

St Mary the Virgin Church Great Brickhill



Annual Church Meeting, Tuesday 13 May 2025

Wi-Fi access:- Gigaclear A5D1

Password:- dj02tsnu6m

The 2024 Church Annual Report and the Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting are available on the website:-

<https://brickhillschurches.org.uk/great-brickhill/annual-church-meeting/>

The Annual Vestry Meeting

The Election of the Church Wardens

Phillipa Cook

Stuart Jones

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th April 2024,
available in advance
(No requirement to adopt the Minutes)
4. Elections:-
 - a). Members of the PCC (max 6)
 - b). Appointment of Independent Examiner 2024No election this year for Deanery Synod
(Jeremy Hopkinson – Deanery Representative)

NOMINATIONS FOR THE PCC

Current members:-

Clare Hankins-Lewis

Sophia Walmsley

Diana Williams

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

David Beatty has fulfilled the role of Independent Examiner for the last few years. He is willing to continue in that role.

ELECTORAL ROLL

**A new Electoral Roll has been formed,
required every six years**

Current Number on Electoral Roll

13th May 2025:- 27

(5 not resident in the parish)

SAD LOSS DURING 2024:

Alan Poynter

Irene Fairley

Mary Denham

Anne Humphreys

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

**Services, activities, events etc
since the 2024 Annual Meeting**

SERVICES:

There was no change to the service pattern.

The services are publicised widely – website, Pew Sheet, Parish Newsletter, weekly e-mail, village WhatsApp

THANKS TO:

- The Rector, Jeremy Hopkinson, and the visiting clergy who helped out, especially during the Rector's sabbatical
- Jerry Breslin (Organist and Choirmaster) and Rosemary for playing the organ for us
- The Benefice choir
- Andrew & Margretta Smith and Sophia Walmsley for the music at the Family Services

ATTENDANCE:

Average attendance for normal Sunday service = 18, the same as in 2023.

Much higher for special services

SPECIAL SERVICES

1 wedding, 1 baptism, 2 funerals,

Remembrance,

Nine Lessons & Carols

PLUS the following:-

Unfortunately, the church had to be closed while the work was taking place but despite the dust and disruption, all services continued as normal, thanks to a lot of hard work cleaning and tidying

HIGH ASH SERVICES:

Services are held for:-

Key Stage 1 & Foundation

Key Stage 2 pupils

Leavers' service

Harvest

Christingle / Carol Service

Easter

HIGH ASH EASTER SERVICE:

Due to the size of the school, the school normally come on two afternoons, but for the 2024 Easter service they all came on one day to minimise the disruption for the builders.

It was quite a squeeze and there was no room for parents. But it was wonderful to see the church full of children.

It was back to normal, two services this Easter

Pimms & Hymns, Sunday 11th August



The musicians, Jerry, Andrew & Margretta, and singer Sophia



The seats were in the shade, it was a very hot day!



December was a very busy, but extremely encouraging month for St Mary's. Thank you to all who gave their support for any, or in some cases for all, of the events and services.

THE VILLAGE NATIVITY

The Village Nativity on Sunday 15th December at the Cricket Club was a great start to our celebration of Christmas. We were very fortunate with the weather. It was lovely to have a nice, sunny day compared to the fog, snow, wind and ice in previous years.



The crowd gathered to see and hear the enactment of the Christmas story

The musicians, Andrew & Margretta, and singer Lewis with narrators John and James



Mary and Joseph with baby Jesus, and the angel Gabriel



The shepherds arrive with their sheep, closely followed by the three Kings





Many thanks to all who took part, or who contributed in any way, and of course to the Cricket Club for hosting the event.

CAROL SINGING ROUND THE VILLAGE:

We had two successful evenings carol singing round the village, covering a lot of ground in the limited time available. There were a good number of singers of all ages - the carols could be heard from quite a distance. Thank you to all the singers and collectors for their help over both weeks.

Some of the singers at the bottom of Rotten Row





Thank you to the Cricket Club for their hospitality at the end of the final evening's singing. And thank you to all who gave so generously. The total raised over both evenings was £712.68 (£20 total more than 2023).

THE CHURCH DECORATED FOR CHRISTMAS:-

The church looked wonderful for our Christmas services, thanks to the skill and dedication of the flower arrangers. We are truly blessed to have such talented ladies who are so generous with their time.

