



Annual Review 2024

Reports and supporting information for the APCM taking place on Sunday, 28th April 2024 at 12.30pm at St Margaret's Church.

To be read alongside the document 'St Margaret's Church Annual Report and Accounts year ending 31st December 2023'.

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ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, IPSWICH - Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The annual church meeting will be held on Sunday, 28th April 2024 at 12.30pm in the Church.

Any Other Business [AOB] may be notified to the secretary or chair in advance of the meeting to the church administrator at verger.stmagsips@gmail.com.

Agenda

VESTRY MEETING					
Item	Description	Lead	Papers	Action	Time
1	Opening Prayer and Introduction	SG			12.30
2	Apologies for absence	SG			12.35
3	Election of the churchwardens (nomination papers must be handed to the Vicar before the start of the meeting)	SG			12.37
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING					
Item	Description	Lead	Papers	Action	Time
4	Minutes of the 2023 APCM and matters arising	SG			12.45
Reports					
5	Vicar's Report	SG			12.47
6	Report of the Parochial Church Council and the 2023 audited accounts.	JG			12.55
7	Report of Property Sub Committee	CK			13.10
8	Churchwarden's report	MW			13.12
9	Safeguarding report and notification of changes to designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead	HPT			13.17
10	Report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod	GW			13.20
11	Electoral Roll Report and approval of Electoral Roll Officer	LC			13.22
Elections					
12	Election of: A) Up to six representatives for three years to the Parochial Church Council Notification of appointments:	SG			13.25

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	B) Secretary to the Parochial Church Council				13.30
	C) Church Treasurer				13.32
13	Election of an independent examiner				13.34
Closing					
14	AOB to allow open discussion about any church matter.				13.36
ACPM to pause for Prayer and Reflection					

The meeting will close with the words of the grace.

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.*

Minutes of the 2023 ACPM



St. Margaret's Church
I P S W I C H

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, IPSWICH – ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

The Church Annual Meeting was held on Wednesday 19th April 2023 at 7.30pm in the Church.

Present: Margaret Woodward, George Woodward (Chair), Phil Hall, Ron Llewellyn, Carol Klug, Helen Prior-Townsend, Stuart Quinton, Melanie Quinton, Belinda Gledhill, Richard Howse, Liz Howse, Geoff Spiller, Mary Ridd, John Grierson, Jean Greirson, Gill Jackson, Richard Jackson, Nick Jacob, Frederike Jacob, Shirley Girt, John Girt, Mary Johnston, Heather Jasper, Bernard Jasper, Sarah Milner, Andy Turpin, Norman Conder, Maggie Conder, Angie Cable, Philip Murphy, Tim Lockington, Inge Lockington, Peta Lowin, Anna Brennan, Edward Phillips, Connie Welham-Phillips, Mark Phillips, John Rendle,

Apologies for absence – Anne Whitear, Peter Youngs, June Youngs, Margaret Llewellyn, Andrew Peck

The meeting began with a prayer, then it was agreed by those present that in the absence of a vicar, George Woodward would chair the meeting.

George welcomed all present.

Minutes

2. Minutes of the 2222 annual meeting – Angie Cable's apologies had not been minuted, but otherwise everyone agreed that it was a true record.
3. Election of the church wardens:

Only one nomination for church warden – Margaret Woodward, who was duly elected. This is the only time that we've only had one church warden.

George appealed for another nomination given that the post will be less onerous due to the fact that we have come to the end of the interregnum.

4. Electoral roll report – Andy Turpin.

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Roll was 135, now 145, 82 in parish, 63 out of parish. The Electoral Roll has been displayed for the required period at the back of church. Appeal for another person to take on responsibility for this from Andy.

5. Election of:

PCC – three nominations for the PCC had been received and these were duly appointed. Peta Lowin, Anna Sawyer Wright and John Grierson deemed to be elected.

Deanery Synod reps – three nominations received, three vacancies (due to electoral roll size). Gill Jackson, George Woodward, Andy Turpin – deemed elected.

6. PCC annual report and accounts – Phil Hall

Thanks goes to Heather Jasper and Andy Turpin. Also to John Rendell (independent financial examiner) who stepped forward last year. John Grierson has said that he will be treasurer going forwards.

Treasurer's report:

An overview was given in a presentation. Net outgoing appears large due to planned expenditure, but in fact our position is good.

We have paid our parish share in full and because of our healthy finances we have declined the deprivation allowance. Over the year, giving reduced by 0.8% - £820. Giving has declined, but good news is that it isn't by too much, given the difficult economic situation. Thank you to all who give, but it is a worry that our costs are going up and that the giving trend is down overall.

Key items; Church Centre rent has increased significantly – exceeding pre-covid levels.

Cost of utilities has increased too, of course, for both the church and the church centre.

Overall, things are not looking too bad.

Questions?

