

St Mary Magdalene's Church, Yarm
Rector's Report for the year ending 31st December, 2023

The last year in many ways was both a year of consolidation on some fronts plus a year of innovation in other ways. Certainly, the year was punctuated with the usual liturgies that continue to add colour and breadth to our church calendar. From the Feast of the Epiphany through to Candlemas and then forwards to Lent and the Easter celebrations that followed there was certainly plenty to reflect upon and to celebrate. Our ecumenical partnerships were again supported with our Good Friday gathering which was held at the Methodist Chapel, and it was very generous of Martin Ramsden to allow me to preach from the pulpit once graced by John Wesley.

Later in the year we did of course ensure that other notable feast days were kept in appropriate fashion from our patronal festival in mid-August through to the Feast of the Assumption and then on to Harvest, Remembrance and Christ the King before engaging with an Advent season that led us beautifully to a very busy Christmas period that just about saw my voice survive into Midnight Mass!

Throughout our worship and our liturgy, we have continued to place a good deal of importance on the music that supports our prayers. 2023 was of course the year that saw our organ returned to us fully restored and that has indeed been a blessing. Another blessing has been the rewards that have come from Janine's, our Director of Music, hard work in recruiting to the choir and especially the junior choir. We now have a good body of youngsters who sing in the choir two Sundays a month and it has been a great joy to see just how ably they support our worship.

On the musical front there was of course one of our innovations for 2023 – the creation of Magda Music. Our church has been described as a 'Georgian Music Hall' and we have therefore honoured that description in some small way by opening up our doors and holding musical events that embrace the secular as well as the sacred. This is very much a work in progress, and we look forward to seeing just how we can take things forward in 2024. My thanks to Janine for getting this project up-and-running and for all of her efforts when it comes to our church music.

Alongside the work of Magda Music and our attempt to open the doors of the church more regularly and more widely was the idea of a church café. I mooted the idea for a café in 2022 and we spent quite a large chunk of 2023 discussing at some depth just how such a project might work in practice. I appreciate that any change to our church life comes with certain levels of anxiety, and I acknowledge that the decision to move forward with a church café was not universally popular. It has to be said however that the opening of the Church Café aka 'Café Magdalene' at the very end of the year by the Bishop of Whitby was both an anxious moment and an exciting moment. I suspect that next year's report will paint a fuller picture but suffice to say that the opening of the café was a huge success and that thus far our café plans are progressing very nicely indeed. I do want to pass on my thanks to all those who have engaged with the project so positively and especially the volunteers who have either staffed the café or who have baked scones and cakes – it would be a non-starter without their efforts, and I really am so very grateful.

Another innovation that was mooted in 2022 was the setting up of some sort of enquirers' course for those who wanted to learn a little more about the Christian faith. There are a number of options, and we could have decided to embrace a few alternatives, but we finally settled on

running an Alpha Course. The course ran on Wednesday evenings from April-June. The videos and the discussion plus the food and drink seemed to go down with all participants. It was certainly very encouraging to see a few new faces coming into church and what is perhaps even more encouraging is that we are continuing to see some of those faces, which has been so lovely. If I am being entirely honest in this report, I would have to admit having started the process being something of an Alpha cynic, but the resources produced by Alpha were really very good indeed and I for one have certainly been won over. We will I am sure be exploring Alpha Courses in the future here at Yarm Parish Church.

Our engagement with the younger elements of our community is something that continues to concern us all and there have continued to be varied ways we have approached this knotty topic over the course of 2023. Clearly our Family Eucharist on the first Sunday of the month (usually!) has continued to take place and there is no doubt that it does engage with our younger choir members and those youngsters from some of our established families. Equally our Little Sparks has continued to meet on Monday mornings where we engage with toddlers and their carers/mums through a time of prayer, bible stories, singing and fellowship, the fellowship allowing mum a coffee and a biscuit whilst their children or grandchildren have a time of play. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have made Little Sparks such a success through their good humour and through the wonderful welcome that they always provide, especially to new faces coming through the door. So, thank you Beryl Nadin, Angela Beckwith, John Bancroft and Debbie Gravestock – I really do appreciate your efforts.

Part of our engagement with younger people includes of course the way we engage with the schools within our community. That relationship is not entirely uncomplicated given the fact that all our schools have no particular religious or Christian affinity. So, I am immensely grateful to all the Headteachers in all of our schools for their good grace when it has come to responding to my various emails and messages over the course of the year. It has certainly been very positive to welcome pupils from Layfield Primary School and Yarm Primary School into St Mary Magdalene's Church in 2023. Our relationship with Yarm School and Conyers School has always been positive but it is extremely encouraging that we have now built up a much firmer relationship with Eggescliffe School and its wonderful music department. Levendale Primary School opened our Christmas season in 2023 with the very first Carol Service, and it was a total joy to have them with us.

When it comes to engaging with our wider community, social media clearly has a part to play. Whilst I appreciate that not all of our worshipping community engage through modern technology it nonetheless has a role and I would like to pass on my thanks to David Beeton for maintaining our online presence through our church Facebook page. I know that it has allowed us to connect with sectors of the community that might otherwise have missed various events across the year.

Our online presence does of course feed into other ways in which we explore our relationship with our wider community. The fellowship we have created throughout the past year through

the Coronation and a whole host of other events including our fairs, the strawberry tea, parish BBQs etc have been extremely heartening and obviously says something about ourselves and the welcome we create for those who have yet to fully appreciate the camaraderie of our church life together. None of that stuff just simply happens and I would like to thank all those who serve on a whole range of committees across the year, the work of which helps me

immeasurably in my ministry here amongst you. So, a huge thank you to the members of the PCC, the Events Committee, the Fabric Committee, the Wildcare Group and the GOLD group. Your work in so many and varied ways has benefitted the church here in Yarm immeasurably. And whilst on that subject I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the work and mission of the Mothers' Union. The MU does sterling work in the way that it gathers and keeps gathered those ladies (and men!) who appreciate the events that take place throughout the year. The prayer life of the MU with its happy knack for organisation and fellowship has contributed a great deal to the life of our parish and it was even more heartening to see it work its magic in welcoming members from Kirklevington once their own branch had been discontinued.

