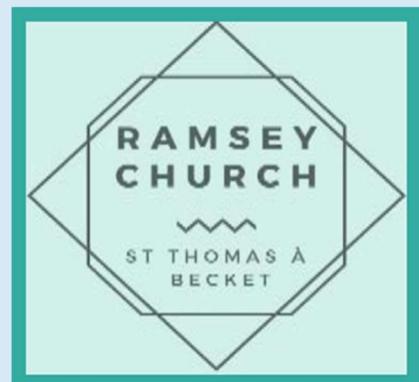


APCM REPORTS 2023



**St Thomas à Becket
Church, Ramsey**



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Front cover photo: Philippa Cadman

Rector's Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

I have been in Ramsey for nearly three years now. Starting in the frightening pandemic times, benefiting from a period of consolidation, I feel we have now moved into a time of fresh beginnings and growth. Personally, I am enormously grateful for the love and support with which you surround your priest and his family. What with illness before Christmas, and then bereavement before Easter, this has been a challenging year for me on a personal level, but I have known of your love and prayers.

In January 2023 the Parochial Church Council adopted a five-year plan, based on values that express who we believe God has made us, as a parish church. The plan is balanced, covering worship, different kinds of mission, and enablers of church life (such as premises, finance, administration). I believe we are already seeing the benefits of the over-arching clarity that the plan gives us, as people are moving forward purposefully and in a co-ordinated way, across different areas. The pace is intended to be steady, not frantic: we will be amazed at how much God will do with us over five years, if we keep putting one foot in front of the other.

We have made particular progress this year in developing ministry to children, families and schools. This has been catalysed by our new Children and Families Missioner, Hayley Challinor. Hayley is personally out in the community on our behalf (particularly in local schools, where she has a strong personal track-record), and is also active in building up the wider group of volunteers working in this area. I have also been really pleased to receive a warm welcome into Abbey College. While strong links with primary schools have been part of our pre-pandemic pattern, we have had fewer opportunities at the secondary level, and we will try to use them well now they arise.

Another important development this year has been the arrival of our curate, Rev'd Maggie. She has brought new ideas and extra leadership capacity, which is supporting the benefice as a whole and particular areas of St Thomas' life. Her knowledge and enthusiasm have particularly benefited our Fen Church project and the eco-church group.

Creation-care has been on our minds all year. Given the exposure of our below-sea-level parish to climate risk, this is a local issue for us, not only a global one. We spent several weeks with this liturgical focus in the autumn, have made various modest changes already (around cleaning products, refreshments, growing our own flowers for the Flower Festival...), and the Eco-Church group helps us with a regular 2-monthly focus. We look forward to achieving bronze eco-church status, and then to the next steps.

Our Fabric and Finance group continues to care for the building, and is very much aware of eco-issues as well as the short-term economics of running the building. It is highly positive that we have returned to funding most of the church's costs through regular giving. Our fund-raising group's work is highly valued – and the basis soundness of the church's financial position means this work can be done in the right spirit, building community and having some fun as well as raising money.

Our Parish Administrator Jackie Southwell has supported us through all the different events of the church's year. I want to express my thanks and pay tribute to her dedication, enthusiasm and willingness to try new things – even the techie things that frighten her a bit!

Worship is at the heart of our life, and I am grateful to the many people who maintain a high standard of liturgy, music and teaching. My particular thanks to our Musical Director, Neville Palmer, who quietly keeps the show on the road, and to those (particularly Pip Cadman and Fi Ward) who have led Family Worship.

We are in good shape, I think, as we look into a new year. This is not to say that we face no challenges. For instance, we are finding it hard to find volunteers, particularly for leadership roles and ones involving a regular commitment. In this respect, we are not unusual, but actually quite typical of charities and churches at this time. For whatever reason, we may be facing the coming year without a full roster of officers, and with a PCC that is rather smaller than normal. This is not a disaster – actually, 'normal' CofE governance is pretty over-engineered, and we will be experimenting with what we can manage without. But this will place more burden on a few people, and we may need to slow some things down, so as to keep everyone well.

I wish to close by paying tribute to our two out-going Churchwardens, Glennis Brown and Shan Oswald. Both have done many other things for the church as well as being Warden, notably in worship and fabric, and are continuing to do so. In fact, these roles may be more visible to many than their work as Churchwarden. Churchwardens take responsibility; they exercise oversight; they guide, advise, support. (I will arrange to have a job description of Churchwarden published in the booklet with this report.) They have sustained St Thomas' through the pandemic, through an interregnum, and then have led us through to the current phase of stability and growth. Personally, I have found them immensely supportive and loving. Thank you both.

