

# St James' PCC, Exeter – Annual Report, y/e 31st December 2024

## **Background**

St James' Church is situated in Exeter and is part of the Diocese of Exeter within the Church of England. The address is: St James' Church, Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter EX4 7AH.

E-mail: [office@stjamesexeter.org](mailto:office@stjamesexeter.org). Website: [www.stjamesexeter.org](http://www.stjamesexeter.org).

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST JAMES' EXETER is registered with the Charity Commission (number 1128877). Working name: St James' PCC, Exeter

St James' PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church. When planning our activities, the PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. Additionally, the PCC has maintenance responsibilities for the church buildings and grounds.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, and the Church Representation Rules 2022). The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. Members of the PCC are either co-opted ex-officio or elected at the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). In 2024 this took place on 17<sup>th</sup> March.

During the year, the following served as members of the PCC:

<i>Incumbent:</i>	Fr Henry Pryse*
<i>Licensed Lay Minister:</i>	Mrs Joan Ridgway*
<i>Churchwardens:</i>	Mrs Rachel Martindill* Mr Andrew Mimmack* ( <i>Safeguarding Representative</i> )
<i>Deanery Synod Representatives:</i>	Mr Mike Payne, Mrs Marilyn Pegg and Mrs Joan Ridgway
<i>Elected:</i>	Mrs Caroline Adams* ( <i>Safeguarding Representative</i> ) Mrs Anita Atherton (until 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2024) Mr Tim Bayton Mrs Susan Coombs Mrs Anne Killingback (from 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2024) Mr Stuart Macwilliam (until 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2024) Mrs Joanna Mimmack (from 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2024) Mr Gary Patch Mrs Pat Read (from 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2024) Ms Louise Spencer (until 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2024) Mr Jim Weeks Mr Nigel Williams
<i>Co-opted (at the meeting in May):</i>	Ms Jill Mather* ( <i>Secretary</i> ) Mr Nigel Ridgway* ( <i>Treasurer</i> )

In addition, the PCC appoints: a Health and Safety Officer, a Planned Giving Officer and an Electoral Roll Officer.

The PCC met six times during 2024. The Standing Committee met five times additionally. Other Committees and working groups normally meet between the PCC meetings. Minutes of their deliberations are received and discussed by the PCC. Notes of Standing Committee meetings are circulated to all PCC members.

## **Committees and sub-groups**

The PCC operates through a number of committees and sub-groups, who report to the PCC and which normally meet at varying intervals throughout the year:

### **Standing Committee**

This group comprises the clergy, Churchwardens, Readers, Treasurer and two members of PCC, as well as the Secretary (*as marked with asterisks \**).

### **Pastoral Care Team**

This group offers help and care mainly to those in the Church who have a particular need.

### **Social Committee**

This group organises social events on behalf of the PCC and encourages participation by as many people as possible in social and fundraising events at St James'.

### **Communications Group**

This group is responsible for the production and distribution of *Contact* magazine as well as maintenance of the website and general publicity.

### **Hall Committee**

This group oversees the maintenance and use of the church hall.

### **Gardening Team**

This group looks after lawns, gardens, trees, hedges and benches in the church grounds.

### **Young People's Leaders (11-Ups, JAM and Messy Church) Team**

## **Semi-autonomous, Fresh Expressions churches**

**Messy Church**, for young children and their parents or carers, meets monthly in the church and in the hall.

**"Celebrate Together"** is a church that is for adults with needs and their carers normally meeting once a month at St James' Church.

## **Achievements during the year**

There remains a spirit of optimism and renewed hope for all that lies ahead. Although there was some collateral damage caused by the COVID lockdowns, generally, we have come out stronger. Regular "in-person" attendance at our Sunday services remains at a level similar to what we were used to in 2019. We still have live streaming which adds significant numbers to those who attend "in-person". Some areas of blessing include:

- **Children and Young People.** We are seeing more of our young people (from 11-ups) involved with Church activities such as the choir, the serving team, and the welcoming. Whilst the numbers in our younger Sunday School, JAM (Jesus And Me) have decreased slightly, the numbers in our older group, 11-Ups have increased. There is much to celebrate with our committed and faithful groups of young people, five of whom were confirmed in the cathedral in November by Bishop James. Another highlight of the year was again the Nativity extravaganza performed for the whole church, led by our older children and their leaders. In June last year we took a small group of 11-ups to Spree and hope to attend in 2025 as well. We owe much to a very dedicated group of leaders.
- **Messy Church.** Messy Church continues to thrive with typical numbers of 50 plus attending. Families and helpers alike experience the enthusiastic and joyous atmosphere of Messy Church, seeing God's work in action. Every month we are indebted to our team of dedicated helpers. As always they contribute to something bigger than the sum of the individuals. In 2025, we will be celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> meeting to be marked by a special event on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