- Investment? Not been addressed recently but may be by incoming treasurer.
- Social club – what are we going to do with it? Provision has been made to deal with this in the future.

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- Ron, on behalf of us all, expressed thanks to Phil for his oversight and hard work doing the accounts.
- Was there a likelihood of new expenditure due to new vicar? Yes - Mission and youth work potentially.

Those assembled reiterated their thanks to Phil for his work.

Acceptance of accounts as shown – duly accepted

7. Election of an independent examiner:

This person cannot be a member of the PCC or related to a member. They have should be deemed appropriate by the church members. John Rendell is a retired accountant.

Decision to accept him as the independent examiner

8. Church Warden's report:

Margaret outlined the challenges and the joys of what has been an extraordinary year and said that she had learned a lot. She described the process of finding clergy to cover all of the services during the vacancy and thanked those who had volunteered and helped St Margaret's to continue uninterrupted during this time.

Above all, she expressed huge thanks to Phil.

9. Safeguarding

Helen stated at the outset that she had decided to continue in the role of Chief Safeguarding Officer in order to support our new Priest in Charge.

Helen explained the importance of safeguarding and its purpose in the church, then outlined the Church of England safeguarding principles.

This year we have done training, DBS checks, Safeguarding Sunday, Notice board, Forms, and dealt with some concerns.

Helen outlined the plan going forward, which includes ensuring that all the right people have DBS checks done and that training needs are met.

Thanks were expressed to Helen and Sarah Milner, her deputy.

10. Deanery Synod Report

Margaret stated that this would be circulated electronically and that there were also copies of the written report available at the back of church.

11. Message from Sarah, our new priest in charge.

12. Open discussion:

Helen wanted to thank Maggie, Carol, Anna and Victoria for all of their help with Rise and Shine this year.

Comment on the accounts; no expenditure on the night shelter or with the befriending; this is disappointing.

Re befriending: Gill Jackson explained that original model for befriending is not now ok re safeguarding, so she would like the funds to be re-purposed.

Night shelter – we need to pass the money on. Acknowledgment that we should be doing more but that the wardens ran out of capacity to initiate projects during the vacancy.

Question about slow speed of communion, and request that stewards to hasten communion; Margaret explained that this has happened due to injury.

Maggie added that warm space was not provided by the church but the mother's union has been offering their own assistance and emphasised that we do care and want to take care of everyone who is needy in the parish.

George thanked everyone for attending the meeting and closed with a prayer.

**Report by the Priest-in-Charge for the
Annual Report and Accounts 2023
and to the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting,
28th April 2024**



2023: Ready... Steady... Go!

The past year has been a game of three halves!

The first four months of 2023 saw the PCC, led by churchwardens Phil Hall and Margaret Woodward, guiding the church community through the final months of the vacancy following the retirement of Revd David Cutts at Easter 2022.

Standing down as Churchwarden at the APCM in April 2023, Phil Hall served faithfully and diligently as a churchwarden, working with Margaret Woodward and Andy Turpin in the role of verger-administrator to bring the vacancy to a close. All three worked extremely hard to ensure a warm welcome for me, the first new incumbent at St Margaret's Church in 27 years and the first woman to be appointed to the role. Phil Hall's presence and participation in this community over many years was properly acknowledged during a service of Choral Evensong at the end of April, as he was prayerfully sent from this community to join Revd Sarah Hall following her appointment as Assistant Curate of St Augustine's Church, Ipswich.

No one from among the community was willing to serve as churchwarden and for the remainder of the year, the church, has again been reliant on one elected churchwarden, Margaret Woodward.

Drawing together many from across the community to attend my licensing as Priest in-Charge on 27th April 2023, Bishop Martin's sermon encouraged St Margaret's Church to look outwards, to see where God is already at work and to join in, being among and serving the local community. I am still grateful for the generous hospitality and warm welcome that was enjoyed by all following the service.

In the summer we flung wide the doors of the Church, the church is now open daily to visitors and pilgrims and during the summer I spent time getting to know the PCC and wider church community through afternoon teas and meeting folk. This led us into Harvest and Remembrance in the autumn and later Christmas season: a PCC away morning in October 2023 built on the direction of travel raised at last year's APCM and documented in the 2022 Parish Profile and we are gradually strengthening our links with St Margaret's CEVAP School, uniformed groups and the wider parish.

As incumbent and warden, Margaret and I endeavour to meet weekly for prayer and reflection.

Governance & Administration

The PCC continued to meet on almost a monthly basis throughout 2023 and has spent time attending to matters of good governance, work that continues into 2024.

