the history of bells and ringing at Wimborne. Social events were the Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday, a summer barbeque, a skittles match against the Churchwardens team, pre-Christmas drinks and mince pies and a New Year's Eve supper before ringing in 2025.

A highlight of the year was the annual outing to Exeter, which included ringing Stedman Cinques, Bristol and Yorkshire Maximus at the Cathedral. The photograph shows the band in the Cathedral ringing room.

Sadly, we said farewell to three Minster Ringers in 2024 – Beryl Sexton, Mary Garrard and Alan Bentley – each of whom gave valuable and loyal service to the band over many years.





.....and on a happier note, we also rang for the wedding of Ian and Lucy Taylor-Warwick in April.

Choirs – Colin Davey, Musical Director

The Minster choir has thrived over the past year we have welcomed several new probationers to the treble line and three of our former trebles have moved to sing with the Lay Clerks (newly renamed to the historical title when the appellation, 'Gentlemen of the choir' ceased to be wholly accurate). The choristers continue to rehearse on Tuesdays when, in addition to the main practice, they receive vocal tuition from teacher Liz Green. In this practice, those whose voices have changed work with Peter Cook to learn their parts. On Fridays, the whole choir meets in the Minster to rehearse upcoming music.

There have been a number of social occasions over the past year, including bowling, choir teas and a film night organised by Claire. The Lay Clerks also meet socially on a regular basis. The Minster Choir is currently looking forward to singing a joint Evensong in Salisbury with Salisbury Cathedral Choir.

The soprano line has also welcomed new members and this group continues to sing one evensong a month with the Lay Clerks. They also helped to lead the music for the Advent Carol service.

Minster Voices, coordinated by Liz Watson, mainly sing when the Minster Choir is on holiday. The group has very healthy numbers and is also going from strength to strength.

We have been fortunate to have Matthew Kelly join us as a regular organ accompanist; he will be greatly missed when he takes up his post as Assistant Director of Music at Hexham Abbey shortly before Easter. We also have a number of other skilled and valued players whose accompaniment has been greatly appreciated, including Sean Tucker and David Warwick. Additionally, we have welcomed visiting choirs to the Minster including Laudemus, Quintas Imperfectus and Keble Choir.

Peter Gibson, as always, does tireless service as choir librarian, managing the music library and producing newly-typeset editions of new repertoire. Rosalind Jensen manages the choir's robes and she and Peter cook have done a great job of wrangling the many difficulties of supplying new matching robes.

Deanery Synod Report

The Minster's Deanery Synod representatives for the year were: De Ashton, Sarah Steel, Minna Harvey and Anne King. Sheila Soper had been an active member and we were so sorry to lose her exceptional contribution and skills.

The Deanery Synod continues to focus on the *Making Jesus Known* initiative, and ways we can learn from one another and work together. The Deanery Plan covers young people, courageous Christian leadership, creative partnerships in local mission, justice and creation care, financing the future, and supporting worship and prayer.

In the winter months, Deanery Synod meetings take place on Zoom so as to avoid travel on dark nights, whereas in summer we meet in various churches across the Deanery.

Parish Share and financing the work of the church is an ongoing subject for discussion. The Synod receives reports from the Diocesan Synod, and from organisations supported by the Diocese, including the sponsorship programme for Clinical Officers in Sudan.

The Deanery Synod enables us to build relationships between the various churches, to share ideas and support one another.

Fabric Committee - Bruce Jensen, Chair (six meetings held in 2024)

Work on the exterior of the church:

The plane tree which overlooks back gardens of our neighbours on the south side of the Cornmarket was cut back.

Five lime trees between the car park and God's Acre were pollarded.

We decided to stop the contract for spraying fertilizer, weedkiller (Esteron) and mould killer on churchyard.

A program of renovating the benches around the churchyard was initiated.

Three of the closest parking spaces in the Minster car park along King Street were converted into two disabled spaces.