In the end, this is God's church and not ours. He may well call more people to help us; our role is to listen, to respond when we hear a call, to join in when we see God at work. God loves Ramsey even more than we do, and God is active across the town; therefore, we work in a place that is full of opportunities. This is an exciting time to be the parish church of Ramsey.

Rev'd Iain Osborne

Ramsey St. Thomas à Becket Church

Financial Facts 2022



	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
1. Cash in all accounts	£ 107,065	£ <u>103,558</u>
2. Cash in general account	£ 39,591	£ 33,313
3. Income from giving, fund raising, funerals per year	£ 77,898	£ 65,493
per week	£ 1,498	£ 1,259
4. Fixed costs for running church	£ 71,620	£ 67,401
per week	£ 1,377	£ 1,296
5. Surplus / (Deficit) per week	£ 121	£ <u>(37)</u>
Surplus in general account of £ 6,278 / (Deficit 2021 £ 1,908)		
6. Ministry share for 2022 £ 42,694 (2021 £ 42,047) paid in full.		
7. Restorations fund £ 49,517		
• £5k purchase choir <u>robes</u>		
8. Re-ordering Fund £ 8,999		
• Fund raising diverted to General Funds in 2022		
9. Normal giving (<u>i.e.</u> before any fundraising) in 2022 was £61,000 (2021=£48,000). This covered 89% (2021=73%) of the annual church costs, which were £68,000 (2021=£65,000).		
10. More detailed set of accounts are available on request.		

RAMSEY ST. THOMAS A BECKET ACCOUNT BALANCES**as at 31-Dec-22****2022***All figures rounded to nearest £1*

A			B	C	D	E	F
			Opening Balance £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers to other accounts £	Closing Balance £
<u>General Funds</u>							
1	Barclays General Account	20740659	30,219	86,157	78,671		37,706
2	TSB General Account	16350260	3,094		1,208		1,886
3	Total General Funds		33,313	86,157	79,879		39,591
<u>Restoration Account</u>							
4	Restoration Current Account	40743089	50,832	3,391	6,317		47,906
5	CBF Restoration	614023002D	0				0
6	Restoration TSB Account	16622860	1,670		59		1,612
7	Total Restoration Funds		52,502	3,391	6,375		49,517
<u>Re ordering Accounts</u>							
8	Barclays Reordering Account	03299236	8,034	896	104		8,826
9	TSB Reordering Account	16622168	231		59		173
10	Total Parish Hall Funds		8,265	896	163		8,999
<u>Chancel Accounts</u>							
11	Chancel Deposit Fund	114001189D	3,296	207			3,503
12	Investment Fund (114001241S)	Note 1	6,182				5,455
13	Total Chancel Accounts		9,478	207			8,957
14	Total funds available to church		103,558				107,065