2023 was in many ways a year of innovation that saw us embrace 'Inclusive Church', move forward with plans for a Café in church and look more deeply at our church music. It saw us move away from the Eucharist one Sunday when we held a thoroughly enjoyable pet service and it saw us expand our fellowship and our friendship in all sorts of fun and interesting and creative ways. I have said previously none of what has taken place can happen without you – the parishioners who have worshipped here for so long and who have embraced the building and the culture and the faith in so many different ways. My thanks to everyone who has supported my ministry during the course of 2023 – I certainly never take your prayers and your support for granted. A huge thank you to the Officers of the PCC not least of course our Churchwardens Peter Monck and Beryl Nadin. Thanks also to our Secretary, David Yates, our Treasurer, Martin Huggins and our Vice Chair, John Rhodes. And then of course so many thanks from me to those who work tirelessly in so many other ways that don't always draw a great deal of notoriety or attention. Thanks to Jean Hodgkinson for her fantastic role of pastoral organisation as we strive to care for our congregation. Thanks to Tanya Brackenbury for her commitment to serving in the sanctuary. Thanks to all of you who volunteer for coffee rotas and reading rotas and intercession rotas and welcomer rotas – please know that your efforts never go un-noticed, and I really do appreciate your contributions. Thanks to all of you involved in our charitable work, not least of course Avril Rhodes and her utterly tireless commitment to the cause of Christian Aid. Thank you to Avril Monck for having the ability to be everywhere all of the time and providing rock-like support as verger. Finally, finally a huge thank you to my ministerial colleagues David Local and Kate Brown – my work here would be virtually impossible without their keen commitment and enthusiasm for the Gospel – thanks too for their sense of humour which is a bit of a pre-requisite if I'm honest.

2023 was a full year and we give thanks to God for the many blessings he continues to bestow upon us all as we plough this little bit of Christendom. I look forward to continuing the journey with you all in 2024!

The Revd Darren Moore – Rector

May 2024

St Mary Magdalene's Church, Yarm

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council

for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Introduction

St. Mary Magdalene Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Darren Moore in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of the parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout Yarm and makes suggestions on how our services 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.

The GOLD (Generosity of Loving Discipleship) subcommittee continued to look at ways of making the church more robust and less reliant on occasional offices (baptisms, weddings, and funerals). It supports the mission of the church and honours its free will offer.

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months unrestricted payments. Details of our actual reserves for the year are given in the Annual Accounts.

During 2023 the PCC met seven times.

Structure, Management and Governance

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission.

St Mary Magdalene Yarm PCC is a body corporate and operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 and the Church Representation Rules. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

On 31 December 2023 there were 120 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 54 of whom were not resident within the parish. Jay Yates is the electoral roll officer for the parish. Many thanks to Jay for maintaining the role.

Worship and Prayer

During 2023, St Mary Magdalene, as the Parish Church, continued to be the focal point for Anglican worship in Yarm. A regular pattern of services was continued, to co-ordinate with the other churches in the benefice.

The 8.00am Sunday Holy Communion from BCP (Book of Common Prayer) along with the 10.30am Sung Eucharist using Common Worship continued during 2023; the first Sunday of the month being a Family Service whenever possible at 10.30am. The 9.30am Wednesday Holy Eucharist and the 7.30am Friday Holy Eucharist, both using Common Worship, also continued during 2023.

Booklets were used to reflect the different times and seasons of the year.

During our Christmas celebrations we held the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and a Christingle Service along with our Crib Service and Midnight Mass both on Christmas Eve. The Christingle and Crib services were both very well attended by young families.

Easter contained a full programme from Palm Sunday through to Easter day. There was a 7:00pm Stations of the Cross service on Wednesday. The liturgy of the Lord's supper on Thursday at 7.30pm included the stripping of the altar and a watch until midnight. The Liturgy of the Passion took place on Good Friday at

3pm and an Easter Vigil on Saturday at 8:00pm, followed by the normal Sunday worship for Easter. We also celebrated the festivals of Epiphany, Candlemas and Pentecost and The Feast of Christ the King.

A Pet Service, well attended by dogs and their humans, was held on Sunday 27th August. The service was well received by parishioners and members of the wider community, and hopefully will become an annual occasion in our worship.

During the year, the Ecumenical Prayer Group met on the first Wednesday of the month following the 9.30am Wednesday service and the Mothers' Union Prayer Group met on the second Wednesday of the month. Both groups are supported by members of our congregation, along with people from other denominations, committed to intercessory prayer.

Our trainee organist, Joshua Greenwell played on several occasions under the supervision of Janine Busbridge (Organist and Director of Music) until he moved on in September and was replaced by Patrick Ward. Patrick took up the position of Organ Scholar in January 2024.

Thanks goes to Janine for her continued commitment and enthusiasm, particularly in relation to the increase in Junior Choir members, and of course for the music provided during worship. Through Janine our choir has been greatly enriched; and a huge thank you is expressed to all choir members for their tireless commitment.

Little Sparks, which attracts pre-school children and their carers, and Little Sparks Xtra for pre-school and primary school age children, and held during school holidays, continued during 2023.

Unfortunately, it was decided early in the year to dispense with our Sunday Sparkle group as there were frequently no children in church during the three Sundays in the month when this was held. If this situation changes, the PCC will be happy to reinstate Sunday Sparkle.

During 2023 there were a total of 10 holy baptisms, three weddings, 10 funerals and 10 interment of ashes.

Flowers

Flower arrangements were beautifully created by Avril Monck on special occasions during 2023; notably at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. We express our gratitude to Avril for her time and expertise.

Stokesley Deanery Synod

Four members of the PCC sit on the deanery synod, David Yates being a member of York Diocesan Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. More information is included in the Appendix.

The Church building and churchyard

The church building was kept in good repair during 2023 (see Churchwardens' Report)

The responsibility of the maintenance of the churchyard rests with the Town Council. They continue to maintain the grass cutting to a high standard.

A large tree close to the main entrance to the church yard was deemed to be unsafe and hence felled by SBC. One of the giant red woods was also recognised as being unsafe and was scheduled to be felled in 2024, along with other tree maintenance.

Pastoral Care

Home communion continued in 2023 with the team of Eucharistic ministers visiting those who have requested it either in private or residential homes.

The wellbeing of the congregation remained a priority for the PCC, and the care for the congregation network has continued to be very active through the co-ordination of Jean Hodgkinson (see C for the C Report). Much appreciation goes to Jean and her team for their care and diligence.

Safeguarding

The Diocese provided three online courses (basic awareness, foundation, and domestic abuse) which all new PCC Trustees were required to complete.

DBS checks were carried out and renewed where necessary, on all Trustees and those in positions of responsibility. There were no safeguarding notifications at St Mary Magdalene during 2023.

Much appreciation goes to Sue Ellis, our Safeguarding Lead, for her diligent hard work throughout the year.

Mission

Our benefice magazine, Trident, continued to be published keeping parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our Church and articles that help develop our knowledge and trust in Christ.