Finance: The newly appointed Church treasurer, John Grierson, enjoyed a solid handover of documentation from Phil Hall and Andy Turpin, and has been working hard to understand and review systems and processes, with the PCC determined to plan forwards financially by setting a budget for 2024. Several PCC members have been trained in the approval of

payments to ensure continued good practice in the handling of income and expenditure and the churchwarden has worked alongside the treasurer and stewards to re-establish processes in relation to collections at services. Planned capital projects were reviewed and dates for implementation during 2024 were agreed and set in motion, with minor maintenance completed. Dave Scott continued to serve as Parish Giving Officer, Jean Grierson as secretary to the St Margaret's Charity for the Needy and I am grateful to both, and John for all the work they do.

The PCC has continued to review safeguarding procedures and employment policy and practice following a safeguarding disclosure in January 2023 that led to the dismissal of the Church Centre Caretaker in June 2023. A further employee change also took place in November 2023 following Andy Turpin's resignation as vergers administrator. The PCC decided to recruit a part-time administrator (post filled in February 2024) and to appoint a new church centre caretaker.

The PCC is also gradually restructuring the way in which PCC members, as trustees, carry out their responsibilities: a few sub-committees and groupings are gradually dealing with pastoral matters, property and fabric, events and fellowship, heritage and the church centre, for example. This structure of sub-committee meetings to attend to day-to-day details and projects, should eventually allow the PCC to meet less often, developing a more strategic oversight of all that we are hoping to be and to do as a community, giving the PCC space by feeding into the PCC from subgroups the necessary information to plan, to do and to review: praying and reflecting as we grow in faith and service.

I am sincerely grateful to Mary Johnston, Carol Klug, Helen Prior-Townsend, and Stuart Quinton who at various points during the course of the year applied and were successful in securing grant funding. This intentional approach, building ongoing relationships with grant funders will be an important aspect of our future growth, working with and among our community.

The weekly email newsletter was maintained, and Helen Prior-Townsend ensured a regular flow of information, resources and gratitude were published through the Facebook social media page. The Church website remains in place, gently updated by the Vicar from time to time: there is plenty of scope to improve our public communication in future, including our content on the website 'A Church Near You'.

For the PCC, this year has seen a focus on governance, the spiritual gift of administration, to ensure a sound foundation on which by the grace of God we might build as we grow in faith and in number over the months and years to come.

Whilst the PCC's role as trustees is important, the whole church community works together in the ministry and mission of the church – the range of additional reports included for information in the papers circulated ahead of this year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting are an indication of this and I hope that we will see this grow and flourish in the years ahead.

Patterns of Worship and Faith Learning at St Margaret's

The diversity and breadth of worship at St Margaret's is a strength and an opportunity. As a parish church we maintained a pattern of 3 to 4 Sunday Services every week, introducing Morning Prayer twice a week from April 2023 (once a week in Church and once a week at St Margaret's VAP School). I am grateful to the clergy who supported the vacancy and to the retired clergy in this parish and those from the Ipswich Deanery who continue to celebrate and preach from time-to-time.

A number of additional seasonal services were held in the year, including a memorial service at All Souls in November 2023 and we heavily promoted Christmas Services

throughout December, by leafleting the entire parish – a long time since we have communicated in this way, but which proved effective: people attending services in direct response to the details on the Christmas flyer as well as engaging with the contemporary nativity scene in the churchyard made by Pat Whitear.

It is a joy to welcome the entire primary school into church every Wednesday and to nurture a growing group of primary school students in leading Wednesday Worship. Two homegroups continued to meet regularly, the fortnightly Men's Breakfast group grew from an average attendance of 4 to around 10 and a zoom book group met during the Advent season. Monthly Messy Vintage services flourished in two local care homes and a deeper connection was established with the community living in Christchurch Court. In addition, I now regularly lead a service of Holy Communion at Norwood Care Home. It was a joy to see two people from St Margaret's confirmed by Bishop Mike in a service at St Mary-le-Tower in May 2024. Five baptisms took place, two marriages, two renewals of marriage vows and two funerals in church: the late Lily Jakubowski and Myra Turnbull.

We continue to support and encourage Helen Prior Townsend as she follows the Alternative Ordination Pathway towards the possibility of her Ordination as a Deacon in 2024, whilst George Woodward began his initial formation to become a licensed lay minister (Reader). Churchwarden Margaret has been working to encourage the team of stewards and sides people, whilst services are supported by members of the community who volunteer to serve in other ways too: cleaning, sound, hospitality, bell ringing, flower arranging, livestreaming, musicians and all those who work to support and encourage children and families.

What next?

The community of St Margaret's has experienced significant change over the last five years: living through and with the impact and consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the retirement of a long-serving vicar, a few faithful folk steering the way through the vacancy and significant changes to key staff and volunteers. The 2024 Annual Parochial Church Meeting, as we review 2023, coincides with the first anniversary of the most recent change: my arrival as your priest-in-charge.