RAMSEY ST. THOMAS A BECKET - Year End Summary 2022

	Last Year 2021 Actual	Current Year 2022 Actual	Better / (worse) on Year	Budget 2023	Last Year 2021 Per week	Current Year 2022 Per week	Better / (worse) on Year Per week
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
General Account							
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1 Opening Balance	35,221	33,313	(1,908)	39,591			
Receipts							
2 Gift Aid	34,487	44,226	9,739	38,517	663	850	187
3 Plates	3,892	5,063	1,171	5,200	75	97	23
4 Envelopes	29		(29)		1		(1)
5 Tax Rebates	9,050	11,396	2,347	10,610	174	219	45
6 Normal Giving	47,458	60,685	13,228	54,327	913	1,167	254
7 Net Income from Wedding, Funeral, Baptism	3,924	4,430	506	3,731	75	85	10
8 Summer Fete	2,752	2,562	(190)	2,500	53	49	(4)
9 Craft Nights	204	644	439	400	4	12	8
10 Summer teas	77	760	683	750	1	15	13
11 Flower Festival	2,723	3,032	308	2,750	52	58	6
12 HDC Covid Grant	6,000		(6,000)		115		(115)
13 other fundraising	147	768	621		3	15	12
14 Photocopying	66	290	224		1	6	4
15 Heating - Hire Church	1,115	1,493	378	1,860	21	29	7
16 Special donations / collections	193	1,554	1,361	200	4	30	26
17 Camera Refund	299	387	88		6	7	2
18 Leos Mobile	435		(435)		8		(8)
19 Coffee am and after service		516	516	1,680		10	10
20 Toddler Church		79	79			2	2
21 Childrens Soc - Christingle	100		(100)	200	2		(2)
22 2½% rebate Ministry Share		697	697			13	13
23 TOTAL RECEIPTS	65,493	77,898	12,405	68,398	1,259	1,498	239
Payments							
24 Ministry share	42,047	42,694	(646)	44,401	809	821	(12)
25 Net Clergy Costs - Ramsey team ministry	808	897	(89)	2,125	16	17	(2)
26 Insurance	3,629	3,854	(225)	4,008	70	74	(4)
27 Organist, deputies	2,700	2,700		2,700	52	52	
28 Secretarial work	2,200	2,750	(550)	3,000	42	53	(11)
29 Photocopying / Riso	232		232	300	4		4
30 Gas	4,190	5,357	(1,167)	4,780	81	103	(22)
31 Electricity	3,250	2,080	1,170	3,190	62	40	23
32 Water	73	76	(3)	80	1	1	(0)
33 Church maintenance	2,600	3,796	(1,196)	2,400	50	73	(23)
34 Upkeep Services	345	1,863	(1,518)	1,500	7	36	(29)
35 Sunday school, baptism cards	69	845	(776)	180	1	16	(15)
36 Fete, fair, teas exps	1,329	108	1,221	625	26	2	23
37 Bank charges	386	526	(140)	500	7	10	(3)
38 Subscriptions	30		30	55	1		1
39 Stationery	41	365	(324)	240	1	7	(6)
40 Postage	14	33	(19)	40	0	1	(0)
41 Children and Families Missioner				1,000			
42 Charities / Donations	88	100	(12)	200	2	2	(0)
43 Licenses	718	857	(139)	882	14	16	(3)
44 Telephone / Wi-Fi	1,976	2,215	(240)	2,220	38	43	(5)
45 Community Mission Worker leavers gift	500		500		10		10
46 Miscellaneous	77	504	(428)	520	1	10	(8)
47 Childrens Soc - Christingle	100		100	200	2		2
48 TOTAL PAYMENTS	67,401	71,620	(4,218)	75,146	1,296	1,377	(81)
49 Surplus / (Deficit) in year before transfers	(1,908)	6,278	8,186	(6,749)	(37)	121	157
Transfers to other accounts							
50 Receipts	25,000		(25,000)		481		(481)
51 Expenditure	25,000		(25,000)		481		(481)
52 TOTAL AT BANK	33,313	39,591	6,278	(6,749)	(37)	121	157
53 Surplus / (Deficit) in year after transfers	(1,908)	6,278	16,623	Change on year			
54 Total giving	47,458 73%	60,685 86%	13,228	54,327 73%			
55 Net income from Wedding / Funerals	3,924 6%	4,430 6%	506	3,731 5%			
56 Other fundraising	10,487 16%	8,035 11%	(2,452)	6,955 9%			
57 Other Income	1,221 2%	4,013 6%	2,792	1,860 3%			
58 shortfall / (surplus)	1,908 3%	(6,278) -9%	(8,186)	7,249 10%			
59 Annual running costs	64,998	70,886	5,888	74,121			

	£		£		£
60 Net costs of ministry	42,855 64%		42,947 61%		46,126 65%
61 Fabric	15,718 23%		17,378 24%		16,678 23%
62 Worship	3,763 6%		5,420 8%		5,082 7%
63 Admin	2,980 4%		4,179 6%		4,655 7%
64 Mission and evangelism	669 1%		845 1%		1,380 2%
65 Costs of fund-raising	1,329 2%		108 0%		625 1%
66 Charitable giving	88 0%		100 0%		200 0%
67 TOTAL PAYMENTS	67,401		70,976		74,746

Electoral Roll Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

Here is a quote:

“Being on the Church Electoral Roll is a way of demonstrating your willingness to help shape the future of the Church, not just locally, but nationally and even internationally. It also enables you to participate and vote in the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)”

- The roll last year was standing at 115 this year it is 113
- This year is a ‘normal year’ where an update only is required
- Notification of the preparation of the new roll (for this year) has been made at the church
- This began on the 30th April and ceases on the 13th May
- The new roll is published and is in the church (at the back)
- It is subject to verification for the two weeks prior to the APCM (to be held on 28th May)
- By way of reminder the last total renewal of the roll was 2019
- The next total renewal is due in 2025
- During the year to date some on the roll moved away
- Some have died and gone on to better things
- Some additional members have applied and are on the roll
- There may be additional applicants / deletions to the roll during the current ‘verification period’
- St Thomas a Becket Church is following the diocese of Ely prescribed procedures for the update of the roll
- Note that all roll members are entitled to obtain a ‘Parish Pass’ enabling free standard access to Ely Cathedral. Here is a link to the page produced on the Ely Cathedral Pages
<https://www.elycathedral.org/plan-your-visit/visitor-tickets-and-tours/free-cathedral-entry>

Ian Bell-Berry, Electoral Roll Officer

03.05.23

ianbellberry@gmail.com

Parish Safeguarding Officer Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

I have been in the position of Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) since June 2019 and work closely with the Diocese of Ely Safeguarding Team to provide safeguarding support within the Benefice.