And, thank you to James Hunter for providing the lovely Christmas tree which adorned the entrance to the church.

The stunning flowers above the altar



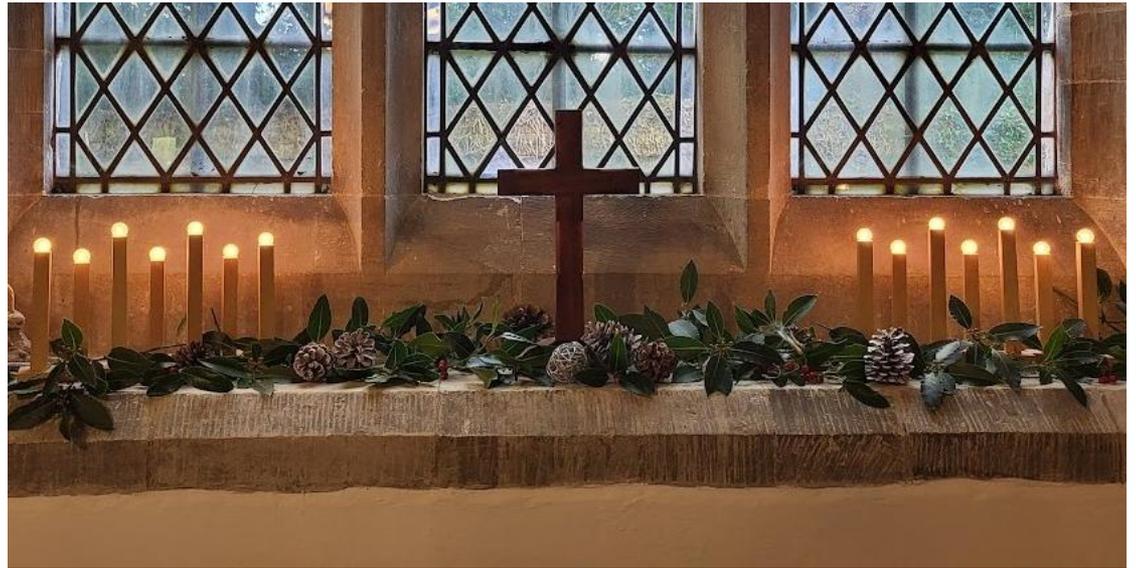
The display in the porch to welcome visitors



One of the displays in the side aisle windows



The windows
at the rear,
west, end of
the church





The crib on the font

THE CHRISTMAS EVE CAROL SERVICE:-

It was lovely to see the church so full on Christmas Eve for our Carol Service. Looking back at the records, the largest number attending since 2017. The singing by the choir and congregation was fantastic - many thanks to the choir, and especially to Jerry Breslin for all his hard work with the music content of the service.

The service starts in the Lady Chapel and the Rector then lights the Advent candle



A full church, standing room only!



The organist, John Wearmouth, and the male voices in the choir





The children join the choir for the first verse of "Away in a Manger"



**Choirmaster Jerry Breslin and
bass soloist, James Northen**

The candles are lit for the end of the service



The final carol at the end of a lovely service



CHRISTMAS MORNING HOLY COMMUNION:-

The Holy Communion service on Christmas Day was well attended, and the singing was led by the choir



The altar prepared for Holy Communion



The choir lead the singing of the carols

The choir sing “We wish you a Happy Christmas” at the end of the service



THE ADVENT WINDOWS:-

The first Advent Window was lit on Sunday 1st December and a new window was lit every day until the final one at the church on Christmas Eve. Together they created a lovely walk around the village over the festive season.

Thanks to Claire Pincott for again co-ordinating the windows.

The first of the Advent windows lit on 1st December





Window Number 8



**The Cricket Club
approach and
window
number 15**





NORTH POLE
E RDS
ELF WORKSHOP
N A S
SANTA'S HOUSE

The final window lit at the church on Christmas Eve



CHURCH ACTIVITIES:

6-week Lent course led by the Rector based on the Diocesan “Come and See” course

The monthly midweek Bible Group at The Rectory continues

Monday Morning Coffee Club during term time from 9.30am to 11.30am. Due to declining numbers, this is taking a break. Thanks to Debbie Jones and Diana Williams for running this for many years

CHURCH ACTIVITIES (cont):

Food Box in the church porch. Thank you to those who contribute and to the families of Little Ashes and High Ash for the gifts that they gave for their Harvest services, which were passed on to us for Food Box.