This last year has been time to steady-ourselves. I am encouraged that decisions are being made and action is being taken: major quinquennial works to the roof and parapets will complete the work identified in the now six-year-old architect's inspection report, the courage to demolish the social club and the decision to install new audio visual and livestreaming equipment and to extend the hearing loop.

Even more importantly, perhaps are the quieter decisions being made – where I see folk grow in confidence and open to new ideas: volunteering to help out, to make coffee, to enjoy the company of others over shared meals, to invite others to share food, to spend time caring for the churchyard, to step forward during services to settle the altar rail and kneelers, to love those beyond the walls of St Margaret's in volunteering and work roles that see church members alongside users of the food bank, supporting those in abusive relationships, encouraging refugees and working to support families in challenging circumstances.

Those historically involved with the Mother's Union have been courageous in trying a new thing, launching 'Cornerstone' in 2024, a monthly drop-in space offering company and conversation. There will be other opportunities too: deploying the grant funding awarded to us by Suffolk Community Foundation to run holiday clubs that feed primary school aged children and their families, working evermore closely with St Margaret's VAP School as their new afterschool club moves into the church centre – a church office opening and new

church centre users as we celebrate and encourage that sense of a community space open, available and welcoming to all.

We will look to offer short courses and opportunities to explore faith as well as holding the first Confirmation Service at St Margaret's Church in two decades. We will have to review our financial plans and giving arrangements, build our fellowship and events and we will invite folk to share their faith stories from different communities as we welcome speakers and missionaries in the late spring and summer to share their stories with us.

There are up to six vacancies for election to the PCC this year and St Margaret's is still operating with only one churchwarden. I am grateful to those who have served on the PCC in the past and mindful that the diversity of St Margaret's remains under-represented, particularly in relation to disability, gender, age and ethnicity. Whilst an under-represented PCC that has skill gaps is less than ideal, it would not be good to fill those gaps for the sake of it, instead we might choose to look to co-opting for specific projects or skills and encouraging folk to participate as the community grows in number, in skills and in wisdom. The vacancies do, however, serve as an important reminder that as the body of Christ in this place, each and every one of us has a responsibility, calling and function within the church community, to participate in the life of the church as together we live and work to God's praise and glory.

I long for 2024 to mark a change as our focus expands beyond the 'doing' of church: to increasingly 'becoming' the faith-full community of people God is calling us to be: tending God's creation, transforming injustice through social action, telling the good news of God's love for all people, and treasuring and sharing all that God has given as we are taught and teach the way of love that leads to life in all its fullness.

Revd Sarah Geileskey
Priest-in-charge

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Electoral Roll Report

Electoral roll was 145 and is now 156. There are 67 resident out of parish and 89 resident in parish. 13 have been added and 2 removed. The Electoral Roll has been displayed for the required period at the back of church.

Church Centre Report

2023 was a year of changes for the Church Centre ...

Users: Some of our users' activities have still been recovering from the interruptions that Covid caused, although most are now 'back to normal'. The major upset happened right at the end of the year, when Alpha Nurseries (who made up a high proportion of our income) announced they were ceasing trading, leaving their bills for the autumn term unpaid. We have gained a regular Ranger Guide meeting, lost a keep fit group, and had a number of one-off events including Inspiring Ipswich, who used our facilities while St Helen's church kitchen was being refurbished, and Hope Church also used our hall as part of a large event.

Maintenance: In May the lights in the Hall were replaced (thanks to a generous donation). The Oak Room carpet and furniture has been replaced, and various roof and other plumbing leaks have been attended to.

Staff: Our caretaker of many years had to leave us suddenly early in 2023. During the vacancy our cleaner (Pim Fiteni) very kindly worked many additional hours, and other caretaker activities were attended to by members of the Church Centre Team. Therefore, I'm pleased to say that our new caretaker, (Stevie Wilson-Inglis) joined us in December and his hard work has been noticed by many.

In June we welcomed Andrew Peck to the management team. If you would also like to get involved, please speak to him or other members of the team – Mary Johnston, Quentin & Alison Thurtle, Angie Cable, Sheena Lloyd and Andy Turpin.

Church Wardens Report

This will be given verbally by Margaret Woodward

Deanery Synod Report

St Margaret's current lay representatives on the Ipswich Deanery Synod are Andy Turpin & George Woodward and vicar Sarah also attends its meetings. Church member, Gill Jackson, is also involved but in her capacity as Lay Chair of the Deanery rather than representing St Margaret's. Currently the Area Dean of the Ipswich Deanery is Rev Charlotte Cook, vicar of Westerfield, Tuddenham & Witnesham.

There have been three meetings of the Synod over the past twelve months which have focussed the following main subjects:

- 13 June 2023 – **Stewardship** - in its widest sense: the giving of time & talent as well as money.
- 27 Sept 2023 – **Growing in Faith** – led by Archdeacon Rhiannon. exploring ways in which the churches of the deanery can step out in faith to encourage people to grow in faith.
- 28 Feb 2024 - **Clergy wellbeing** – how can we ensure the deanery's clergy, who often fulfil their ministerial roles under considerable levels of pressure and stress, are suitably supported and cared for.