The diocese uses an IT program called The Parish Dashboard, which is a simple to use, online tool, that helps the PCC keep track of safeguarding in our church and keeps us up to date with local and national changes in safeguarding requirements. It produces an Action Plan for the PCC to monitor progress at regular intervals and STaB have reached level 3, which demonstrates a vote of confidence in the PSO and the PCC's approach to safeguarding. The PSO also has access to the Diocesan database to check training records on the system.

It has also been announced that digital DBS checks will be available from 19th April to speed up the process, providing the applicant has a PC/laptop and SMART phone.

For your information there were 248 safeguarding referrals within the Ely Diocese in the past 12 months.

We continue to open up our Church and activities are starting again. Our church officers are recruited safely and undertake the necessary safeguarding checks and training that is required of them. It is important that all those people involved undertake the Safeguarding Training modules relevant to their roles. Free training is available through the Diocese of Ely Safeguarding website. To the best of my knowledge, the PCC complies with its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

A safeguarding folder containing all relevant documentation and helpful information can be found at the back of the church.

If anyone has any safeguarding concerns or wants more information about training or anything related to safeguarding, please contact me on 01487 814984 or email safeguarding@ramseysandupwood.org

Jane Cusworth - Parish Safeguarding Officer

The Church of England, its archbishops, bishops, clergy and leaders are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church. Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture.

This means we will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those that have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks.

The Church of England affirms the 'Whole Church' approach to safeguarding.

This approach encompasses a commitment to consistent policy and practice across all Church bodies, Church Officers and that everyone associated with the Church, who comes into contact with children, young people and adults, has a role to play. The Church will take appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment for all and to practice fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and adults; to respond sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm.

Promoting a Safer Church, 2017

St Ives Deanery Annual report for the APCM 28th May 2023

St Thomas a Becket Ramsey

Deanery Planning

The Deanery plan has been the main issue of the year. +Dagmar visited to kick this work off, and Synod discussed this several times. A steering group has taken the work forward, producing a consultation document, and then the Rural Dean met with most of the PCCs. The plan must be finalised by this summer.

As it is working out, there are no plans to close churches or change parish boundaries. The focus of our plan is likely to be mission: encouraging collaboration between parishes (on fund-raising, occasional offices, eco-church etc.) and supporting more work with children and families (which is a strength across the deanery). Our own Hayley Challinor gave a presentation about families work in our benefice which was well-received.

Looking forward, a growing menu of opportunities for collaboration across the deanery is likely to be offered. As parishes often have little track-record of collaboration, it will take time to work out where there is benefit in working together, but our benefice is in a good position to lead work which others may wish to join.

New Ministries and training

Most parishes and Benefices rely heavily on lay leadership. Synod has discussed what training resources are available, and how diocesan provision could be more realistic compared to parishes' needs.

Finance

While a number of parishes continue to struggle to pay full share, they have been supported within their benefices or across the deanery, and the deanery share was paid in full.

Ramsey representation

A parish with an electoral roll of our size (over 100) should have two Deanery Synod reps, and we currently have only one; we therefore have a vacancy. As described, the deanery is likely to play a growing role in parish life, and the meetings are often interesting opportunities to hear what others are doing in response to similar issues.

James Carter

Deanery Synod Representative 2023

Becket Flower Group Report to APCM – 28th May 2023
St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

At time of writing, we are about to decorate church for the Coronation weekend. Arrangements will be in place for our Coronation Coffee Morning fundraiser on 5 May.

We have recently invested some of our funds in a metal storage shed for which we have been given a plot in Ramsey Hollow. Chris Thompson has put in many hours to construct it for us and our thanks to him are recorded here. It is hoped that a lot of our “once a year” items can go into the shed along with many pieces of equipment that are currently being stored in our garages, lofts, etc. We should be able to reduce the congestion on the mezzanine too, making our frequently needed kit easier to access.

Plans for August Bank Holiday Flower Festival are underway. The theme this year is famous landmarks around Britain and our working title is “Green and Pleasant Land”. Letters will go out to potential sponsors in early June and instructions to flower arrangers in early July.

Harvest Festival and Christmas will be planned in due course.

Thank you for continuing to support our efforts.