The Harvest and weekly food contributions go to Sprouts in Thornaby and 'Love in a Box' gifts for Romania were collected. The Christian Aid collection was largely achieved by delivery only envelope and therefore the sum that could be attributed to St Mary Magdalene was an underestimate of our overall contribution. We are grateful to Debbie Gravestock for her coordinating role with Sprouts and to Avril Rhodes for her commitment to both 'Love in a Box' and Christian Aid.

The PCC is committed to being generous to other charities and organisations and encourages the congregation to decide which local, national, and international charities we should support in any given year. For 2023 the chosen charities were Zoe's Place (local), the RNLI (national) and The Salvation Army (international). In Addition, we also supported two local animal charities, Maxi's Mates and Yarm Cat Rescue. With the proceeds from our Christmas Card Board we supported Ripple Effect, a garden twinning charity which twins our church yard with a family in rural Migori, Kenya. Thanks go to Elaine Huggins for introducing us to such a unique but important charity.

An Alpha Course took place during the Spring, attended by a number of people new to our church as well as members of the congregation. Lively discussion and fellowship were enjoyed by all, and new friendships were made.

During 2023 we endeavoured to welcome everyone in the spirit of love and friendship who came to St Mary Magdalene, whether it be to attend a service, to arrange an occasional office, to take part in a group activity, for a look round our beautiful church or to spend a few minutes in quiet thought and prayer. With the evolution of Café Magdalene, our mission and outreach will hopefully continue to develop in different ways into 2024 and beyond.

Report provided by Peter Monck and Beryl Nadin (Churchwardens) on behalf of the PCC

Appendix to the APCC Report

PCC Members for 2023

St Mary Magdalene's church is part of the Deanery of Stokesley in the Diocese of York within the Church of England and is situated in West Street, Yarm TS15 9BU. The parish is in the Benefice of Yarm with Kirklevington with Picton and Worsall. The PCC of Yarm remains the governing body for the Parish of Yarm.

PCC members who have served as Trustees between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023:

		Dates	
Incumbent	Revd Darren Moore (Chair)		
	Revd Kate Brown (Assistant Curate)		
Wardens:	Mr Peter Monck	(2023-2027)	
	Mrs Beryl Nadin	(2022-2026)	
Elected Members:	Mr Martin Huggins (Treasurer)	(2022-2025)	
	Mr David Yates (Secretary, Diocesan Rep)	(2023-2026)	
		Mrs Wendy Gaitskell	(2021-2024)
		Mrs Margaret Nicholls	(2021-2024)
		Mrs Pam Parker	(2021-2024)
		Mrs Angela Beckwith	(2022-2025)
		Mrs Ros Carling	(2022-2025)
		Mrs Elaine Huggins	(2022-2025)
		Mrs Lynn Allison	(2023-2026)
		Mrs Tanya Brackenbury	(2023-2026)
	Mrs Jean Finlay	(2023-2026)	
	Mrs Marion Johnston	(2023-2026)	
Co-Opted members	Mrs Valerie Meeking	(2023-2024)	
Representatives on Deanery Synod	Mr David Local	(2023-2026)	
	Mrs Avril Rhodes	(2023-2026)	
	Dr John Rhodes (Vice chair)	(2023-2026)	

Groups within St Mary Magdalene

Benefice Magazine

Bible Reading Fellowship

Café Magdalene

Care for the Congregation

Choir and Music

Churchwardens

Craft Group

Deanery Synod

Ecumenical Prayer Group

Events

Fabric

Finance

GOLD

Health and Safety

Little Sparks and Little Sparks Xtra

Mothers' Union

Safeguarding

Wild Care

BENEFICE MAGAZINE: Trident

The editorial team comprises Revd Kate Brown, Ros Carling, Debbie Gravestock, Revd Darren Moore, John Rhodes and Jay Yates and 10 editions of Trident were published. During the year the editorial team met to finalise the layout and content and we are grateful to Avril Rhodes for her proof reading. We continue to hand deliver most copies of the magazine to ensure they were received just before the start of the month. Many thanks to Beryl and her dog for a proportion of deliveries. Some copies are posted or sent as an E-mail.

Thank you to all who have continued to provide contributions. The editors have never had a month without a varied and full copy. A strict cut off has been introduced because errors crept in when we tried to accommodate last minute contributions. We ask that all source material is referenced in any article submitted. We tried to prevent infringement of any copyright by following the UK Copyright Service advice for news reporting.

The editors are aware of safeguarding and do not publish unnecessary names and contact details. We also endeavour to ensure permission is granted for photographs to be included, especially of children. We continue to be delighted to receive contributions especially from young budding journalists.

We are indebted to our advertisers who allowed us to keep the cost at £6.00 per annum and provide a few colour pages. Without colour many photographs will be dull and not be clear. With the improvement in smart phone cameras, we get a lot more digital photographs submitted and try our best to provide as many in colour as possible without turning the magazine into a picture book. Gill Waller who collected the advertising renewals and the printers TopPrint have continued to provide an excellent service. It is important that our advertisers know that you support Trident by thanking them for advertising in our magazine when you see them. We must remember that they do not do it solely to support the church, but to attract customers like us.

Trident is your magazine and an important tool in our outreach. Please share your copy with your friends and encourage them to purchase a copy for themselves. We try to provide news and articles about events and activities taking place within the parishes, and to include articles about aspects of faith. We have many regular contributors and without you the magazine would not be enriched by such diversity. The lay members of the group would not be able to provide the breadth and detail of church activities without the dedicated contribution and enthusiastic support of Darren and Kate.

We are grateful for all who subscribed for the year as it does help us to minimise waste at the end of the month. Please do ask a friend to consider taking out a subscription so more people can learn about our church. Thank you one and all for your support.

Report provided by John Rhodes on behalf of Trident Editorial Team

BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

Bible Reading using the BRF (Bible Reading Fellowship) publications continues to thrive within the congregation at St Mary Magdalene, and numbers have continued to grow. Our short monthly informal 'lay led' reading and discussion group meetings on a Wednesday morning for our BRF users and anyone else interested have continued, with some most interesting discussions on all sorts of topical and biblical subjects ensuing. These have been well supported and generated much enthusiasm, and have proved to be a valuable support and also another welcome chance for informal social contact by those joining in. Our Reader David has also supported and prepared material for these, and many thanks are due to him, and also to our Rector Darren's continuing support and lead whenever his other commitments allow.