These deanery synod meetings also included items about finance (parish share), any new clergy appointments, updates on the Inspiring Ipswich initiative, news items from General Synod & Diocesan Synod meetings as well as times of worship, reflection and group discussions (where members are encouraged to speak with folk from other churches to get a wider perspective on the mission & ministry of the Church of England in the Ipswich Deanery).

Property Sub Committee Report

After a near 5-year hiatus due to covid and St Margaret's interregnum, a PCC property sub group was set up with the brief to progress work on much needed projects.

Following the church Quinquennial (QI) Report carried out in 2018/19, masonry; stonework; and repointing work on the church had become urgent. The Faith, Hope and Charity west window was in desperate need of repair and the old Railmen's social club next to the Church Center, was in a dangerous condition.

The property group arranged and sought authorisation from the PCC for the social club to be demolished and by end-December 2023 all paperwork was in order and a demolition company was engaged to demolish the club during January 2024.

Grants were applied for and permissions required from the Diocese were granted for the QI and west window works. Contractors were engaged and work will commence in April 2024.

A much awaited AV and broadband project was managed and progressed to PCC and faculty approval. Contractors were engaged. Work will begin in April 2024.

With the church properties being set in good order and the AV project underway, our Church is in a steady position to build on relationships with its wider community.

Treasurers report

Please see separate annual report and financial statements 2023

Bellringers Report

As has been said many times, the church bells are the loudest voice possessed by the church. To this end we ring for morning service each Sunday to let the parish know that worship will be taking place. We also ring the bells, when requested, for weddings, funerals and other special services such as Carol Services.

Now that we can ring from the gallery we feel much more part of the service and we also receive complimentary remarks from members of the congregation who can now see what we do.

We practice every Tuesday evening and receive support from some bell ringers who belong to other local churches. Vesting bands of ringers come to enjoy our bells and sometimes for practice ringing and teaching. We have our own recruits - but never enough who wish to learn this traditional art and skill. There is no restriction by age or gender.

Hospitality Report

Sunday 26th February: Winter Warmer

We served a bowl of hearty soup with rolls followed by pudding. 32 parishioners participated and we were able to seat everyone in the Gladwyn Room. A surplus of £150.00 was donated to FIND.

26th April: Induction of Vicar Sarah

A great reason for a celebration: we catered for 150 guests and served canapes, wine and soft drinks in the hall.

Sunday 23rd July: St Margaret's Day

We enjoyed a bring and share lunch with 62 guests, some brought friends and family.

NB: Numbers could have been higher if it had not been the start of the summer holiday.

Sunday 24 th September: Harvest Supper and talk by Vicar Sarah about her visit to Africa

Thirty two people were served baked potatoes and a pudding.

Flower Arranging Report

The flower arrangers go in about 3 times a year to decorate the Church for festivals. It is always a fun and friendly time with lots of chat and even more so if we have a cup of tea/coffee and a biscuit or even cake!

The Mums and Toddlers always decorate the porch for us which is lovely. It is good to have that association with them as not all attend the Church.

Over the past two years we have welcomed some new arrangers into Church, some have unfortunately had to give up so it is good to have some new arrangers join us.

We are a friendly bunch who can pass on knowledge or help to those who need it.