Janet Pritchard and Debbie Pincott kindly look after the Food Box for us.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES (cont):

Communications:-

Website, Pew Sheet for every service, Parish Newsletter, weekly e-mail, village WhatsApp

Parish Newsletter:-

Scaled down version with news items is printed and delivered each month to those known to be unable to receive the Newsletter online

FUNDRAISING EVENTS IN 2024

The weather was kind for our two big events, were very successful:-

The Snowdrop Walks raised a record amount £3033. Thanks to David & Sally Duncombe for allowing us access to their wonderful grounds

The Plant Fayre saw 438 visitors through the door and raised £3168

OTHER EVENTS IN 2024:-

The Christmas Coffee Morning £1032

Tomato plants – thanks to John Hall's donation £700

Brickstock Teas

Open Garden Teas

Carol Singing

CHURCH MAINTENANCE:

(1) Workdays:-

Two workdays were held:

- on Saturday 1st June to get the church back in order after the building work, ready for the wedding the following week**
- And on Saturday 28th September.**

CHURCH ACTIVITIES (cont):

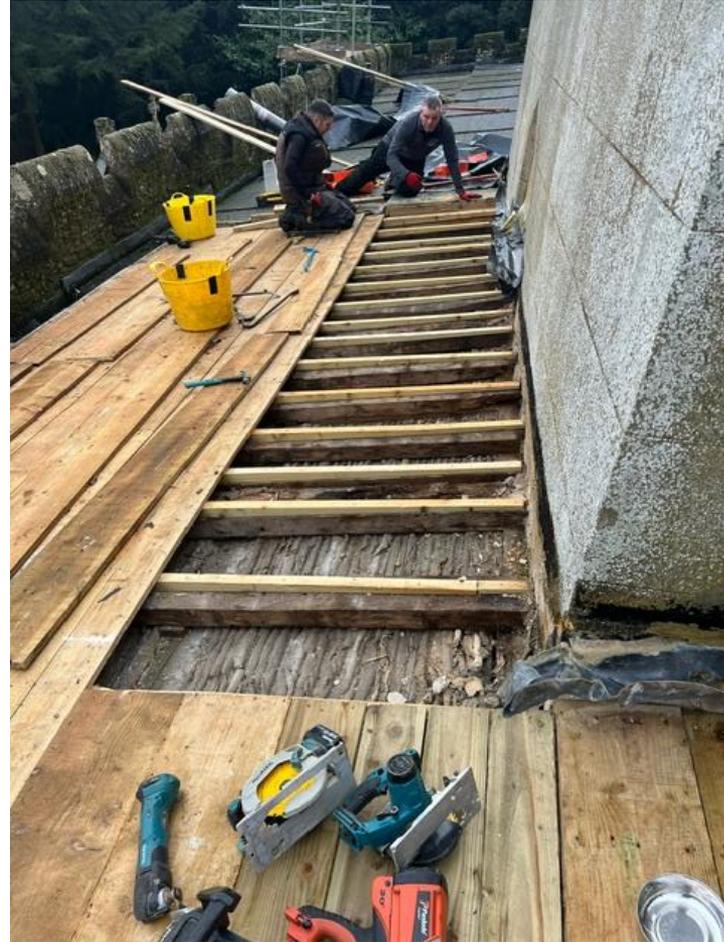
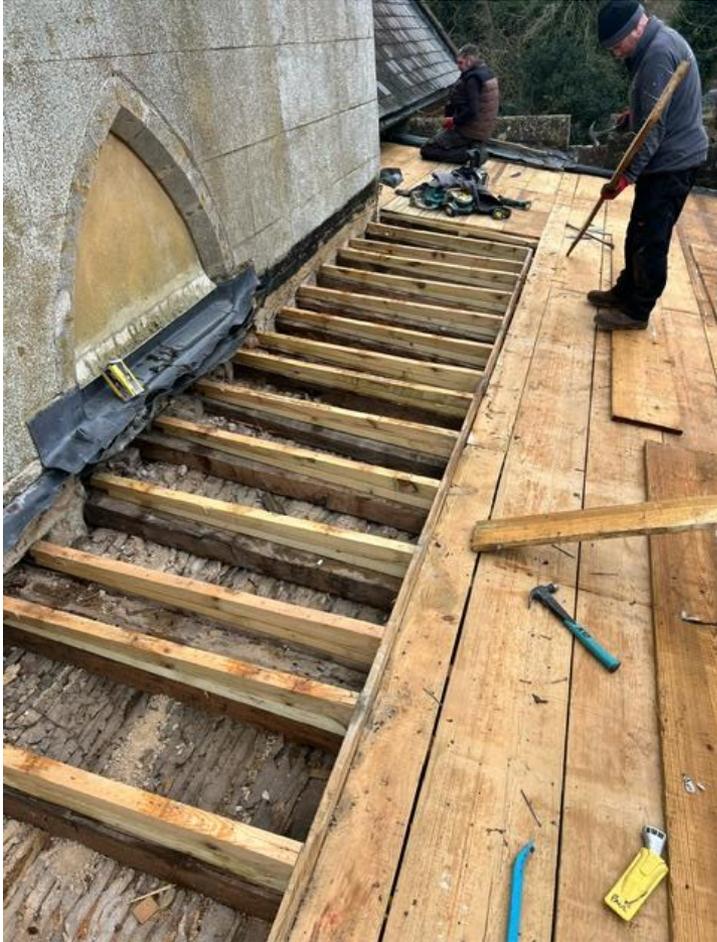
(2) The Quinquennial:-