- **Celebrate Together** met (enthusiastically) at St James' once a month, for those adults with needs and their helpers. Our thanks to Revd. Sheila Swarbrick in assisting Shirley Croft and the rest of the St James' home team.
- **Our close cooperation with other churches** is a great blessing. The church hall is regularly used by our local Eastern Orthodox Church for coffee after their service, and some 300 people attended the Orthodox Easter vigil in the church. Additionally we are pleased that the church is now also host to the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church for Holy Mass on some Saturdays.
- **Community bonds.** The church hall and the church are the main community facilities in the parish, and through our highly successful hire of both venues, the 4,000 or so footfall is an indication of our bond with the local community. The hall is used by exercise classes, children's parties, numerous dance groups, health support teams and many more while the church is used by other church groups, various choirs and for music lessons. Our cooperation with Ellen Tinkham college is also mutually beneficial. The Big Cream Tea in May and later the Summer Fête (with the scones and bouncy castles) and then Santa's Grotto and the Christmas bazaar are all big crowd pullers.
- **Friendship groups.** There are number of friendship and fellowship groups. Notably the fortnightly **craft group** (which attracts 25 or more people), the monthly **coffee mornings** (attracting 30 or more), which continue to go from strength to strength and the monthly **house group**.
- **Music at St James'.** Within the regular pattern of rehearsals and services, the choir continues to attract newcomers and to grow in ability. Once again, highlights of the year included choral Evensong, the patronal festival and the Christmas carol service, as well as various social events for choir members and friends. For its first ever outing, the choir sang choral Evensong at St Peter's Church in Tiverton. On Sunday mornings when the choir is not singing an anthem, instrumentalists contribute to our worship during the distribution of Communion. In 2024, the Musical Director arranged a visit to a neighbouring church, where a number of young people from St James' had a go at church bell ringing.

**PCC business.** A good proportion of PCC attention has been devoted the mission action plan (MAP) survey, an extensive and highly successful piece of work with nearly 100 respondents, has been chewed over and dissected and as a consequence the MAP is now being finalised. Work has already commenced in some areas such that some of the action points proposed are now becoming areas for encouragement! As in previous years, much attention is paid to safeguarding policies, associated documents and implementation both within the church and, where appropriate, to non-church organisations using our premises.

**Appeals and fabric.** The PCC ran two appeals in the year, one being the Tearfund South Sudan appeal where over £4,000 was given, the other for church fabric as a result of which the Lady Chapel and much of the interior has now been cleaned and redecorated and is a pleasure to behold. Meanwhile external works continue, dealing with both corrosion of railings, pillars to the hall and to rainwater goods and also to repairs to stone and mortar joints around the church building.

**Adieu and welcome.** With funerals in 2024, we experienced the sad departing of a number of those dear to us, who have been a precious part of the St James' family, and in some cases the last contact we had with the pre-WWII St James' church building. However we celebrate many newcomers who have become a part of the family at St James' church, with baptisms and confirmation being a special highlight.

## **Volunteers**

The members of the PCC would like to thank all the volunteers who give of their time and effort so tirelessly to make our Church a vibrant but also a warm and embracing community. Our especial thanks go to our Churchwardens, Rachel Martindill and Andrew Mimmack.

## **Safeguarding**

The PCC is committed to the safeguarding of our young people and vulnerable adults and reviews its Safeguarding Policy annually. Details of safeguarding contacts can be found on St James' Church website and on the notice boards in the church and church hall. Safeguarding reports are submitted to each PCC meeting, with updates on training and information from the Diocese. An action plan produced by the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard is submitted at least twice a year to PCC. A safeguarding report is also given at the APCM. Additionally, our volunteers who work with children complete the appropriate online safeguarding training courses as well as our members of PCC, Servers, Assistant churchwardens, Welcomers and many others who have roles in the church. In carrying out these actions we consider that we have had 'due regard' to the guidance issued by the House of Bishops and the PCC has complied with its duty regarding safeguarding.

## **Health and Safety**

A Health and Safety report is submitted to each PCC meeting and risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. The congregation was reminded of the emergency exits, in church and the church hall. All the portable electrical equipment has been tested for safety during the last year. Thanks to all those, in particular the Churchwardens and the Treasurer, who keep a vigilant eye on the buildings and grounds to ensure any minor repairs are completed promptly.

## **Financial review**

The accounts show another reliable and sound year with general unrestricted funds increasing by over £5,500. During the year a successful fabric appeal has enabled much of the interior to be cleaned and redecorated, while £12,000 was given to charities, mainly overseas, like those working in South Sudan. There has been a slight decline in planned giving (stewardship and collections) but this has been more than made up for by hall and church hire (now over £37,000). Other sources of income continue to perform well, and expenses remain contained. With the hall hire and church hire continuing apace (thanks to Michelle, our new bookings administrator), and with the generous financial giving in the church, the outlook for the future years gives us cause for encouragement. We continue to be hugely grateful for the sacrificial giving by so many, working for the collective good of St James'.

## **Reserves Policy**

The PCC considers that a contingency may be prudent in the case of the loss of the major donors. It may take one year to recover from or adjust to such a calamity. A maximum reserve of £25,000 may be required, which is adequately provided for our Unrestricted Cash at Bank and Short-term investments. In 2023, £40,000 was set aside for roof repairs and, whilst the worst has been dealt with, there is still some water ingress, a provision is considered necessary.

**Approved by the PCC on ..... 2025 and signed on its behalf by:**

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Reverend Prebendary Henry Pryse

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Mr Nigel Ridgway (Treasurer)