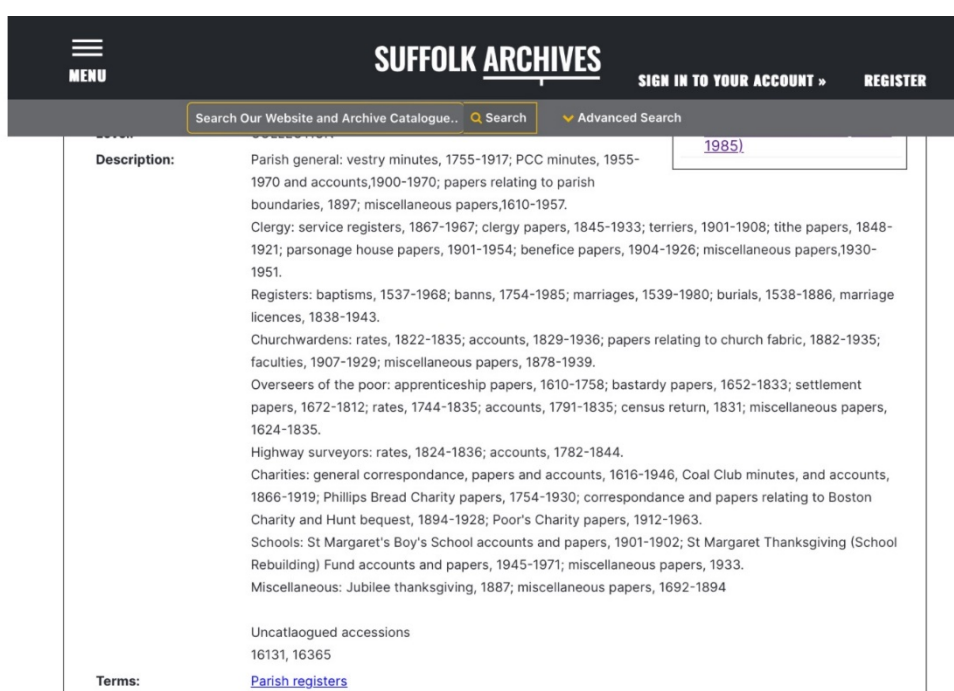
Heritage Group Report

A Heritage group of David Evans, the late David Hampson and Ann Woodings was set up to fulfil one of the requirements of the HLF grant:

That there was an inclusive explanation of the history of the church in various forms (guide books, bat boards, time line etc) and the stimulation of further research into more detailed aspects of people and events which would be added to a dedicated Heritage section on the (also required) new website.

This undertaking has continued and encompasses not only particular benefactors of St Margaret's and the reaction of our parish to national events but also the work of Parish Council from the C17th to fulfil its obligations.

The Hold in Ipswich has a huge number of our parish papers; see below for the list.



The screenshot shows the Suffolk Archives website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a menu icon, the text 'SUFFOLK ARCHIVES', and links for 'SIGN IN TO YOUR ACCOUNT' and 'REGISTER'. Below this is a search bar with the text 'Search Our Website and Archive Catalogue...' and a search button. The search results are displayed in a table with a search term of '1985'. The 'Description' column contains a detailed list of archival records, including parish general vestry minutes, PCC minutes, accounts, and various other documents from 1755 to 1970. The 'Terms' column lists 'Parish registers' with a link to the full list.

Search Term	Description	Terms
1985	Parish general: vestry minutes, 1755-1917; PCC minutes, 1955-1970 and accounts, 1900-1970; papers relating to parish boundaries, 1897; miscellaneous papers, 1610-1957. Clergy: service registers, 1867-1967; clergy papers, 1845-1933; terriers, 1901-1908; tithe papers, 1848-1921; parsonage house papers, 1901-1954; benefice papers, 1904-1926; miscellaneous papers, 1930-1951. Registers: baptisms, 1537-1968; banns, 1754-1985; marriages, 1539-1980; burials, 1538-1886, marriage licences, 1838-1943. Churchwardens: rates, 1822-1835; accounts, 1829-1936; papers relating to church fabric, 1882-1935; faculties, 1907-1929; miscellaneous papers, 1878-1939. Overseers of the poor: apprenticeship papers, 1610-1758; bastardy papers, 1652-1833; settlement papers, 1672-1812; rates, 1744-1835; accounts, 1791-1835; census return, 1831; miscellaneous papers, 1624-1835. Highway surveyors: rates, 1824-1836; accounts, 1782-1844. Charities: general correspondance, papers and accounts, 1616-1946, Coal Club minutes, and accounts, 1866-1919; Phillips Bread Charity papers, 1754-1930; correspondance and papers relating to Boston Charity and Hunt bequest, 1894-1928; Poor's Charity papers, 1912-1963. Schools: St Margaret's Boy's School accounts and papers, 1901-1902; St Margaret Thanksgiving (School Rebuilding) Fund accounts and papers, 1945-1971; miscellaneous papers, 1933. Miscellaneous: Jubilee thanksgiving, 1887; miscellaneous papers, 1692-1894 Uncatalogued accessions 16131, 16365	Parish registers

Not listed

here but also in The Hold are copies of all the initial documents published on the Heritage section of the website so that they are available for future researchers.

Each category is large and paleographic skills are required to interpret many of the documents available.

There are Visitation records of the Bishops of Ely to Holy Trinity (terrible and corrupt cooks etc.) in book form (Selden Society).

Another very early source is the Christchurch Priory rental probably immediately pre 1291 now in Cambridge University Library. It has recently been digitised by The Bodleian Library with help from the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History (SIAH). The record is said to show a large and bustling community. The names and trades are all listed. This is available on the SIAH site for all to read.

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A predecessor of ours has, via DH, left a file of his researches in the Archives including a remarkable transcription of all the wills in The Hold relating to our church from the C13th together with Hearth Tax and Tithe records. Interestingly some early names are still extant in Ipswich today eg Harbottle, Brame, Mulley etc.

All of this plus general research gives us the opportunity to build a picture of the community of St Margaret's through the centuries: its characters, trades, changes etc. which can be placed on our Heritage site.

Within this huge collection of St. Margaret's parish records from 1537-1968 the full range of the responsibilities of the parish in that time can be seen.

