



**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF SEEND  
within the Wellsprings Benefice *within the Diocese of Salisbury*  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2022**

**Annual Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and other activities of the Parish generally.**

In respect of clergy it has been a difficult year. Rev Joshva John and Rev Renee Coulson had left the Wellspring Benefice in the summer of 2021, our Rector, Rev Alison Bridewell has been on full sick leave (and has now retired on the grounds of ill health), our curate Rev Adrian Burholt was transferred to Devizes, but we continued to be blessed by the retired clergy, Rev Maureen Allchin and Rev Jane Knowles and the Licensed Lay Minister Liz Starling. The Electoral Roll dropped to 65, largely due to a number of deaths within the Parish. Rev Caroline O'Neill was appointed to the Associate (House for Duty) Priest post left vacant by Rev Joshva the previous year. A number of new Lay Worship Leaders and Lay Pastoral Assistants were trained at the end of 2021. The LWLs have really helped by covering non-eucharistic services within the WSB and the LPAs have continued to maintain important pastoral links within the parishes. Ministry is also a part of the Storytellers remit who continued their bi-weekly Seend School visits throughout the school year under the leadership of Jan Crabtree.

There were two weddings, two baptisms, various Seend School services, a celebration service for HM Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee..... and then the nation held its breath in collective grief at the death of Her Majesty on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Her photograph and a burning candle were placed on the altar with tea light candles for people to light when they came to sign the book of condolence which was left out during the whole period of official mourning. The book was signed by many villagers and has been kept in the Vestry for posterity.

Fundraising events during 2022 included a Friends of Holy Cross concert, a Pudding & Pipes evening, and Seend Cleeve's Open Gardens. It has been another difficult year for the church financially. We are slightly better off than at the end of 2021, with a slow recovery from the pandemic helped with two legacies this year. We were able to pay our Parish share of approx. £23,000 to the Diocese in full, but this has left us with little reserves going into 2023. Our costs continue to rise, particularly for heating and electricity. The Fabric Fund is in a very poor state and it will continue to be a challenge to keep up maintenance. We also have limited resources in the Improvement Fund and an outstanding debt on the loan of £25,000 plus £2471 in interest. The Seend School Fund and Spotlight continue to be robust.



The fabric of the church required some urgent maintenance particularly to some of the windows and to some of the stonework (thanks to Windsmere stonemasons for the latter). Grant funding was obtained to pay towards the window repairs. In February storm Eunice barrellled through the village and felled an old cherry tree in the churchyard. With the help of villagers summoned by Facebook and by ringing round friends, the whole tree was logged and dealt with by lunchtime the following day. Oddly, the main trunk was supported by a war grave and very little damage was done to the surrounding graves. The stump proved the tree to have been rotten.

Due to the extremely cold weather in December the boundary wall between the churchyard and The Old Stables (once part of the Seend House estate) collapsed. Another Facebook plea brought about thirty villagers to help move rubble, bricks and also right the church heating oil tank which had been pushed over at an angle and snapped the feed pipe to the boiler. All Christmas services were chillier than usual and the boiler couldn't be re-commissioned until the new year.

The year drew to a close with the familiar and popular Christmas services, starting at the beginning of December with the Christingle service, busier than last year (nearly 100 children and parents), led by Rev Caroline. She also led the Carol Service when nearly 180 attended, and there were 40 at the Midnight Christmas Eve Communion service and just over 30 for the Festal Eucharist on Christmas morning.

This report would not be complete without thanks being given publicly to all those who serve the church in so many ways, most doing so quietly in the background. Thanks particularly go to the band of churchyard helpers who do so much during the year to keep things neat and tidy – many of the participants are not church-goers but show their love for our church in this way. Also, thanks are due to the band of bellringers, the flower arrangers, holy dusters, the Friends of the church and the PCC members.

So, as with every annual report... in closing we offer up a prayer of thanksgiving for all the people who love our church and worship in our church, and for those who give their love in other ways not necessarily in a 'holy' way but in the simplicity and generosity of their service. Amen.

***Len Murray (Church Warden) and Philippa Jackson (Treasurer)***