

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH SPRINGFIELD

"A friendly, welcoming church for everyone in the heart of the community"

1. Introduction

The Parochial Council of The Ecclesiastical Parish of Springfield, Diocese of Chelmsford, referred hereafter as All Saints' Springfield is a corporate body established by the Church of England and registered with the Charity Commissioners, (Charity Registration Number: 1131427). The registered address is All Saints' Church, Springfield, Springfield Green, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 7HS. The address for correspondence is 4 Old School Field, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 7HU.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector to promote, in the ecclesiastical parish of All Saints' Springfield, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the All-Saints' Church Centre buildings, part of the Burial Ground in Trinity Road, a Freehold property at 60 Chichester Drive and the internal decoration of the Rectory.

2. Objectives

The PCC is committed to serving the whole Springfield parish community, and to welcoming as many people as possible to become part of the church community at All Saints' and to worship at All Saints' Church.

The PCC maintains an overview of worship and makes suggestions on how work in God's mission can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, the Rector and the PCC have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith through developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus; caring for other people; helping people who are in need; and actively serving the community.

We make provision for pastoral care to people living in the parish, those on the Church Electoral Roll outside the parish, and conduct mission work in the local community. In support of this we make extensive use of our church and church centre and maintain the buildings.

3. Parochial Parish Council

3.1. Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex officio (e.g., clergy, readers, churchwardens or synod members), representatives of the laity elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules, or people co-opted by the PCC for special reasons.

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During the year 2023 the following served as members of the PCC:

RECTOR and CHAIRMAN	Revd Sally Croft (installed October 2023)
LICENSED LAY MINISTER	Roger McFarland (retired November 2023))
CHURCHWARDENS:	Nicola Howard (until 2024)
DEANERY SYNOD MEMBER	Ian Poston (also Treasurer) (until 2026) Robin Stevens (until 2026)
ELECTED MEMBERS:	Dave Gauld (until 2024) Gregory Potts (until 2024) Jan Penney (until 2024) Nick Milbank (resigned July 2023) Paula Hiett (until 2025) (PCC Secretary) Carol Leverett (until 2025) Barbara Garside (until 2025) (Vice-Chair PCC) Ben Alder (until 2026) Sue Chorley (until 2026) Shirley Duggen (until 2026) Peter Downes (also Electoral Roll Officer (until 2026) Jack Spencer (elected member until April 2023 then co-opted May 2023) Sally Hatt (November 2023)
CO-OPTED:	
ELECTED MEMBERS UNTIL APRIL 2023:	Sally Brown Nicola Morecroft

3.2 PCC Officers

PCC Officers, not being members of the PCC, included the following:

Planned Giving Recorders:	Tim and Angela Pearce
Architect:	Philippa Reed of Barker Associates

3.3 Independent Examiner

Pauline Montague has been appointed to conduct an independent examination of the accounts and accounting records.

3.4 Committees

The PCC operates through a number of committees that meet between full meetings of the PCC so that members of the congregation with particular interest or expertise might have an opportunity to contribute to a broadened discussion and decisions.

3.4.1 Standing Committee

This is the only committee required by law. It has power to transact business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. The members of the Committee are the Rector, Churchwarden(s), PCC Secretary, Treasurer, Chair of the Finance Committee and Chair of Fabric Committee.

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3.4.2 Finance Committee

Oversees the general financial dimension of the work of All Saints' by monitoring income and expenditure, budgeting, and coordinating Christian Stewardship of money through planned giving. It met twice during the year.

3.4.3 Fabric Committee

Attends to matters relating to the stewardship of the church buildings and fabric, the churchyards, the Rectory and the house at 60 Chichester Drive, currently rented out. No formal meetings were held during the year, business being dealt with virtually.

3.4.4 Social Committee

Co-ordinates our catering and social activities and events. It did not meet formally during the year, but activities were arranged virtually.

4 Church Attendance

During 2023 we resumed our usual pattern of worship. Recordings of Sunday morning worship continue to be shared on YouTube supporting our mission of engaging with our wider congregation.