The proper keeping of records of baptisms, marriages and burials became a statutory duty in 1538 when Thomas Cromwell, Vice-Gerent of the Church, laid down an injunction to that effect. Vicars had to keep a book to record these events, which was brought out every Sunday to be updated with the church wardens in attendance. It was then to be locked into a special coffer with two locks and keys, one for the vicar and the other for the wardens. There was a fine if this was not done.

Edward VI repeated this injunction in 1547 but directed that the fines go into the parish poor box.

By the time of Queen Elizabeth I, it was clear that very poor paper had been used and it was ordered that surviving registers should be copied on parchment. Copies of the registrations had to be sent yearly to the Bishops. It has been suggested that this was to prevent the changing of the records to legitimise/bastardise children with inheritance implications.

St Margaret's baptismal records start in fact, in 1537 and the first are very indistinct. They are in Latin and, as was customary in all documents, abbreviated. Dashes over the top of words indicate abbreviations. The cost of vellum or parchment which had to be specially prepared from a calf /sheep or goat was considerable, hence the economical use of abbreviations even in the finest Bibles.

The Parish was the "Social Services" of the time; everything was done within the parish. Records of administration of the Poor Law, the setting and collection of the Poor rate, Apprenticeships, Bastardy papers, administration of the Phillips' Bread charity etc are to be found.

Currently we are pursuing a view of the social history of the church and its involvement with the poor, apprentices, bastards, schooling and the provision of bread.

AW is currently looking at Apprenticeships from 1614 as it was the duty of the Parish under the 1601 Poor Law to provide them for poor children of the parish. The apprenticeships lasted until they were aged 24.

DE is reviewing the Bastardy records and the Bread Charities.

We also hope to start a new section giving vignettes of notable characters in the history (up to 1900) of the church.

We are currently arranging for the official church guide to be placed on the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust website.

Mothers' Union Report

Following out AGM in January when no one wished to take over the posts of Leader, Treasurer or Secretary those in post decided to continue for one more year

Our meetings were usually held in the church centre at 2.30pm on the second Wednesday of the month.

We had a varied programme, 2 services, one evening programme and one communion. Speakers included the school chaplain, Andrew from the Samaritans, Hannah from the Church of England Children's society and a talk about Water Aid.

Other highlights were a strawberry tea, the wave of prayer service, making Christmas cards for prisoners and Christmas making table decorations.

We contributed to Deanery activities and did manage to make some hats for the seaman's mission and toiletry bags to the hospital. Donations were also made to the Mother's Union at home and abroad.

Our membership had fallen to 15 and with no leader coming forward it was decided to close the branch. Vicar Sarah marked the occasion at the Candlemas Service.

Band Report

The St.Margaret's Church Band was probably formed in the 1970s by John Parry who was organist and choirmaster for 45 years (1961 – 2006).

Initially it provided the music for one or two services a month, giving an opportunity for any instrumentalist in the choir or congregation to come and play.

The band still leads the congregation by playing hymns from band books handwritten by John but more recently his successors. Alan Swift and currently myself have arranged many other hymns to suit the current band members. I have been directing the band now for 12 years and have also added music for specific occasions such as Christmas and Easter.

At the moment, we regularly have 2 violinists, 2 recorder players, a trumpet and euphonium. We also have a violist and a 'cellist when they are home from college/university.

We rely on members of the congregation to let us know of anyone they think would be interested in joining us.

I direct the band from the piano and rehearsals are held about half an hour before services.

Choir Report

Worship

The primary mission of the Church Choir is to glorify God through music, aiding congregational worship.

Church Music Education

The choir provides training and experience for singers, organists and choral conductors. Currently, Theo is contributing in all three roles. Some previous members now use their gifts elsewhere – eg Matthew Crowe, one of the Vicars Choral at Bury St Edmunds; baritone Jonny Quinton, now a choral conductor at his University and a member of the National Youth Choir. Organist and alto Amy Quinton is using her skills further afield in Sheffield.

Outreach - within the Church

Always a welcoming and friendly group, the choir has attracted members of all ages, most recently two young singers from Sri Lanka. A family of four children with Iraqi parents were regular choristers until they moved away. Choir members are active in recruiting friends and colleagues. Choir members also regularly read lessons and lead prayers.

Outreach – beyond the Church

'Come and Sing' events, such as The Armed Man and *Fauré's* Requiem, have been opened to singers outside the church, as has the Remembrance Day Service in Christchurch Park. A 'Come and Sing Evensong' event is being planned. Choir members from St Mary's Grundisburgh join us each month for Evensong.

Outreach – at the school

Pre-Covid, Christopher visited St Margaret's school for hymn practices before playing for some of the school's church visits. A teachers' choir was organised for the school's 2023 carol service, cancelled because of the tragic death of a staff member.