The Inspection was done on 10th July. Main Work required is to the Chancel Roof and the tower. The work was done in January 2025

THE ROOF REPAIRS

**The external work started on
12th February**

The work on the roof – south aisle



More damage had been caused on the north aisle



Terne coated steel in place



The new roof as seen by a drone



INTERNAL WORKS

**when the disruption started in
April**

Internal work required – ceiling & walls



Additional rafter repairs required on two ceiling panels



**For a few weeks scaffolding was erected
on both aisles**



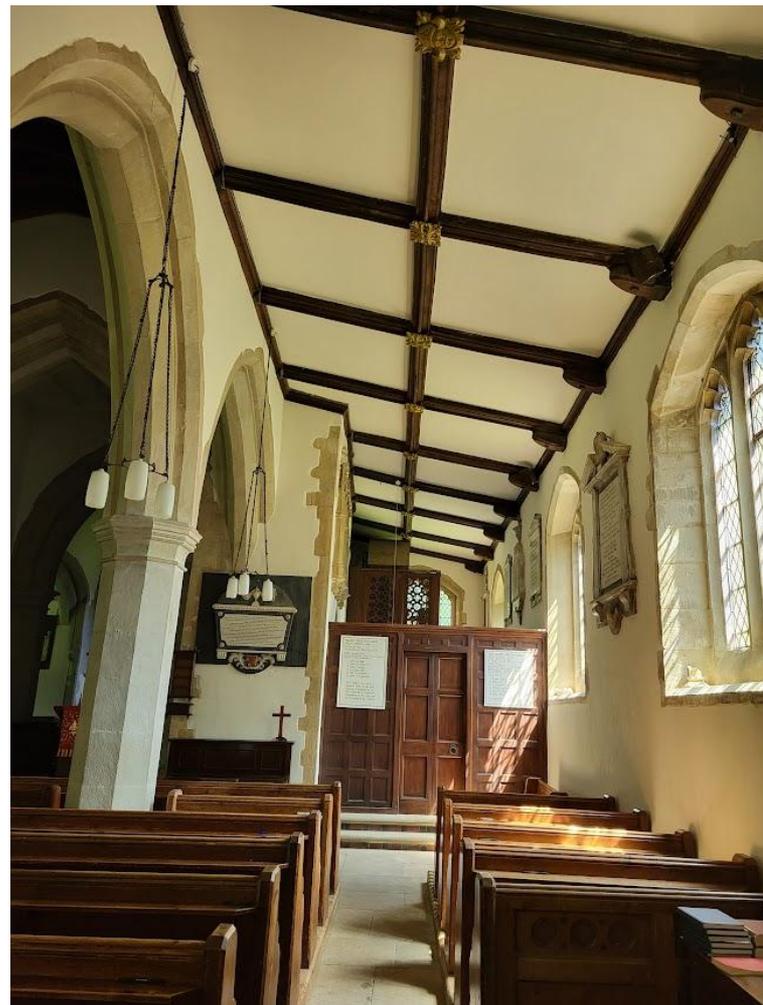
Painting of the north wall after a period left for drying out