A lower-cost contractor for clearing the gutters, Skyvax, used giant hoovers & drones for the work. They did a good job and we intend to continue with them.

The fence between the Forest Garden and the car park along King Street was completely replaced.

Work on the interior of the church:

New winders were fitted to the tower clock. We entered into a maintenance contract with Cumbria Clocks.

A new water boiler was fitted upstairs in Church House, and there were other minor electrical repairs.

The Bridport firm Stonecroft Stained Glass repaired the arrow-slit windows in the Chained Library tower and replaced a holed stained glass piece ('Reuben's knee') in a window in the north aisle of the Nave.

Re-ordering: much work on the expansion of the vestry had to be shelved after a negative reaction from Dorset planning & conservation. It was decided to concentrate on changes within the walls of the Minster: entrance ramp, servery, and toilet pods. Much progress for all these.

A working group on heating, consisting of Bruce Jensen, Rosemary Lunt, and Andrew Kelley was established. This was formed initially to look at evolving the present heating system to a more efficient one. The task became more urgent with the failure of one of our two elderly gas boilers.

After a suggestion by the Archdeacon, we had a visit by Canon Tom Clammer, a consultant on disabled access in churches, which was very useful.

The Fabric Committee received a report from MEG on the feasibility of installing solar panels in the Minster. The report concluded that installing solar panels is not the best use of the Minster's resources at this time.

Changes to the committee

We sadly lost Colin Feltham in 2024. Colin was a former Churchwarden and long-time stalwart of the Fabric Committee. Jackie Morgan left the employ of Minster and resigned from the Committee. Churchwarden Peter Cook's last meeting as Chair was on May 7: he was awarded a unanimous vote of thanks from the Committee.

Families Outreach & Children's Ministry – Claire Lehmann

Children's, youth and Families Ministry and outreach work has continued to grow at the Minster over the past year through a programme of regular and seasonal events. I'm very grateful to the 15 lovely volunteers who regularly assist by leading craft activities, preparing refreshments and welcoming families.

The Forest Garden continues to be popular in all weathers with Forest Garden toddlers running on Tuesdays and our home Education group running on alternate Fridays. Our home Education group is now our largest group with 20 children aged 2-13 regularly attending. Muddy Church which runs one Saturday a month is also becoming increasingly popular. In the Forest Garden based groups we largely follow the 'Muddy Church Education Programme' which introduces the main events in the Christian calendar, the basis of the Christian faith and an understanding of what it means to be a Christian. The programme has been designed for children and families who do not attend Church regularly and has been well received. Alongside this a monthly Messy Church held in the Minster is regularly attended by 20-30 children. Hosting this group within the church building has proved very beneficial in supporting families to feel comfortable in an environment they are not familiar with. On Monday's a successful Forest Garden group for children with special

educational needs runs throughout the year and is supported by Dorset Children's Foundation.

Until Christmas families attending Minster Praise were able to participate in 'Creation Station'. This has been replaced by 'Kids in the Crypt' which has been enjoyed by families attending.

An increasing number of families have begun to visit the Minster to use the play area during the week. This has led to many meaningful conversations with local families that have then attended groups and events.

During school holidays, there are a range of seasonal events offered that include Forest Garden sessions, craft activities and 'movies at the Minster'. These sessions are promoted to local schools and are very popular. Last Summer 75 people joined our 'big day out' which was a trip to Monkey world supported by the friends of Wimborne Minster. We also welcomed Dorset Born theatre into the Minster to perform a 'Shipwreck' story as a conclusion to our Summer Holidays 'Pirate' theme, which was inspired by local Pirate and Church Warden, Issac Gulliver.

Trails within the Minster have proved popular and themes this year have included Reindeers, Corgis and Pirate Treasure. Over the Summer Holidays 300 children completed the Pirate themed trail. The trails have proved successful in engaging with families and have led to families attending Muddy Church, Forest Garden toddlers and Seasonal services. Clothes and Toys swaps have supported families to access items they may need at no cost.