At the beginning of 2023, electoral roll membership was 185 (2022:185). The number of worshippers in attendance (in church or having viewed on-line) at Sunday services averaged out at 87 (2022:86) adults and 20 (2022:13) children (under years 16) each Sunday during the year, and 27 (2022:20) adults and 17 (2022:11) children attended midweek services.

62 (2022:94) adults and 22 (2022:17) children attended church in person on Easter Day. It is also estimated that some 50 (2022:33) worshippers viewed the on-line service on Easter Day.

107 (2022:79) children under 16 and 163 (2022:145) adults attended the Crib Service and 15 (2022:17) children and 133 (2022:86) adults attended the Carol Service on Christmas Eve. The Midnight Communion Service was attended by 3 children (2022:3) and 67 adults (2022:71). Christmas Day Holy Communion was attended by 14 children (2022:5) and 68 adults (2022:48).

12 (2022:22) infants and children and 0 (2022:0) adults were baptised in 2023. 4 (2022:7) couples were married, 8 (2022:6) funeral services were held in church. A further 17 (2022:19) funeral services were conducted at the crematorium on behalf of the parish of All Saints' Springfield during the year.

5 Review of the year 2023

5.1 Proceedings of the PCC.

The full PCC met 6 times during the year. Membership started the year with 14 members increasing to 16 members in April 2023 following the Annual Parochial Church meeting and to 15 members in July 2023 following the resignation of one member but increased to 16 in November 2023 following co-option of one member. An average attendance of 9 members at meetings was achieved. During 2023 meetings were held in person in the church centre.

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The PCC and its committees met regularly to debate and agree actions concerning the worship and pastoral activities of the church. The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Safeguarding is always on the PCC agenda as is our progress as an Eco Church.

During the year, the work of the PCC included: -

- Approved the 2023 parish share contribution and uplifts to Wedding and Funeral fees.
- Considered and agreed governance arrangements for use of iKnow Church.
- Agreed increase to 10 hours per week for employed Parish Administrator, and to extend contract to the end of December 2023.
- Approved the 2022 Accounts, Trustees Annual Report, and other reports for the APCM.
- Developed and agreed the Parish Profile and Parish Representatives as part of the appointment process for a new Rector.
- Oversaw installation of new lighting in the hall and other church centre maintenance.
- Agreed to seek permission through Faculty to install a defibrillator for community use.
- Eco Church – agreed application to be submitted for an Eco Church Silver Award.
- Welcomed our new Rector.
- Approved financial budget for 2024.
- Agreed new and updated church policies.

5.2 Church Activities during the year

5.2.1 Worship and Prayer

- We are keen to offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. Weekly morning services were held in church and in the church hall ('Sunday Special') on Sundays, and in the church on Wednesdays. Sunday morning services in the church are routinely recorded and posted on the Church website for viewing shortly after each service. People continue to enjoy the recorded on-line worship available through YouTube.
- The church was open regularly for personal prayer.
- Baptisms are usually held monthly in the afternoon to accommodate family groups and at other times when appropriate. 12 (2022:17) Baptism services were held during the year, and we welcomed baptism families at our Worship Together or Sunday Special services.
- Every Wednesday morning during term time, Children-in-Church provides a valuable opportunity to welcome pre-school children and their carers into the safe and friendly environment of the church, to play and to enjoy a range of other activities, and to join in a short child-friendly service if they wish. Numbers attending remain stable with an average of 11 (2022:10) adults and 11 (2022:12) children now attending in church.
- The Sunday Special worship service is popular with our young families and children, and others who enjoy this alternative form of worship. With a good attendance this continues to be a significant mission activity in the parish with many regular

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attendees. An average of 19 (2022:18) adults and 14 (2022:12) children attend these services. The service is designed with both children and adults in mind and takes place every Sunday, in parallel with the traditional church service at 10.30am, except once a month when an all-age service is held in the church. Sunday Special Eucharist is usually offered during the third Sunday worship.

- Uniformed youth organisations' – The Boys' Brigade, Brownies and Guides – church parade services recommenced.