Messy Vintage Report

Messy Vintage is like Messy Church but is for older people. We visit the 2 care homes in the parish, Norwood on Park Road and Park Manor on Tuddenham Road. Typically, a visit involves a short service, with a reading hymn, prayers and a short talk, followed by a craft activity. A small team of 6 wonderful volunteers help to make this happen.

So far this year we have made 8 visits to Norwood and 10 to Park Manor. The residents have got to know us better and we are seeing greater engagement and some very touching moments of quiet individual prayer. As volunteers we get as much out of the visits as the residents, as they make us so welcome and we enjoy providing chat and fellowship.

We have also started visiting the sheltered accommodation at Christchurch Court, Cobbold Mews and Tudor Court on Christchurch Street. Residents there have enjoyed 'Meet the Vicar' sessions, carol singing at Christmas and some craft activity too.

Music Group Report

In 2023 it was agreed the music group would play at every 9.30am service rather than alternating with the choir or band once a month to play at an 11am service. This was for a couple of reasons; to create continuity for those running the Rise and Shine service whilst the church was without a vicar and Liz has commitments with St Mary le Tower Church and family from 10.30am. However, there were concerns that the 11am congregation would miss out on the chance to experience the music group style of musical worship and this may be something to reflect upon at the APCM in 2024.

The music group leads vocal worship for the congregation in the form of songs chosen specifically to reflect themes and messages in that week's reading and also instrumental music during each service, for example in moments of prayer and reflection or family activities, hopefully heightening spiritual experience for the congregation. The range of songs sung include those aimed at the younger members of the congregation to widen access to familiar musical worship and link to experiences in school. Members of the group also accompany a Wednesday service for St Margaret's CEVAP once a term, strengthening the link between the church and its school, and has been involved in other seasonal services throughout the year, for example Christmas and Lent.

Pastoral Care Report

The Pastoral Team which consists of Maggie Conder, Belinda Gledhill, Charles Croydon, Gill Jackson and Margaret Llewellyn, have had 3 meetings in the time Rev. Sarah Geileskey has been our Vicar.

We offer mission across our community by practical and spiritual support. We provide care in the form of being a listening ear whether it be a physical, emotional or faith related enquiry. We can be the person showing a way to explore more, a person to sit alongside someone and offer practical and prayerful support. To show God's love for everyone through our actions and words, encouraging and nourishing. Every circumstance is so different, we can invite people to a group to meet other people in a safe environment and gain confidence to come and try different services and be alongside offering friendship genuine interest in who that person is. It is of paramount importance for people to feel safe and secure in what they share and how they are treated.

Safeguarding Report

Training

We have had a great improvement with the completion of requested Safeguarding training.

PCC

Is at 98% completion and all PCC members are required to complete the basic and foundations of safeguarding training courses either on line or face to face.

Pastoral Care team

All have completed the Basic and Foundation courses as needed and the pastoral lead (Maggie Conder) has completed the leadership course.

Rise and Shine team

All are up to date with both basic and foundation completed.

Choir

The choir director has completed basic and foundation courses, we have good coverage from other choir members who are in different roles, but we may ask a couple more people to complete the basic course.

Bell ringers/music group/band

We have good coverage but need a few more people to complete either just basic or basic and foundation to ensure we have optimum cover, we will ask people to volunteer for this and some do need to do these still to stay in their roles. This has been communicated to them.

Others

We have had some church family members complete basic training even though they are not official post holders. This will enable us to start new activities without too much issue with training.

I organised for a member of the diocese safeguarding team to run a basic course in the church centre which was well attended.

As ever training is available to all church family members.

DBS checks

Again this is going much better and we have been processing these, a check needs to be done to see who else needs these

Safeguarding concerns

We have created a secure safeguarding log which Helen and Sarah have kept up to date. We have had approximately 4 conversations regarding safeguarding where support and/or signposting has been given but nothing has had to be taken further.

Recruitment

Safer recruitment processes have been put in place for new employees of the church/church centre.

Next focus

Our next focus needs to be on the benefice safeguarding action plan which covers not only training and DBS's but also procedures and policies. I am happy to help the new main safeguarding officer with this.

Toddler Group Report

The toddler group meets every Friday in term 9.30 until 11.15am, in the church centre, it has now been running for over 10 years, with members of the congregation serving the refreshments, to both carers and children.

The parents, mainly mothers, get out and clear up all the play and activity equipment and organise the activities, stories and singing. They are very supportive to each one another via Whatsapp group.

At church festivals Easter, Harvest and Christmas the group liaise with the flower committee and decorate the church porch.

Since Covid when the numbers dropped to about 15 children, numbers have been steadily rising and by the end of 2023 we were in the mid twenties.

The cost per session is £1.50 per family, and at the end of term the group are usually able to make a donation to the Church Centre Funds.