This year we opened the Forest Garden for the Folk festival, where families were able to participate in making seed bombs, crafts and den building. The Minster also hosted a drummer in the Minster which was very popular and encouraged many visitors to explore the Minster. We also participated in October's Eco Fayre by opening the Forest Garden and providing recycling based crafts for local families. There was also a 'People in the bible' themed messy church as part of the Wimborne Book Festival. We have begun to introduce a range of social activities for those attending services and those with no connection to the Minster. This has included craft sessions, skittles evenings, bring and share lunches and a Christmas themed Cream tea with Christmas Quiz.

In December we held a Christmas Craft Fayre with an adult wreath making workshop and children's crafts. This event was attended by 20 local store holders and approximately 270 members of the public with 23 participating in an affordable Wreath making workshop and 30 joining a Children's Christmas Craft workshop. On Christmas Eve 400 people attended the Crib service with children receiving a copy of the Nativity story.

Family Events including a Christmas Walk and Remembrance Service themed Messy Church have been held in Pamphill and Witchampton.

Support has continued to be provided to the Choristers by leading their Sunday school activities during the 9-30 service and by organising their social events. In the past year the Choristers have enjoyed bowling, alpaca walking, pottery painting and pizza nights. In October a Choristers taster morning and pizza

lunch was held and gave children the opportunity to explore what it is like to be a Chorister at the Wimborne Minster.

Support continues to be provided to Wimborne Minster Dementia Friends and there is weekly engagement with Pamphill School through an Art club targeted at children receiving pupil premium. On Fridays chaplaincy is provided to students at Queen Elizabeths School. As needed support is also provided to 2 by 2 toddler group and the Oasis Bereavement group.

Looking forward to this year, our new ' Kids in the Crypt ' Sunday school has been enjoyed by families, and our Easter trail has just been launched. You may have seen the bunnies and chicks currently in the Minster. On Easter Sunday Minster Praise will be having an Easter Eggtravaganza themed Service which will include music, and 'egg quiz', crafts, refreshments and an Easter egg hunt.

Friends of Wimborne Minster Report - Peter Cook

The Friends of Wimborne Minster is a registered charitable incorporated organisation originally set up in 1945 to support the Minster with regard to its buildings and its mission.

The first event of the year was the annual Valentine's Coffee Morning which proved to be a great success and raised significantly more funds than the previous year. The Friends' stall at the Minster Fair was highly successful and raised in the region of £1000.

The preacher for the AGM Evensong was the Very Revd Stephen Waine, former Dean of Chichester with Canon Nigel Lloyd officiating at the service, which was followed by the traditional Cream Tea.

Members of the Events Team provided tea for the annual visit of "Laudemus!" in August as well as refreshments for the Cuthburga Lecture, given by Canon Charles Stewart on 'The Glories of Evensong'. In early September members enjoyed the annual Coffee Morning at Deans Court with Sir William Hanham in attendance.

The final event of the year was the November Tea Party which again was very popular with the entertainment being a "Desert Island Discs" featuring Peter Cook, the Friends' Secretary.

During the year Trustee John Hughes arranged trips to Cranborne Gardens and Garden Centre, the Russell Cotes Gallery and Tivoli Theatre. A Friends' Banner was also purchased by John on behalf of the Trustees.

The Minster's Family and Outreach worker, Claire Lehmann again organised a Christmas Craft Fayre at which the Friends had a stall.

Over the past year we have welcomed nine new members.

Fund-raising produces a modest amount on a regular basis from lectures and teas. Membership fees have continued to be collected and with careful management of our investments we find ourselves still in a position to make grants. Overall, we are still in a healthy position and have no doubts about

continuing to operate according to our constitutional requirements. A grant from St John's College Cambridge was renewed for a further five years.

During the year grants were awarded for:

- New Choir Cassocks
- Chorister trips
- Christ Story books for Crib Service
- Saxon Booklet
- Easter story books
- For Claire Lehmann's work with families

God's Acre - Judy Burrows

As all gardeners know, last year and so far this year has been a challenging time. It has been soggy and very windy.