5.2.2 Music and Mission

- The Choir leads the singing at 10.30 am Sunday Services in the church and sings for special occasions, weddings and funerals.
- During 2023, the choir sang an Anthem at every Communion Service, 50% being new repertoire and three newly commissioned works by living composers for Mothering Sunday, King Charles' Coronation and RSCM Music Sunday.
- Compline was sung during the Monday Choir Practice in Holy Week and the choir led the worship at the Good Friday Meditation, supported by cello and flute.
- The choir sang choral evensong in July.
- In October the choir led the worship at Rev. Sally's Collation Service and also recognised the dedication of one member, Gina Shadrack, by presenting her with a long service award, certificate, and medal, celebrating 87 years of singing in All Saints' Choir.
- Outside the parish, in May the choir sang in Chelmsford Cathedral at the Essex Change Ringers service. Members of the choir also joined the choir of St. Mary's Dunmow in a choral evensong (October) and Nine Lessons and Carols (December) held at St. Mary's, and in an Advent Service (November) held at St. Andrew's Barnston.
- During Sunday Special services a band comprising guitars, keyboard and drums, leads the less formal worship. They have broadened their repertoire to include a wide range of contemporary worship songs.
- Members of the choir and the All Saints' Band sing at our Worship/Communion Together services in church, and in December sang carols at The Tulip pub.

5.2.3 Pastoral Care

- The church organisations provide support for anyone seeking help. These activities include practical befriending, follow-up pastoral care visits of the bereaved and personal prayer support are provided by the clergy and our Prayer Ministry Team. This support continued to be provided during the vacancy but with a diminishing number of people.
- During 2023 our Church Centre was used by local organisations, including regular use by our Pre-School which provides early years schooling to children from the local community.
- 'Chat & Do' and 'Cuppa and Chat', and, over the winter months, All Saints' Winter Warmer, provided a weekly opportunity for people of the Parish to meet for fellowship. For our vulnerable, especially elderly people, these clubs provide opportunity for a friendly chat and keeps attendees in touch with the wider community, along with offers of practical help to anyone who needs it in the community. Copies of the weekly sheet and 'In Touch' magazine continue to be delivered to people's homes.
- The Women's Fellowship meets on the second Thursday of each month and provides spiritual, intellectual and social activities.
- The church support services at Lyons Court and The Lawns Nursing Home.

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5.2.4 Mission and Evangelism

- Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. The church continued to promote support for the Chelmsford Foodbank and also Christian Aid Week. Details of the charities supported by the church are shown in the Notes to the accounts. The congregation was also encouraged to donate on-line.
- Our parish magazine “in touch” provides news of our activities and articles that help develop our knowledge and trust in Jesus. This is available in a printed format and via the website.
- Our website also provides comprehensive information about our church, our faith, our services and activities, the latest news and calendar of what’s happening, how people can be married or bring their children for baptism here, and how to find us and contact us.
- Three House-Groups provide opportunities for members to meet, study and discuss the Bible and its application to everyday life.

5.2.5 Work with Children and Young People

Work with Children at All Saints continued during 2023 with: -

- Children-in-Church (see 5.2.1 above) which continues to provide a valuable opportunity to welcome pre-school children.
- Sunday Special, (see 5.2.1 above) which has an active and enthusiastic attendance on Sundays and plans to develop new leadership among the parents.
- The Boys’ Brigade comprising Anchor, Junior, Company and Senior sections. The Rector is chaplain to the Company.
- Rainbows, Brownies, and Guides meeting in the Church Centre.

5.2.6 Eco Church

- Since January 2021 All Saints’ has been part of the nationwide Eco Church community. As a church we are committed to caring for God’s world through our services and communications, through the way church buildings and land are managed, through engaging with the local community and in global campaigns, and through our own personal lifestyles.
- Caring for God’s world is a regular focus for prayers, talks and songs in church services and in Sunday Special activities. The church buys renewable electricity, and we try to use energy efficiently within the limitations of our heating systems. Within the Church Centre steps have been taken to encourage waste recycling, and to use more environmentally friendly products. The woodland in the western part of the churchyard has been developed into a wildlife area, with a wildflower meadow next to it, for everyone to enjoy. More sustainable lifestyles are encouraged through monthly articles in ‘in touch’ magazine, through the Eco Church notice board, and through the website. We carry out an annual green lifestyle questionnaire to explore what people at All Saints’ are doing to help the environment, and where there is scope to do more.
- During the year Eco Church activities included:
 - In March we held a Fairtrade Fun Day, and the following month All Saints’ was recognised as a Fairtrade Church by the Fairtrade Foundation.
 - For our ‘Environment Sunday’ service in July we had a speaker from the Eco Church charity A Rocha to which the collection was donated.
 - In October the lighting was replaced in the Church Centre and the Tower, so LED light bulbs are now used throughout our premises.