There were 23 subscriptions (+ the Rector) to the church order for BRF bible reading notes booklets, and this implies 25-30 members of the congregation using daily readings and prayers, several being couples. An increase of 2 in 2023

- All 23 read 'New Daylight', daily readings.
- None now read 'Guidelines', weekly reading and topic(s) for study.

We continue to meet monthly around the table in church with cake and coffee and this is much enjoyed by those attending, permitting increased social involvement.

Our church members who are using these the BRF publications find them valuable, often enjoyable, sometimes challenging, and always useful; and those of us who use the booklets highly recommend them to all.

Report provided by David Yates

CAFÉ MAGDALENE

The first meeting of the Church Café sub group took place on 9th January 2023. Members were Ros Carling, Avril Monck, Revd Darren Moore (chair), Beryl Nadin, John Rhodes (note taker) and Elizabeth Rigg invited because of their support for the project and either catering or business expertise. Everyone had a job to do and carried it out with speed and enthusiasm attending monthly meetings. Rules, regulations and statutes were investigated and the first hurdle to overcome was the hygiene regulations. All bakers and lead servers were required to obtain a hygiene certificate. We were fortunate and indebted to Debbie Fixter of Sprouts who offered to provide training free of charge on 31st July and 12 people attended and all passed with flying colours. The next problem was getting kitchens certified and the church was inspected and awarded 5 stars. Sprouts gave us an oven surplus to requirements. It was at this point that the group realised that the venture was possible.

The group wished the café to serve a range of hot bean to cup beverages from a machine that was simple to operate and keep clean. A user requirement specification was drawn up requiring fairtrade or ethically

sourced ingredients and the market tested. Rountons Coffee based locally was chosen and the representative Steve Ashman invited to a meeting to explain the ethics of the company and the coffee machine they supplied. An economic water boiler was also sourced to fit neatly into the space vacated by the filter machines. Individual tea pots holding a hygienically sealed fairtrade tea bag were chosen and we were delighted to receive handmade cosies from the craft group. The café was set up using an interest free loan to be paid back as first call on profits. The name Café Magdalene was chosen by the congregation from a short list.

The final hurdle to overcome was HMRC and statute. The café cannot be called 'primary purpose' trading because it does not help or form part of our primary purpose which is conducting church worship services. However, there is a small trading exception that allows the café turnover to be up to 25% of the PCC income. As the café wished to receive customer payments by either cash or card, a point of sale (POS) was proposed to be dedicated to the café which was linked to a Co-op bank account to allow fiscal control of the trading.

Quality of food is also a priority for the catering team. Freshly baked scones and cakes are served. The business case was based on being able to serve a maximum of 3 coffees per minute and 200 per day. After much research, prices were chosen to match general retail prices. We opened on 3rd December 2023 with the Bishop of Whitby in attendance, as guest of honour who declared the start of operation. Trading was limited in December and a profit of £337.06 was made from the 6 days. It was felt that the success of the venture would not be assessed until the end of January when we would be open 3 days per week. The café annual accounts will not reflect the true position until we have been going for 1 year.

Report provided by John Rhodes on behalf of Café Magdalene sub-group

CARE FOR THE CONGREGATION

As any business conducted by C for C is confidential there never will be a detailed report per se; suffice to say a very efficient watching brief continues.

Care for the congregation was inaugurated in 2016 the aim published in 'Comet now Trident' the same year. Since then, the congregation has changed, people leaving balanced by newcomers, so there will always be some who may be unaware of C for C and how it works.

Care for the congregation a brief resume:

As a caring congregation it is usually easy to identify a missing regular attender not so easy with intermittent worshippers. To overcome this problem C for C was established.

It is a simple system where a group of regular worshippers have agreed to keep a non-intrusive watching brief on various groups of parishioners. If they identify a missing worshipper, they will try to ascertain a reason why through simple enquiry or a discrete phone call, to check all is well and if necessary to offer assistance.

If requested, they will inform the Rector of the situation, or he can be informed directly.

C for C does not prevent anyone from watching for an empty seat and raising concerns. We are all responsible for ensuring that no one in need of aid goes unnoticed.

Most of you know, who has you on their care list, and have been reminded from information recently handed out. New attenders have been individually contacted with details of C for C and the Electoral Roll. During the covid crisis C for C proved an invaluable information network. Lists are updated as changes occur in addition to the annual review.

Report provided by Jean Hodgkinson on behalf of the C for C Group

CHOIR AND MUSIC

The keyword for the choir in the past 12 months has been growth. The renovation on the organ has taken place, and other than a few little tweaks still needed, it's sounding great! We have added a junior choir to our ranks, which has attracted some new and experienced singers alike, and we have a new organ scholar who is with us twice a month, as well as assisting in the training of the new juniors. The choir are going from strength to strength, performing a concert recently which was well attended, raising over £200 for our now quite healthy choir fund. This has also been added to by a series of concerts held at church, designed to help to gain traction as a concert venue locally for a variety of groups. With further plans for excellent concerts, and another 'Come and Sing Messiah' this coming Christmas, the only way is up!

Report provided by Janine Busbridge

CHURCHWARDENS

The Churchwardens for 2023 were John Rhodes, replaced by Peter Monck at the swearing in service held in Stokesley Parish Church, and Beryl Nadin. Together we endeavoured to support our Rector and Reader in their ministries.

During the year the organ was restored and upgraded by Woods of Ripon. Proceeds from our three main events (the Spring, Summer and Christmas Fairs) went towards the organ fund along with proceeds from other fundraising activities, donations and grants. Our sincere thanks go to John Rhodes who worked tirelessly during the year, procuring grants and liaising with Woods to ensure the whole operation progressed smoothly.

Necessary electrical work was carried out by Oliver Monck in preparation for the reassembling of the organ.

Two more fire extinguishers were installed in church and all electrical equipment was PAT tested.

The rear vestry gully was repaired when the walls were discovered to be damp.

Bee Keepers came to investigate our Bee infestation on the north wall/roof but were unable to help. The PCC concluded that the only option was to remove the hive. This operation is scheduled to coordinate with Neil Sweeting's (contractor) work on the guttering on the north and west sides of the building during 2024. Wi-Fi was installed during 2023 in preparation for Café Magdalene.

Flickering lights were renewed.

The PCC decided to purchase a BBQ for parish use.

The Tranter Family donated a new bench for the church yard in memory of Frank.

The church has been kept clean by Andrea's Angels who have been very flexible when funerals and other activities impinged on the cleaning times. We would like to thank both Andrea and Val for their support during the year.

We celebrated the King's Coronation in early May with a BBQ, joining with local residents on the green outside church.