We had to cut down two box bushes which were infected with box caterpillars. As I'm sure you have noticed the pests have spread all over the churchyard. However, amazingly the shrubs have started to regrow.

For those who know about fungi, a jelly ear fungus was found and identified. What an appropriate name!

We are trying to maintain the chippings path as we think it is useful for anyone wanting to look at the plants in the middle of the beds. Just recently we have placed the logs from the cut-up Christmas tree along the edges. The beehive has been renovated as it was not looking too welcoming to the bees. It has now been placed on the lime at the entrance to the Acre.

After one of the mighty storms in January the holly tree on the south wall collapsed. It was very heavy with ivy which is good for the birds but not so for the tree. There is more cutting down to be done & removal of some of the ivy.

The routine work of leaf clearing and bird feeding has continued. There is a great deal of excellent compost under the leaves on the south wall. All are welcome to come and dig some out.

We are very fortunate that we have a new helper, Tom, who is a tremendous help with some of the heavier tasks.

Plans for the future: we need some long grasses for the insects and will contact Knoll Garden for advice. We also need to try to control the ivy.

Lunch & Chat - Anne Pollard

We continue to hold Lunch and Chat every Friday in the Parish Room, at 12pm, where homemade Soup and Cake are served. We are very grateful to the many people who make the soup and cakes, they do a good job! This is a time for people to get together and we are extremely pleased to have the support given us by members of Oasis, who attend each week. Do come and join us for lunch and bring a friend. All proceeds go to the Sudan Medical Link.

Minster Environment Group (MEG) – Alison Francis

MEG continues to meet regularly and to keep a watchful eye on Minster activities.

We monitor energy usage in the Minster and seek to ensure implementation of our Environmental Policy. Creation care features frequently in our worship and prayer and a Climate Service was held in June 2024.

Late in 2023 a working group was set up at the request of Fabric Committee to investigate the feasibility of solar panels on Minster roofs. This group consisted of some members of MEG and others with expertise and interest in this matter. After considerable research and investigations into projects around the country, the conclusions made were that, due to the considerable technical problems and minimal net benefits in carbon reduction, at the present time it would not be pursued further.

DonateIT sessions were held twice in 2024

MEG continues to be involved with Planet Wimborne and played a part in the Green Festival in October.

Minster Guides – Gordon Edgar, Head Guide

During the 2024 season the Minster Guides greeted many visitors and told them about the many points of interest located within the Minster.

It was my impression that a greater number of visitors than 2023 came into the Minster. It is also my impression that many of those visitors wanted to know more than superficial details and from some we learnt some additional material.

We welcomed a number of large groups, some travelling considerable distances to visit. There was also an apparent increase in visitors using Wimborne as a stop-off place on the long journey from the southwest to the southeast but targeting the Minster as the 'place to visit'. Some even booked a 'small group tour'. I believe 'small group tours' are an area of our activity that we can develop.

Guides also took part in Wimborne Events, offering Civil War themed tours of the Minster during the Civil War event and themed tours during Dorset Architectural Heritage Week. Every tour we offered was sold out. It is my intention to offer a greater number of tours for the 2025 Dorset Architectural Heritage week. Guides were also present in the Minster for other Wimborne events such as the Folk Festival.

I am grateful for the support I am given by the Guides and doubly grateful for the warm welcome they give to those who visit us. For the 2024 season I had enough Guides available to cover morning and afternoon slots and some lunch times. More volunteers would be welcome so that we can cover those missing lunchtime slots

Guiding is fun, you get to meet many different people, so if being with people is your thing, why not come and join us. Sure, there is knowledge to be acquired, but we will support you with that.