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- In December we again provided a shared Christmas Card scheme enabling one card to be sent to all church friends, reducing the environmental impact of sending cards.
- In November 2023, All Saints' was very pleased to receive an Eco Church Silver Award in recognition of the church's efforts to care for God's world.

5.2.7 Community Events

- Every year All Saints' holds community events which attract large numbers of local people. These are a very valuable part of our outreach as well as helping our fundraising. In 2023 one such event was held.

5.2.8 Church and Church Centre

- The church is regularly open for visitors, for private prayer, and services.
- The Church Centre is well maintained with accessible rooms. The centre is well used by church and community groups throughout the week.
- It is available for use by private individuals for birthday parties and other events.
- The church is available for weddings throughout the year. The families appreciate the music provided by the organist and choir and ringing of the bells.

5.2.9 Church Relationships

- The Rector and two members of the PCC are on Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the Church of England. Briefings on the proceedings of the Deanery and Diocesan Synod meetings are provided to the PCC.
- The PCC is committed to playing a full part in the North Chelmsford Mission and Ministry Partnership and helping to develop the collaborative working and mission focus, including the establishment of ministry at St Francis' Community Church in the Beaulieu development, as it evolves in the coming years.

5.2.10 Ecumenical Relationships

- The church is a member of Christians Together in Chelmsford, (previously Churches Together) and regularly participates in the Good Friday Procession of Witness in the High Street. Christians Together publicise and co-ordinate ecumenical activities across the city, including a regular Breakfast together.

5.2.11 Parish Organisations

- Apart from the activities in and beyond the parish that have received mention in the preceding sections of this report, much of the church's activities and mission in the parish is carried out week by week by dedicated people and groups, meeting in-person or remotely as allowed, to pursue a variety of social, educational and recreational activities. Annual reports of the activities of these groups are presented in a separate report.

5.2.12 Role of Parish Administrator

- The parish administrator was employed in September 2022 to assist the Rector and church wardens in the administrative responsibilities of the church, for ten hours a week. Overall, the administrator deals with email and telephone enquiries, forwarding them to others as appropriate, maintains online diaries and church centre bookings. The administrator is responsible for the paperwork involved with weddings, baptisms, and funerals, as well as producing invoices for the fees of

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those events and liaising with the treasurer to make sure the invoices are paid. The administrator's contract and duties will be reviewed annually.

5.2.11 Role of Volunteers

- Our Rector (stipendiary) prepares and conducts the services assisted by a retired priest (with Permission to Officiate). Four Lay Ministers and two Authorised Local Preachers support services. Christian disciples, who live out their faith in service of the church and community in this way, lead all the activities (on a voluntary basis) within the church.
- Our Churchwarden(s) and the Church Council oversee parish activities, while volunteer workers carry out all Church Centre management. All the activities reported under 5.2.9 are led and supported by volunteers, including the organisation of meetings, booking of speakers, provision of refreshments, etc.