The Archdeacon's Visitation took place on 10th July. Both the Archdeacon and the Rural Dean were very impressed with the way the church is looked after and with the up-to-date paperwork. They were also appreciative of our free-will offer. Many thanks go to John Rhodes who prepared much of the paperwork and completed the Terrier while he was still churchwarden.

Due to the instigation and hard work of David Yates we received the Bronze Eco Award from 'A Rocha'. The Wild Care group were busy during the year erecting bird boxes and feeders as well as planting bee

friendly flowers in preparation for the arrival of our bee hives. Special thanks go to Lynn Allyson, Victor Wood, Peter Ellis, Pam Parker and Angela Beckwith for their hard work, as well as to David, of course, for his inspiration and enthusiasm.

Certainly the most exciting venture of the year was the preparation work for Café Magdalene, inspired and led by Father Darren. Due to an interest free loan from a parishioner, capital items were able to be purchased.

The majority of people who volunteered to either bake or serve, or do both, in the café completed and passed a hygiene course. Two members of the baking team had their kitchens inspected by SBC, both receiving 5 STAR hygiene awards, as did the church servery.

The grand opening of Café Magdalene, by The Bishop of Whitby, took place on Saturday 2nd December.

Report provided by Peter Monck and Beryl Nadin

CRAFT GROUP

The Craft Group continues to meet in the Fellowship Hall every other Tuesday from 1.00pm – 3.30pm. We have 19 regular Tuesday members and 8 outworkers. We all do our own 'crafting' and enjoy a chat and a cup of tea.

During 2023 we gave knitted blankets to the Asylum Seekers based in Middlesbrough. We also knitted baby blankets for the North Tees and James Cook Hospitals. Valerie has also knitted burial gowns and blankets for still-born babies, for the charity 'Cuddles'. Members of the group attended all the St Mary Magdalene Fairs, plus the Kirklevington Fairs. We contributed at £900 to church funds.

Report provided by Valerie Meeking on behalf of the Craft Group

DEANERY SYNOD

The Parish elected lay representatives for Deanery Synod are Avril Rhodes, John Rhodes and David Local., David Yates is an ex-officio member as a Diocesan Synod representative. Our Rector Fr Darren and Revd Kate are also members as serving clergy. Synod provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church, it met 3 times during 2023 in February, June and October and generally our Parish/Benefice was well represented.

Synods are appointed every 3 years and as the 2020 – 2023 triennial came to an end In July 2023 the APCM re-elected the 3 current lay representatives for the 2023 – 2026 Synod and David Yates continued as an ex-officio member.

The routine business of Synod involves an update on the Living Christ Story Diocesan initiative, information from the Deanery Financial Adviser (DFA), Ken Taylor of Christ Church, Great Ayton about the current position of the payment of free will offers (FWO) and other interesting happenings in the Parishes of our Deanery.

The main item of Synod is a series of three or four carousel conversations in small groups. During 2023 these conversations covered the following topics:

- Next Generation of Light and Heat – hosted by David Yates
- Thriving Churches and the opportunities of the Easter season
- Children, Families and Community: 'with' not 'for'
- Creating a church eco-culture
- Mission based PCC hosted by Fr Darren and David Local
- Time to Dream. If your Church had a significant donation?

- Obtaining grants for work in your parish.
- Benefits of a parish/benefice office/administrator
- What we offer across the Deanery.
- Outdoor ministry

These carousel conversations create great deal of interest and are a mine of information.

On the 12th -15th October a Centenary Walk to mark 100 years of the establishment of the post of Bishop of Whitby took place from St Mary's, Whitby to St Mary's, Lastingham, via Egton, Goathland and Newton-on-Rawcliffe. The walk was led by Bishop Paul and Archdeacon Amanda split into 4 walkable days; in total about 40 miles. Anyone from the Archdeaconry or beyond was invited to join the walk for part or the whole. Participants averaged about 7/8 per day, Avril Rhodes completed the whole walk, Jennifer Local did one day and David Local did two. Each day began with prayer in the local church and ended with refreshments in the local Church.

Report provided by David Local on behalf of Avril Rhodes and John Rhodes.

ECUMENICAL PRAYER GROUP

The Ecumenical Prayer Group has a long history. It was originally started by Pauline Hislop approximately 26 years ago with the intention of bringing together Christians from different denominations in order to pray as intercessors. Although over the years membership has changed, there remains a core group who meet in St Mary Magdalene on the first Wednesday of the month following the 9.30am Eucharist.

During 2023 the group met on 10 occasions in the Lady Chapel. A total of ten people attended from three different churches; St John's, Egglecliffe, Yarm Methodist Church and St Mary Magdalene. A further eight people received the intercessory list by e-mail.

Report provided by Beryl Nadin on behalf of the EPG

EVENTS

Events Group Members: Father Darren, Angela Beckwith, Elaine Huggins (until June), Marion Johnston, Avril Monck, Peter Monck, Beryl Nadin, Maggie Nicholls, John Rhodes, Carole Wilson and Jay Yates.

The Events Group met a total of 6 times during 2023.

A number of fundraising and social events were organised during the year with the proceeds going towards Church Funds as well as our three chosen charities ('Zoe's Place', the RNLI and The Salvation Army). Donations were also made to the choir fund and other charities.

Our events were:

- Lent Lunch – Sunday 26th February
- Smartie Tubes raised £646 for RNLI
- Spring Fair – Saturday 25th March – raised £1,456.91 for church funds
- Coronation Celebration – Monday 7th May – organised with local residents
- Wine & Wisdom Quiz Night – Saturday 13th May – raised £280+ which was sufficient to purchase a church barbecue at a cost of £264
- Summer Fair – Saturday 15th July – raised £1,400 for church funds
- Parish BBQ following Choral Evensong – Sunday 16th July – donations were made towards new choir robes
- Parish Outing to Seaton Carew – Monday 7th August (including Little Sparks Xtra)

- Strawberry Tea – Saturday 12th August – raised £330 which was sufficient to purchase a new bench for the church yard. The Tranter family subsequently asked if they could pay for the bench in memory of Frank. This was agreed and the £330 went to church funds
- Pet Service – Sunday 27th August – donations of money and food were shared between ‘Maxi’s Mates’ and ‘Yarm Cat Refuge’
- Bring a Bulb – Saturday 30th September. Congregation donated and planted bulbs (bluebells, daffodils, snowdrops and wood anemones) in the church yard
- Harvest Festival – Sunday 8th October – raised £581.99 for ‘Zoe’s Place’. A further £200 was kindly donated by Wendy Gaitskill and Debbie Gravestock from their Birthday party gifts
- Christmas Fair – Saturday 25th November – raised £2,600 plus a further £595.60 from the Big Raffle
- Christmas Cheer – Sunday 10th December.
- Parish Panto – Saturday 16th December. 30 of us went along to see ‘Cinderella’ at the PAA
- Crib Festival – 16th / 17th December
- Christmas Card Board – raised £286 for ‘Ripple’, the ‘Twin a Garden’ charity

The ‘Cash only Club’, organised by Jean Finlay, raised £560 towards Church Funds.