Minster House Groups – Revd Derek Butler, Alison Francis, Anne King,

Tricia Knott

It has been said that house groups are the powerhouse of any church, enabling members to deepen their faith and get to know and support each other, both spiritually and practically. So with this in mind, last autumn, it was decided that, although there were at that time five active groups in the Minster, it would be a good idea to raise the profile of house groups more generally and ensure that everyone who would like to be part of a group had the opportunity to join one. A small committee was formed with this purpose.

The first stage was to produce a questionnaire to establish current provision and future need. This was distributed both electronically and in hard copy at all the services for a few weeks. A total of 48 people filled in the questionnaires giving the committee a full picture.

The next stage was to review all the information and place people, as far as possible, according to their wishes. This turned out to be quite a complex task! 18 people expressed an interest in being part of a new group, with some offering to lead or host. The majority of people who were already in a group wished to stay with that group and most of these groups were already full. This led to the formation of three new groups.

As a result of this initiative, there are now eight house groups within the Minster, meeting on a variety of days, both in the evening and in the day and all are thriving. This was a wonderful outcome far beyond what was envisaged at the start of the project; we have been truly blessed.

In the future, the committee would like to keep house groups visible and accessible and are working on a leaflet which would be available in the church and in the office and are considering a smaller-scale refresh next autumn.

If you would like more information and would be interested in joining a group, please speak to one of the committee as above. Finally, we would like to thank congregation and clergy for their interest and support and offer special thanks to those who have come forward to lead or host the new groups.

Minster Praise - Andrew Patrick, Lay Worship Leader

Minster Praise continues every Sunday, offering all-age very informal worship with refreshments and fellowship for those who enjoy that approach, whether long-time Christians or completely new to Church. Refreshments are on stream from 11 until about 12.30, with worship from 11.15 to noon.

During 2024 Revd Marianne joined the Minster Praise team, with the Rector, Revd Derek, Families Worker Claire, and commissioned Lay Worship Leaders

De and Andrew (supported by many helpers, musicians and IT experts – thank you all!). This now means one-to-one prayer is available after worship for those in need of healing or help.

Worship at Minster Praise typically tees-off with a chorus for children (of all ages!) a worship song, and maybe a video. While the children go to “Kids in the Crypt” (see Claire Lehmann’s report) we focus on a Bible reading and teaching, and - a feature of Minster Praise – a discussion, which you can join in, or just sit, listen, and learn. Another feature of Minster Praise is a short time of open prayer, when you can pray out loud or silently. The Kids come back from the Crypt to “show & share” & we close with a worship song or two.

A bring-&-share lunch follows on the first Sunday of every month – for everyone in the Minster, not just Minster Praise - and a simple Holy Communion on the last Sunday of the month.

As with most Minster services, Minster Praise has grown during 2024, from about 35 to around 50 plus, and encompasses every age group from babes in arms to nearly 90. “Come as you are, relax, and enjoy!”

Mothers’ Union – Di Hiscock, Leader

2024 was another busy year for the Mothers’ Union. We welcomed a new member from another branch and enrolled two new members, one of whom, Joy Craddock, took on the role of Branch Secretary. This was an answer to prayer and we are very grateful for all that she does. We thanked Jane Pike for acting as secretary for several years. Jill Mogg retired from many years on the committee, and we thanked her too for all she has done in that time.

Sadly, we lost Sheila Soper who worked tirelessly for the MU both in the Salisbury Diocese and in South Sudan. She is greatly missed.

On the first Wednesday of every month some of us met for coffee and a chat before going to the 11 o’clock Communion service in the Minster.

We continued to meet on the third Thursday of every month, except August, at 2.15pm in the Church House Lounge. These meetings varied from a New Year’s Party with De Ashton entertaining us with some poetry to Revd Susie Allen leading us in a Lenten Reflection and Revd Derek Butler telling about his interesting path to the Ministry. We learnt more about the Trussel Trust, the work of MEG and related local projects and a retired policeman talked about how to recognise scammers, particularly on the phone, and what action to take. After a shared Christmas lunch, we joined other MU branches in the Deanery for an Advent Carol Service in West Moors. In February we joined in the MU’s Global Wave of Prayer for our allotted hour.