The internal walls were also decorated



The work finished - completion certificate 22nd May



GRANTS AWARDED FOR THE ROOF:

Successful grant applications from:

Benefact Trust

Garfield Weston Foundation

Bucks Historic Churches Trust

NCT Wolfson Foundation

NCT Headley Trust

Francis Coales

Archdeacon's Fund

Plus, Last Chance Churches,

GRANT AWARDED FROM:-

National Churches Trust “Last Chance Churches”, a special £500,000 match-funding appeal open until March 2024. St Mary’s was chosen as one of 18 churches across the country to be a recipient from this fund.

The award of £30,850 has enabled us to complete the roof work in one go, rather than having to do it in stages.

TOTAL GRANTS RECEIVED:-

£75,000

TOTAL COST OF PROJECT:-

£155,000 incl VAT (recoverable through Listed Places of Worship Scheme)

NATIONAL CHURCH AWARDS:

St MARY'S FINALISTS

for the National Church "Care & Conservation Award". The results were announced at the National Church Awards ceremony at Lincoln Cathedral in October. Whilst this was a little disappointing having made it to the short list, it is flattering to think that the work carried out here has been recognized at national level.

FUTURE PLANS:

NET ZERO CARBON PROJECT:-

Andrew Smith has been commissioned to conduct an energy audit in the church and to look at plans for decarbonisation. This will include a large project to replace our very old boiler with a heat pump. We have received a grant for this preparatory work and there should be grants available when it comes to carrying out the actual work.

POLICY DOCUMENTS

All documents are on display in the church porch and in the Great Brickhill section of the website

Safeguarding – a subject to be taken very seriously:

Annual Safeguarding review was held in November. The Safeguarding Policy & Domestic Abuse Policy were approved.

No safeguarding incidents have been reported.

Treasurer's Report including adoption of the Annual Report

- Accounts prepared on Receipts and Payments basis**
- Deficit for the year of £1,286**
- Total Receipts and Payments very similar to 2023**
- Despite higher gas prices, lower cost for Heating, Lighting etc due to a more favourable rate with new supplier and new programmable thermostat.**

PARISH SHARE PAYMENT TO DIOCESE

Payment due for 2024 was £20,783

Parish Share paid:- £14,000

(67% of amount due)

(Parish Share paid in 2023:- £14,000)

QR CODE:

A QR Code has been set up via the SumUp credit card account. It is easy for people to gift aid their donation.

It was used for carol singing round the village and also for the Christmas services.

The QR code is on display in the church for any visitors to use if they wish to make donations.

WARDENS' REPORT ON FABRIC OF THE CHURCH

(Julia Turner)

PRESENTATION AND THANKS TO JULIA

Warden for a total of 16 years:-

from March 2004 to April 2011

[7 years]

and from April 2016 to May 2025

[9 years]