The Churchwardens would like to thank the members of the Events Group for their hard work and continued support in making the social life of our church so varied and uplifting.

They would also like to thank everyone from our congregation who contributed so much during 2023, particularly towards our various Fairs, and also members of our congregation and wider friends who came along to support our events. Without the support of so many people, not only would it be impossible to sustain the social life of our church, but our fundraising and charitable giving would also be substantially reduced.

Report provided by Beryl Nadin on behalf of the Events Group

FABRIC

The fabric sub-committee consists of, Eric Heaviside, Martin Huggins, Beryl Nadin, Peter Monck, Darren Moore, John Rhodes and David Yates and has met 6 times in 2023.

The group is set up to assist the churchwardens in the maintenance of the building and their oversee of the maintenance of the churchyard and to consider restoration, fabric proposals and developments in the building.

Action points were recorded and presented for each meeting to the following PCC meeting for approval. 14 items from 2022 were discussed and 8 items of business were closed as follows:

- The energy footprint tool for 2022 has been closed.
- The lighting cable in the churchyard was marked on a drawing for future use.
- Church café was to be discussed by a subgroup of the PCC.
- The organ work had commenced and handed over to Woods for completion.
- Boiler condition appears to be good for a couple of years.
- Toilet was unblocked.
- Bio-tank was checked.
- Window ledges were re painted.

16 items of new business were discussed in the meetings and 8 were closed by December 2023 as follows:

- A cleaning device for high level dusting was selected and obtained.
- The church insurance was reviewed.
- The church passed the EIO independent review.
- A crack above the resurrection window was revealed during the organ renovation and repaired.
- Flickering lights were replaced.
- The alarm in the disable toilet was selected and fitted.
- Wifi has been fitted in church.
- A fridge surplus to requirements in the wellness centre was examined and found to be too large for use in the church.

Report provided by John Rhodes on behalf of the Fabric Group

FINANCE

General Unrestricted Funds

2023 has been a very active year and we have come out of it with a healthy balance of £31,919 (2022 – 32,215), and thanks are due to everyone who has supported us in many and various ways.

The specific detail is as follows.

Total unrestricted income was £93,756 (£86,193 in 2022) and is detailed in the financial statements. Of this, £63,371 (was £64,460) was pledged giving and includes associated tax relief, and represents a significant 67.6% (was 74.8%) of the total income. This is the third full year of the Parish Giving Scheme and this scheme helps to benefit our cash flow. We still have about two thirds of our supporters signed up to the scheme, with a few new users signing up during the year. It would be good if other contributors were able to join them.

Other parts of the accounts are continuing to recover. The Summer and Christmas Fairs, again held in Church, raised a very welcome £4,081 (£2,381 - Christmas only) and the Christmas Raffle yielded a further £595 (£784). This year, Choir activities have brought in over £1,100 and the bee project has raised £1,700 which will allow the project to proceed in 2024. Total net fundraising (including the above) was £8,938 (£4,815), a very significant and welcome increase.

The remaining income came largely from collections, donations and fees, and is now at £18,377 (£14,068). Collections have decreased significantly to £3,390 (£5,183) in 2023 whilst yellow envelope Gift Aided donations have increased to £2,500 (£1,595), as have fee earnings, now at £5,218 (£3,359). This shows a change in the way people are giving and we need to keep an eye on this.

Also, we have received £2,356 (£1,392) from the rest of the Benefice as their contribution to the expenses of the Rector, the Curate and the Rectory. There has been one legacy this year of £1,000. (£0 in 2021). We would hope that more people in the future will give in this way.

Total unrestricted expenditure was £94,052 (was £87,956). We have maintained our contribution to the Freewill Offer to support the Mission in the Diocese at £61,800, the same as last year. This Freewill Offer

was paid in full, and is a very significant 65.9% (71.7% last year) of our total income from all sources. In addition, Diocesan fees for weddings and funerals in our Church have added £5,689 (£4,460) to our total giving from the Parish to the Mission in the Diocese, which now totals £67,489 (£66,260).

The cost of running the Church building was £11,908 (£9,950), with Insurance rising by some £650 per year. The cost of replacement lightbulbs at £828, with roof works and miscellaneous maintenance at £1,172, are a significant outlay. The upkeep of services cost a further £8,510 (£7,701), and reflects a complete year of Organist fees, together with support for the training of our organ scholar.

Expenses for clergy amount to £4,034 (£3,153) – an increase resulting from an active year for the new Rector and the Curate. This is offset by the sharing of these expenses with Kirklevington and Worsall who paid £2,356 (£1,392) of this amount.

Other expenditure was £4,606 (£2,142), with a lot of expenditure on choir robes, moving the statue in the Lady Chapel, changes to locks and keys for added security and other miscellaneous activities.

Net result for the year was an excess of expenditure over income of £296 compared to an excess income over expenditure of £1,764 in 2022, which with our carry over of £1,700 for the bee project, gives us a similar outcome to last year.

The total balance of unrestricted funds at 31st December 2023 was £31,919 (£32,215).

Café Magdalene

Café Magdalene opened in the last month of the year and has produced a deficit of £717, because of the costs of setting up the equipment needed to trade successfully. A generous interest free loan of £11,250 has allowed the purchase of the coffee machine and other capital items, valued at £9,307 at the end of the year. The loan is expected to be paid off in 2024, but shows as a liability on the 2023 balance sheet.

Restricted Funds

Organ Fund

The major repair work on the Organ has been largely completed within 2023, with income of £20,741 being received in grants during the year. We have paid out £92,161 for the works so far, leaving a small amount of £2,400 carried forward to 2024 to pay the outstanding balance when all the final works have been completed. Completion of this project has been due to all the hard work and generosity of the congregation.

Restoration Fund

Activity has continued as last year. The Quinquennial Report had shown up various significant repairs required that have been completed at a total cost of £8,285 (£20,042). Activities covered were Roof and Wall repairs, fitting a new disabled alarm in the toilet, together with Architects fees. This has been funded by a Listed Places of Worship Grant of £10,623 (£2,427), together with a Fund Raising “Cash Only Club” which made £560 and the Easter Extravaganza raising a further £1,417.