We continued to Support the Salisbury Diocese MU projects by taking a welcome pack for the family staying in the Holiday Home at Rockley Sands. We collected Christmas presents for the women and children in the Salisbury Women’s Refuge and we thank the Minster congregation for their support with this.

Oasis Bereavement Group – Sue Hatherley

Every year that Oasis has been running, we reflect that the most important aspect of our group is the mutual support it provides, for all stages of bereavement - and often in surprising circumstances. This has been emphasised by appreciative replies from a recent questionnaire put to members.

We are truly lucky to have a strong leadership team - now further strengthened by Tricia Knott - which has really helped us through a turbulent year. Many thanks are also due to Vicki and Maggie for their loyal help at our monthly meetings. These take place on the first Thursday of the month with a bring and share lunch or a visit.

Highlights of the year: a hand massage session (very therapeutic!); craft workshop with Claire, our Families Outreach worker; an illustrated talk from Viv Miller about her Arctic Adventure; a talk from our curate Marianne.

The sun shone for a most successful trip to the New Forest, however not when the heavens opened for the cream tea in Jane's Garden, when all rallied around and had a jolly time indoors. Informal coffee gatherings in the Methodist Centre are popular, and members organise a monthly Sunday lunch at different venues. Plans for this year already include a theatre visit to Chichester.

Grateful thanks to the Digby Trust, whose generous grant has enabled coach trips and visits.

Open the Book – De Ashton

Packing beads become manna from heaven; garden ponds are raided for reeds; a skittle becomes Pharaoh's crown: welcome to the imaginative world of Open the Book. This scheme, run by the Bible Society, gives church groups the chance to go into schools and act out stories from the Bible, for which there is limited space in the National Curriculum. The team going fortnightly to Wimborne First School is made up of members from the Minster and St. John's Church, Wimborne.

In 2024 we made 20 visits to assemblies, recruiting 8-12 children from Year 4 to take on roles as diverse as sheep, Roman soldiers, fish, servants and trees. We post examples of our ingenuity on the OTB Facebook page, which we hope inspires other groups to be equally inventive. We are grateful to the school for allowing us to store costumes and props and to use their technical resources. Thanks go to Kevin Metcalfe for being our technician and liaising with school.

During 2024 we experienced the sad loss of our leader, Sheila Soper. She was given a tribute by Headteacher Mrs Sarah Hartley in assembly. Her absence is still felt by the team.

At the end of the year, Mrs Hartley moved to pastures new, but not before ensuring that OTB visits were firmly in the school diary. We continue to have high standards of Safeguarding.

Anyone who has secretly desired to take on the role of robber, wayside rescuer, fish-dweller or baby-concealer would be welcome to come and find out more.

Publicity Officer's Report - Anthony Oliver

Throughout the year contact has been maintained with the Media and we have had good support from the various publications including the Dorset View and Viewpoint Magazines, Wimborne Around Guides, the Wimborne Directory, the New Stour and Avon Magazine, the Daily Echo and the Wimborne Directory. Wimborne BID, which receives a copy every month of our Parish Magazine kindly mentions Minster Events both on their website and in printed publications. The Parish Magazine is also still sent monthly by e-mail to the Salisbury Diocesan Grapevine for their information and to the Museum of East Dorset for their archives.

Contact is maintained with the various Radio Stations which cover our area and interviews have taken place from time to time.

BBC South and Meridian ITV are kept abreast of the more major events and frequently feature the Annual Pancake Race around the Minster. Contact is also maintained with our freelance friends at the Daily Telegraph and the Bournemouth News Agency.

The Minster website is also kept well informed of our various events and, as has been said on many occasions, the most essential aim is to keep the Minster in the public eye so as to ensure it is seen as a lively and active Church.