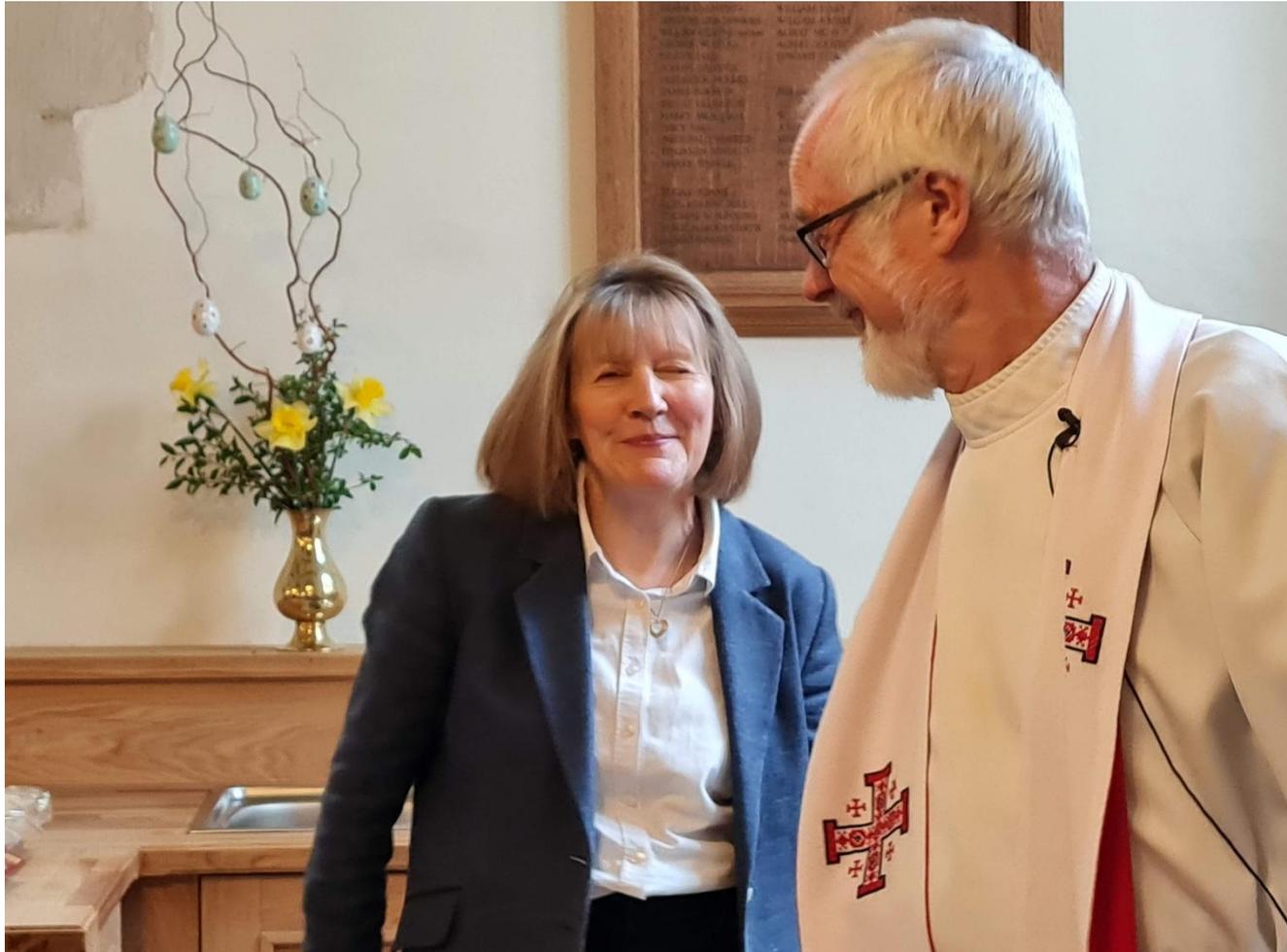
Presenting Gill Wilson, New Facilities Project Manager, with flowers before their move to Devon, Annual Meeting 2020



Open Gardens teas, still in COVID times, 2021



Easter Sunday service with Steve Barnes 2022



Watching 1975 Silver Jubilee Film at 2022 Jubilee



2023 Harvest Service “at home”, Rectory Farm



Remembrance Service 2023 with Sarah Stokes, the bugler



Coffee Morning 2023



Archdeacon Guy came to take a service and witnessed the full extent of the work 5th May 2024