5.2 Financial Highlights of 2023 (*in round figures*)

5.3.1 Giving & Income.

- The effects of the coronavirus pandemic continued to affect income in 2023 but are moving closer to pre-pandemic levels.
- Due to the mainly ageing membership in the scheme, Planned Giving levels have slowly declined. There are now 67 (2022 70) members in our Planned Giving Scheme. Planned Giving in 2023 contributed just over £64,000 (2022 £71,000), with Gift Aid providing an additional £18,000 (2022 £18,500) of income tax reclaimed from the taxman.
- The cash in collection bags provided income of almost £4,000 this year (2022 £2,500).
- Some fundraising events were held this year, but only brought in £1,500 (2022 £5,000). Donations of £11,800 (2022 £7,400) were also received, which provided a very welcome addition to our income. Some gifts were given with Gift Aid, which is included in the £18,000 noted above.
- We received two generous legacies in the year totalling almost £8,800. These were unrestricted.
- Income from the use of the church centre continues to improve but has not quite returned to pre-Covid levels. Donations generated £10,000 (2022 £8,000).
- The PCC receives no fees for our clergy officiating at funeral services at the crematorium. Fees for wedding and funeral services held in church provided income of almost £3,000 (2022 £4,500).
- Advertising in the church magazine provided income of £900 (2022 £1,200) with the sales of the magazine more than covering the print costs.
- The house we own in Chichester Drive provided rental income of £11,500 (2022 £11,000), which represents a good return on the capital tied up in the property.
- As the churchyard is closed, maintenance is the responsibility of Chelmsford City Council. Members of the congregation undertake the day-to-day upkeep and maintenance of the grounds and the PCC is able to apply for a small grant to cover costs. We received a grant of £470 (2022 £470).
- We received a grant of £595 from the Essex Association of Local Councils in 2022 for our Winter Warmer initiative, with £343 of this relating to activities in 2023.
- Chelmsford Diocese also provided a grant in 2023 of £760 towards increased energy costs.
- We are most grateful for all these grants which help to cover the relevant costs.

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5.3.2 What we spent.

- Having been assessed with a lower amount of Parish Share for 2023, we were able to pay the requested £66,700 in full as it was based on a half-time stipendiary post. (2022 £90,000 based on a full-time post)
- We were still able to pay the usual bills to heat, light and insure the church buildings. Utility costs, particularly gas charges, have increased significantly during the year.
- From the General Fund we spent £18,000 (2022 £2,500) on repairs and maintenance of the church and church centre, and £850 at Chichester Drive (2022 £400). Repairs in the church centre included LED replacement lighting (£5,500) and the curtains in the hall (£8,500). The cost of the curtains was covered by the legacies mentioned above.
- From the General Fund we again gave £200 (2022 £200) to the Bishop's School, £25 (2022 £25) to the Friends of Chelmsford Cathedral, £100 (2022 £nil) to Christians Together in Chelmsford, £180 (2022 £nil) to Tearfund, and £18 (2022 £18) to The Royal British Legion in lieu of a new poppy wreath. Total £523 (2022 £243)
- In 2023 we gave our Independent Examiner a thank you gift voucher for £35 in recognition of her undertaking the examination of the 2022 accounts and for the assistance she provided to the Treasurer and PCC throughout the year, all at no cost. (2022 £30)

5.3.3 Charitable giving

- Our level of charitable giving improved this year with donations made through collections at services e.g. Remembrance Sunday and at Christmas. People were again encouraged to make their own personal donations if they were unable to attend these special services.
- We were able to support the Angel Tree Project, The Bishop's Discretionary Fund (at the Collation service), The Children's Society, The Church Army, YMCA Essex, Church Mission Society, Embrace the Middle East, A Rocha UK (for Eco Church), Chelmsford CHESS, Chelmsford Foodbank, Fairtrade, Macmillan Cancer Support, and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.
- The total amount donated was £4,234 (2022 £2,029) and some of this was also given with Gift Aid.

5.3.4 And this resulted in...

- We ended the year with a surplus on the General Fund of £18,046. Having made prudent transfers of £17,000 to designated funds for anticipated significant maintenance costs, this leaves a small surplus of £1,046 to add to the general fund reserve. (2022 £734). The amount of General Funds retained in hand is maintained at a level to accommodate cash flow variations during the year.

5.3.5 Church Estate

- During 2019 with the permission from the Charity Commissioners, the assets of the Church Estate (Charity number 227437) were transferred to the PCC. The Church Estate charity was closed in 2020. The PCC now holds this permanent endowment and will continue to use the income from the transferred assets for the original purpose, which is for the use and repair of the church or the poor of the parish.

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6.0 Statutory Accounts

- The Statutory Accounts are an integral part of this report. There is also a summary account available for the church's General Fund. This includes all the day-to-day activities of the church but does not include the funds the PCC holds that are for a special purpose e.g. maintenance of the church building.

Approved on behalf of the Parochial Church Council

Rev. Sally Croft

..... Chairman

Revd Sally Croft

Paula M. Hiett

..... Secretary

Paula Hiett

Date: 13th March 2024