Saint Margaret & St Anthony's Chapel - Dinah IF & Sue R

It is now well over two years since the current pattern of Holy Communion Services at the chapel was trialled and established in the summer of 2022. We continue to hold monthly services on the third Thursday of each month at 11 a.m. These are led by a rota of Minster Clergy and follow the Common Worship format. Readings for each month are selected according to the relevant liturgical season, feast or festival. Three hymns appropriate to the theme are chosen and we are blessed to enjoy musical accompaniment from our talented musicians on piano, flute or harmonium.

Historic England's listing for the chapel describes it as "C13 - originally the chapel of hospital for leprosy. Ironstone walls, modern tiled roof, with timber bell-turret at west end" and mentions windows and doorways from the 13th, 15th and 17th centuries. By the late 19th century the building had fallen into a state of disrepair but thanks to the intervention of a Wimborne Minster curate, restorations began and services could again take place.

The beauty, atmosphere and history of this place are most certainly appreciated and valued by those who worship here today, and by the visitors we welcome from time to time. The chapel is also put to good use by the St

Francis Group for their monthly meetings and by members of the Almshouse community.

In May, we initiated a clear-out of the ancient wooden chest at the back of the chapel. This was partly to help create more storage space for the Almshouse residents' equipment now that they use the chapel more often for charity or social events. It also provided the opportunity to relocate some items no longer needed at the chapel, and to evaluate the condition of books used in times past and now stored away. Some interesting volumes came to light, including a large King James Bible from 1870, a 19th century book of church services with illuminated pages, and a BCP Service Book with a Collect for "thy Servant VICTORIA our Queen" which may indicate when it was last used. These books had seen better days, so we asked a representative from Wessex Bookbinders to inspect them and his evaluation was that they could benefit from restoration. We agreed they would be restored for just the cost of materials, which the Rector and congregants immediately donated. The books have now been returned, complete with meticulously refurbished spines, new endpapers and newly restored covers. We are grateful to Phil for his careful restoration work and to Verger Martin for his help in sourcing the wooden bookstand used for displaying the books.

In September it was a pleasure to host the visitors taking part in the annual Ride & Stride event to raise money for the Dorset Historic Churches Trust. Dozens of cyclists and walkers appreciated the chance to stop and take refreshment or to look around the chapel and learn a little of its history. The following week, the chapel was prepared for the Harvest Service with food, flowers and other autumnal decorations. The vegetables, fruit and flowers were gratefully accepted by Wimborne Community Food Supply at the Allendale Centre to help their volunteers support local people in need.

Our November service, with the theme Christ the King, was cancelled on the day due to thick snow.

Early December the beautiful papier mâché Nativity figures were transported from storage in the North Transept of the Minster to St Margaret's, where they are always displayed on the deep window ledges.

Holly and ivy, bright conifer branches and baubles were added to enhance the December Communion Service with Carols. Rector Andrew and Curate Marianne led a most fitting service for about 24 communicants, including many Almshouse residents and Trustees. Leonie, our resident pianist, was unable to attend, so Mrs Maggie Davis kindly stepped in and played the harmonium for all our carols. Dr Maurice Stack was the last regular harmonium player for our services, so we were especially delighted to have him with us. At the age of 102, perhaps the harmonium is of a similar age, and both still going strong!

Sidespersons Report - Anthony Oliver

Throughout the year Sidespersons have continued to maintain their high standard of giving a friendly and warm welcome to all those attending the different Services in the Minster. This is often commented on by not only

visitors but also regular members of the congregation. Thank you to all involved and also to those who have assisted at special services during the year for it is not only on Sundays that Sidespersons are required.

Although we do have a reasonable number of Sidespeople on the overall list for the different services on a Sunday new people would be more than welcome. The only requirement to be a Sidesperson is to be on the Minster's Electoral Roll.

I must pay thanks to those who have retired during the year Sue Hatherley and to Jean Harvey retiring in the early months of 2025. Both have been long time members of the Team.

The Sidespersons list now includes those taking up the Elements at the 9.30am Parish Eucharist and thank you to those who have joined this Team.