Outdoor activity, Family Service, 14th July 2024



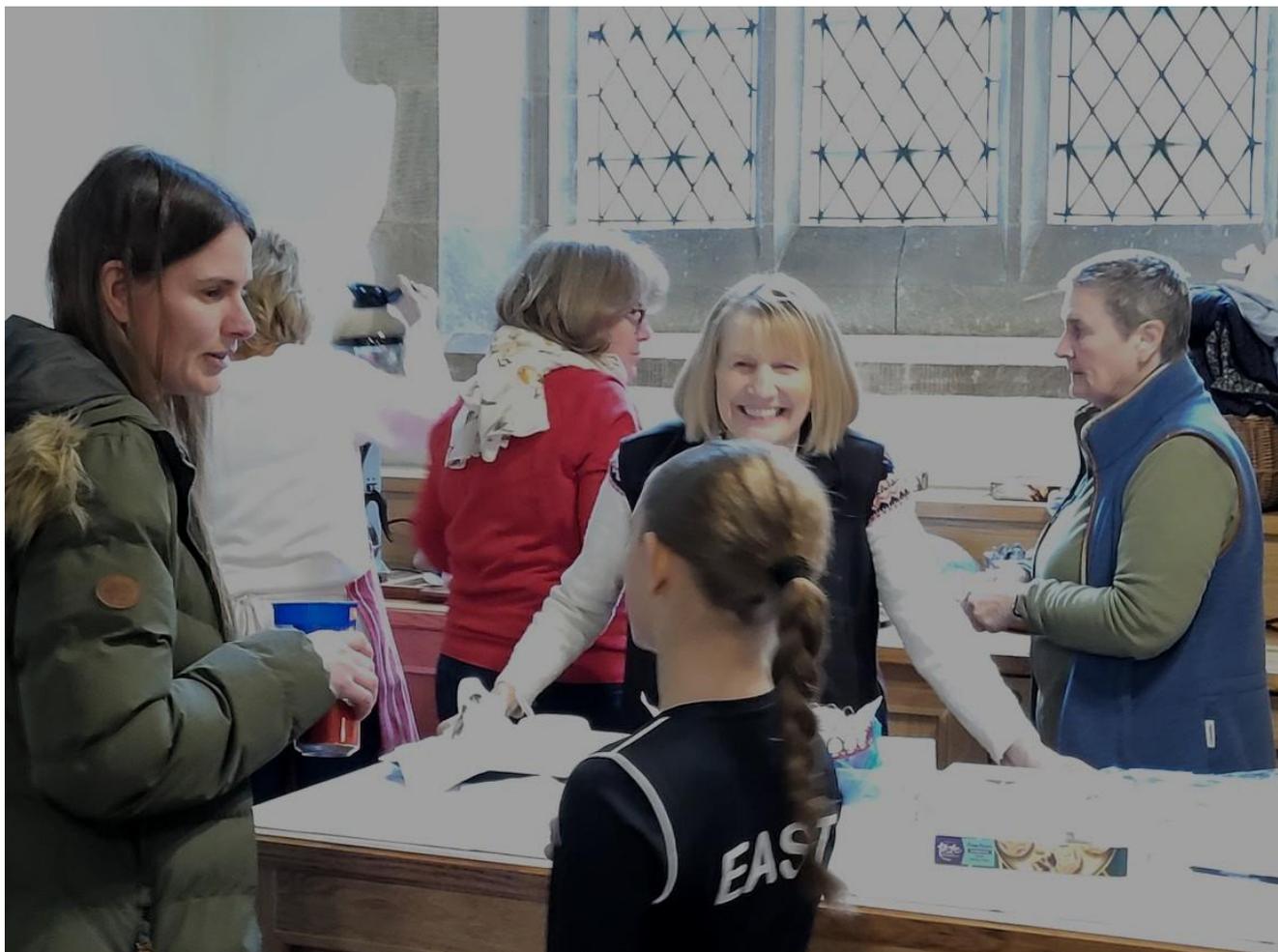
Thanksgiving Service, 13th October 2024



Remembrance Day wreath laying 2024 2024



Christmas Coffee Morning 2024



DEANERY SYNOD

Synod representative newly elected Jeremy Hopkinson

Dr Annie Cooper is Lay Chair.

Revd Val Plumb is continuing as Rural Dean.

Malcolm Oliver is the Deanery Secretary.

Jeremy Hopkinson stepped down as Treasurer, no replacement.

DEANERY SYNOD (cont.)

The main points of discussion were:

- Further discussion of the Diocesan Review of C&YP (children & young persons).**
- Blessing of Same Sex Relationships. (All four Benefice PCCs agreed that we should be ready to offer these prayers within Sunday services if asked).**

THE RECTOR:

“Making New Life”

**So we're not giving up. How could we!
Even though on the outside it often looks
like things are falling apart on us, on the
inside, where God is making new life, not
a day goes by without his unfolding grace.**

(2 Corinthians 4. 16, The Message)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**The meeting will conclude with Compline,
a short service of evening prayer**

THANK YOU TO

**Everyone who helps with various tasks
around the church and churchyard
but offers of help are always welcome!**