The balance of the Restoration Fund at 31st December 2023 was a stabilised £11,737 (£10,184 in 2022), but this will need to be increased by fundraising in order to be available for future work and for keeping the Church in good order.

Charities

Restricted funds were again collected and paid out to individual charities, coming from collections at funerals as specified by families concerned, and from special events arranged by the Church for nominated charities. The total amount was £6,567 (£5,426).

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds, which equates to three months' unrestricted income, to cover emergency situations which may arise from time to time. The balance of £31,919 in unrestricted funds at the year-end exceeds this target (currently £23,450).

Additionally, we recognise that the maintenance of a historic building requires periodically significant sums of money to carry out important restoration and maintenance work. Although we had a significant legacy in 2011, we have spent considerable sums on successful restoration and renovation projects, leaving our reserves for this aspect of our work at just over £11,737. The use of this money needs to be carefully regulated and monitored, and it would be good if it could be augmented by individual efforts and some new legacies in due course.

Report provided by M J Huggins - Hon Treasurer

GOLD - Generosity of Loving Discipleship

The Generosity of Loving Discipleship Team has the following members: David Local (Chair), Maggie Nicholls, Beryl Nadin, Martin Huggins, John Rhodes, Revd Darren Moore, Lynn Allison, Marion Johnston and Elaine Huggins.

During the year Elaine Huggins decided to resign her voluntary membership of the Group, Peter Monck joined as a result of being appointed a Church Warden at the 2023 APCM and John Rhodes agreed to continue to be a member.

During 2023 we met on 5 occasions. Towards the end of 2022 we had agreed to hold a Gift Day on the last Sunday of March 2023. However, as the Spring Fayre was scheduled for the last Saturday in March it was decided to have a 'Gift Weekend' and an appropriate brochure was designed to advertise both events. The Spring Fayre achieved an excellent result. The Gift Day was only moderately successful and it was agreed to hold future Gift Days as and when considered necessary.

We agreed the weekly pew sheet would continually be used to remind the congregation of the benefits of using the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) for their regular giving, to keep their regular giving under review and the availability of the PGS for making one-off gifts to the Church.

Janine, Church Organist who was qualified to write wills had offered to write free wills to anyone of St Mary Magdalene's congregation who wished to include in their will a legacy to St Mary Magdalene's. As a result the PCC agreed a Legacy Policy and the availability of free Wills is also advertised on the weekly pew sheet.

As a result of a report of a meeting with the Diocesan Generous Giving Advisers at a meeting of Diocesan Synod it was agreed to invite them to our group meeting to advise us on their experience of good practice. One of the Advisers was responsible for encouraging a generous culture within church, and the other for best ways of raising regular income.

We have benefited from their advice in helping us to focus our sense of direction and they have been given an open invitation to attend our regular meetings.

As a result of the opening of Magdalene Café we have since began work to create the resources to communicate St Mary Magdalene's finances, Generous Giving values and future plans for the benefit of new people visiting the Church.

The PCC Treasurer advised that there were no present serious concerns about the finances of the Parish; therefore, going forward we have continued to focus on:

- Different ways of raising regular income and where to focus our efforts;
- Possibility of creating a dedicated Giving Station;
- On-going encouragement for more use of PGS, particularly encouraging the automatic increase of gifts in line with inflation;

- How best to display activities and events in the Church and to generally promote a Generous Giving culture within our Church?

Report provided by David Local on behalf of the GOLD Team

HEALTH & SAFETY

The Health and Safety Committee has 5 members: John Rhodes (Chair), John Bancroft, David Beaton, Avril Monck and a Churchwarden.

There is not a great deal to report for 2023 . . . maybe there ought to be more.

There was one accident reported in the accident book (kept on the noticeboard near the entrance to the large store/photocopier cupboard). This was in June and the committee considered this by email and made recommendations. It is important that any accidents or near misses are reported in the accident book so that any necessary lessons can be learned.

In February the Committee conducted a Fire Risk Assessment for the Church.

Health and Safety (H&S) is an important (and much maligned) subject. It is easy to be complacent and forget about the possible H&S implications of what we do in Church. This is particularly so when we make changes to our activities, layout and objects in and around our Church building, such as the introduction of Café Magdalene and possible changes to seating arrangements in the South Aisle. This is where the Committee comes in, to keep an eye on any H&S implications and reduce the possibility of accidents. Some members of the Committee expect that we may (and ought to) have more activity to report to the 2025 APCM.

Report provided by John Bancroft on behalf of the H&S Team

LITTLE SPARKS & LITTLE SPARKS EXTRA

Little Sparks is a group for pre-school children and their parents/carers. The group meets in church at 10.00am on a Monday morning (excluding Bank Holidays) for about an hour and a half. Activities begin in the Lady Chapel with prayer in the form of lighting candles. We then have an age-appropriate Bible story before moving to the chancel for a rousing sing, always ending with 'The Wise Man'.

Refreshments are then served giving the adults time for an informal chat while the children play with the toys in the children's area, suitably supervised.

At the beginning of 2023 numbers attending Little Sparks dwindled to only three children attended on a regular basis, and some Mondays to only one child and his grandmother. It was felt, however, that along with the church members who helped with Little Sparks there was sufficient involvement and enjoyment to keep the group going. In September we no longer had our stalwart member when he started school-based nursery. Fortunately, we were able to keep going with our two existing members and two new children and their grandparents.

Particular thanks go to John Bancroft and Debbie Gravestock who provided the music, and to members of the Mothers Union who kindly provided refreshments.

Father Darren led Little Sparks with much enthusiasm during 2023, assisted by Angela Beckwith and Beryl Nadin.

Little Sparks Xtra is a group for pre-school children and primary school age children which took place in 2023 either in church or in the Fellowship Hall, on chosen Monday mornings during the school holidays. These sessions occurred on the Mondays of two of the Half Terms, the first Monday of the Easter Holiday and on three Mondays during the Summer break, one of them being the Parish Trip to Seaton Carew. Two summer sessions were held in the Fellowship Hall as the children's corner was taken up with the organ

renovation. These sessions were well attended by a total of 26 children, many of whom came to all the sessions held in Yarm.

The format of **Little Sparks Xtra** mainly follows that of **Little Sparks** with the addition of craft activities. Families are asked to bring a packed lunch if they wish to stay until 1.30pm.