If there are any members of the congregation who would like to join either team they only have to speak to me.

Stewardship – Dennis Child, Secretary

In October 2023 in my letter to the congregation I invited people to think about increasing their giving in line with inflation if they were able to do so. I am pleased to inform you that the overall increase from our current regular monthly donors has increased by 5.26% which makes the average monthly giving £80 per person.

Unfortunately, we have lost a few of our regular givers last year which has meant that we are just ahead of where we were last year financially. Recently we have seen a number of new members in the congregation, and we trust that they will consider joining one of our regular giving schemes. We now have just over 150 regular givers.

I am also pleased to report that the contactless machines that we have placed by the Minster entrance in the year to December has generated £21,056 (£14,462) in donations including the Chained Library £2,263. This is a significant increase and most of this is new income to the Minster.

In addition, we do continue to receive income from the Christmas School Concerts and other services, cash is still given at the door in the donation box.

If you are new to the Minster or an existing member of the congregation and want to give on a regular basis you can find out about our various schemes by visiting our website: www.wimborneminster.org.uk and clicking under "giving" or contact me: stewardship@wimborneminster.org.uk

Sunday School – Heather Davey

The Sunday School continues to meet when the choristers are singing at the 9.30am Eucharist. Numbers have increased, reflecting the growth in the Minster Choir. The group is run on a rota basis by a team of four volunteers, with one person leading and the other supporting. Leaders sometimes use the

resources from *Roots*, a subscription-based website that provides worship and learning material for young people. At other times, leaders may choose to create their own sessions, tailoring them to the needs of the group.

Sunday School sessions are usually based on the Gospel reading but may, at times, focus on the words of the anthem for the day. In this way, choristers gain a deeper understanding of the words they are singing in the service. Occasionally, sessions may focus on the Christian year or feast days celebrated at the Minster. Activities are varied and, in the past year, have included games, crafts, problem-solving, discussion, and baking.

The Sunday School is open not only to choristers, but also to other children who may be visiting the Minster. We always welcome new members.

Two by Two – Ruth Edgar

Two by Two has continued to thrive this year opening our doors each Thursday morning to carers and their under-fives from Wimborne and beyond.

We are regularly in contact with over twenty families with over 80% of sessions attended by 10 or more families. Occasionally we have had the joyous chaos of seventeen or eighteen families on a Thursday. Our termly services for Mothering 'Sunday', summer and Christmas have been well attended and the help from Minster clergy was much appreciated.

Of course, none of this could happen without the loyal support of the 'coffee ladies' who turn up without fail, rain, sun and this year, snow. Thank you all. Thanks too, to the Minster staff who put out chairs, rugs and The Stable for us at the appropriate juncture.

It is now time for me to move on and from April Claire will be taking over Two by Two bringing lots of fresh ideas to the group.

Wimborne Minster Musical Heritage Trust – Peter Cook

The Trust was established in early 2020 to manage the finance of the Minster Makes Music Appeal. It is a non-membership Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The five trustees have met regularly during the year.

A grant made to the Trust by the Michael James Music Trust for the cost of an Organ Scholar has been used to support Matthew Kelley. The Trust has also paid for extra coaching for the young choristers by Mrs Elizabeth Green.

The Minster Makes Music Appeal was re-launched in the Spring and, under the "Partnership" scheme, we have some new regular donors but are always looking to increase this number. The Summer Organ Recitals made a good profit due to increased numbers and the purchase of a card reader allowing contactless donations. The first of the two major evening recitals was a modest success, and we covered our costs, but it clashed with an event elsewhere and needs greater publicity.

Two special events are planned for the Spring of 2025. A performance of Bach's B minor Mass by the Orlando Singers in April and the Barnes Organ Recital in May to be given by Sam Hanson.

The accounts examined and agreed as required by the Charity Commission and the trust is now registered for reclaiming of VAT on donations. Cheques for the appeal should be made payable to: Wimborne Minster Musical Heritage Trust.