During 2023 the focus of LSX was 'Looking after our World'. A large collage depicting the natural world was created during the summer sessions and then a life size St Francis of Assisi was made over the Autumn half term. Anne Stainer, our resident artist, worked with the children to create both of these pieces which were displayed in church. Many thanks go to Anne for her patient work with the children.

The Little Sparks Xtra sessions were much enjoyed in 2023 by many children who, when younger, had attended Little Sparks, previously known as Pram Service, as well as by children attending for the first time.

John Bancroft and Debbie Gravestock provided the music for Little Sparks Xtra and the Mothers Union, once again, made refreshments. We are very grateful to them all, for their hard work, their commitment and their enthusiasm.

Father Darren led the sessions with support from Angela Beckwith, Anne Stainer, Avril and Peter Monck and Beryl Nadin.

Reported by Beryl Nadin on behalf of the Little Sparks Team

MOTHERS' UNION

Yarm Branch of the Mothers' Union began 2023 with 25 members on roll.

During the year sadly one member, Nancy Ward, died and is sorely missed and one member is no longer able to attend because of ill health.

Unfortunately Kirklevington Branch of Mothers' Union closed in December 2023 but we welcomed three of their members into Yarm Branch.

These changes mean we ended 2023 with 26 members on roll.

Over 2023 there were nine meetings and events on Monday afternoons. At four of those meetings we had speakers - Father Darren, Reverend Kate, Joan Mason and Barbara Ford. Other meetings included the 'Wave of Prayer' focussing on 5 Dioceses linked with York Diocese, a successful Strawberry Tea fundraiser, and an enjoyable day visit to Wydale Hall. This visit included lunch and a midday service in the chapel led by Reverend Ford, the Diocesan Chaplain for Mothers' Union. We had hoped to explore the grounds and gardens but the very wet weather kept us inside but gave a chance to view the accommodation and facilities indoors and enjoy talking and relaxing. The year's Monday meetings finished with a well-supported Advent Service and Faith Tea to which local Mothers' Union branches were among those who attended.

Several evening discussion meetings were held, led by Jayne Gregory, and we look forward to these resuming in 2024.

During the year members enjoyed the spring and Autumn Retreats at Wydale Hall as well as attending the two Diocesan Council meetings.

The Mothers' Union Annual Gathering this year was held in York. The meeting in the morning was held in the Barbican followed by a service in York Minster.

Reported by Marion Johnston (Mothers' Union Branch Secretary) on behalf of Yarm MU

SAFEGUARDING

The Diocese of York safeguarding statement

- “It is important to recognise that safeguarding is important for the needs of any age be it children, young people, vulnerable adults including the elderly and a commitment to equal worth for all “

To this end and following guidelines stipulated by the diocese, all trustees on the PCC have now completed successfully during 2022 and 2023 at least three online courses designated by the Diocese on basic awareness, a foundation course on safeguarding and domestic abuse.

- The Diocesan policy now states that all Welcomers must complete at least the basic awareness course to be in that role.
- In not doing so it will prevent them from becoming, or continuing as Welcomers.
- Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS] forms for trustees are renewed as a requirement every three years and these applications have been successfully done with the assistance of John Rhodes. The applications are managed online using a dashboard website called (31.8) recommended by the Diocese Safeguarding team. Reminders of DBS renewal will be sent by this dashboard website.
- The Archdeacon was satisfied with her observations on safeguarding procedures when she completed her audit in the summer of 2023.
- Opinions were given [at short notice] on the Jay and Wilkinson Report for the future of safeguarding within the Church of England which recommended that any inspection and scrutiny of safeguarding issues within the Church of England must be fully independent of the Church. A decision on this will be made in the near future.

The York Diocesan Safeguarding team issues a monthly bulletin on safeguarding issue, policy and upcoming events. As well as the PSO and churchwardens receiving this online bulletin it is now distributed online to all Trustee members as a valuable source of information.

The Diocese holds quarterly discussion forums for safeguarding officers (PSO) and the PSO has taken part in those in 2023. The PSO took part in Safeguarding week in November 2023 with an introduction and question and answer discussion with the Archbishop of York. Subjects included making risk assessments, modern slavery and record keeping.

Churches need to be safe to welcome everyone and any safeguarding issues will be dealt with respect and sensitivity. The PSO, churchwardens and Rector will work together if there are any safeguarding issues brought to their attention before reporting to any other agency for example the diocesan safeguarding adviser and social services. Any issue is totally confidential and any written information is kept locked in a safe.

The diocesan policy is on the church noticeboard and there are copies of the Parish safeguarding handbook and a Safer Church available.

Duplicated risk assessment forms for any church activities or outings are available (in a file) to be completed and kept as a record.

Reported by Susan Ellis (Parish Safeguarding Officer)

WILD CARE

Members include David Yates (Lead), Lynn Allyson, Angela Beckwith, Peter Ellis, Father Darren Moore, Beryl Nadin, Pam Parker and Victor Wood.

In 2023, the Wild Care Group, which was formed in 2022, has made some good progress in relation to looking after the ecology, flora and fauna of our churchyard.

During the year, areas of the churchyard were designated for leaving to nature, i.e. no cutting or mowing, plans were made to support the birds and insects with new boxes, bird feeders and log piles, a plan was

agreed for managing the trees, fundraising took place to enable beehives to be installed (this is due to happen in second half of 2024), the congregation kindly provided daffodils, bluebells and other flowers which were eagerly planted in September, and management of the wild areas continued (cutting back brambles and suckers, providing shelter for insects and birds etc).

The group has gained momentum in 2023 and an especially proud moment was St Mary Magdalene's attaining the "Bronze" eco award from the ROCHA UK project.

The group very much looks forward to continuing their work in 2024 and will continue to provide updates on activities via the Trident magazine and PCC updates.

Report provided by Lynn Allison on behalf of the Wild Care Team

SUMMARY

Without the support of a large number of our congregation our weekly worship and fellowship here at St Mary Magdalene would be greatly hindered. A sincere thank you goes to all those people who help in a multitude of ways: the welcomers, the readers and intercessors, the eucharistic ministers, the refreshment providers, those who wash and iron linen, and all those who quietly help in the background. Special thanks to Tanya Brackenbury for her weekly commitment and to Jane for her service as thurifer; to Kathy Wilson for her commitment at the 8.00am Sunday service; and to Kath McCarthy for her continued supply of refreshments on Wednesday mornings.

The Churchwardens would also like to thank all those people who kindly provided reports for this APCM and everyone who continues to give their time, enthusiasm and expertise to be part of one or more of our groups.

Thank you all for your generous support and for making the mission and outreach of our church so valuable.

Peter Monck and Beryl Nadin