Hilary Tough
3 May 2023

Bellringing Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

The past year has seen both highs and lows for the ringers.

As well as ringing to proclaim the death of HM Queen Elizabeth 11 and again on the occasion of her state funeral, we have rung the bells for the funerals of good friends. Steve Brown, Joe Howes, Stan Holmes, Gina Charles, and Maurice Thurmott, the last two having been loyal members of the band at Ramsey.

The highs have included opening the tower for all comers to chime a bell for the Platinum Jubilee, when 82 people climbed the tower steps to take part. This is to be repeated on Coronation Bank holiday Monday when all are invited to 'Ding for the King'!

Eight weddings were rung for including the wedding of one of our own ringers, Charlotte. From the charges for weddings each year we try to move some money to the church main account.

Three new ringers are making good progress and we have welcomed ringers from St. Wendreda's Church, March to practice with us while their tower is undergoing repairs. They will also ring with us on the morning of the Coronation.

We maintained regular service ringing each Sunday morning and for Songs of Praise services.

Christmas was especially busy, with ringing before the Carol services on the 23rd, and 24th, then before Holy Communion services at 8:30pm on 24th and 7:30am on 25th, finishing with 9:30am for the family service.

We rang for the RBL Service of Remembrance.

The bells have been maintained through the diligence of our Steeple Keeper, David, and our Ringing master, Elspeth, challenges us to step out of our comfort zone and encourages and promotes better striking of our bell.

In summary, we look back on another year of very enjoyable ringing with all members of the team making great improvements.

The undersigned joint tower captains would like to thank all our ringers for their strong team spirit and for their unfailing service in ringing the bells to call the faithful to worship.

Paul Kneller and Cathy Moulton

04/05/2023

Children and Families Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

It has been a busy year for the development of children and families work. Since my appointment, which began in September 2022, we have re-established our links with the local primary schools (Ashbeach, Ramsey Spinning Infants, Ramsey Junior, Upwood Primary Academy) in the following ways:

- Open the Book teams lead assemblies monthly and we have a current team of sixteen volunteers.
- School assemblies and services at key points in the year in two schools.
- Invitation to support in RE lessons and fun workshops in two schools on the focus of Christmas and Easter.
- 1:1 mentoring (through CROPS charity) in one school.
- Ramsey schools visited St Thomas a Becket for Christmas services. The church was full, with standing room only.
- After-school club in one school which now has twenty-five children attending (one-fifth of the school).

In addition, Iain, Maggie, and I have finalised our safeguarding checks at Abbey College. and we are about to begin a weekly chaplaincy slot during breaktime, alongside some RE curriculum support.

Over Easter we held a successful Holiday Club where we welcomed thirty children into church for three mornings to learn about who Jesus was, what He said and did and what happened to him. We had a strong team of eight adults, and we used Scripture Union resources. We had such positive feedback from the children and parents, many of whom have expressed interest in a summer holiday club. We charged £2 a day which covered the cost of the resources and refreshments.

We have recently started a weekly after-school club at the Scout hut in Ramsey for primary aged children. Eleven children (from all four local schools) attended our first session; six of whom attended Easter holiday club. The focus of the club is to share the message of God's love for us through joy, hope, friendship, care, forgiveness, and prayer using Christian books, Bible verses, craft activities and sharing a meal together.

Sunday school, which we now call Sunday Fun, continues to take place monthly and is expanding so much that we feel we may need to move to the Scout hut soon. At our last session, we had nine children compared to the previous month which was three.

Within church services we now regularly provide resources and activities for children and families linked to the readings or sermon. This has proved successful, and we have seen new families coming to church services. The next step is to provide a children's area towards the front of church, next to the choir stalls, using funds provided through a successful bid from the Changing Market Towns initiative. We are also about to trial pew bags (with books, colouring, physical resources) for families during services.

Our next steps are:

- The creation of a new children's area to be installed by June.
- Invitation to Year 6 pupils to visit St Thomas a Becket for a workshop on transition to secondary school.
- Provide a summer holiday club in church at the end of July.
- Youth provision to be investigated but we need more volunteers for this to be realised.
- Make links with Ramsey Baptist Church children's worker and investigate some joint work.

Hayley Challinor, Children and Families Worker

Cleaning Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

In previous years I have presented a positive report despite the need for more volunteers. However, this year I have done a turnabout in the hope this may have more impact!

We have 11 people on the cleaning rota so this vast building is cleaned less often than is required, especially as it is in regular use throughout the week and at weekends!

I have put appeals in the Bulletin and the Informer in the hope of getting more volunteers to come forward, but to no avail. The good people who do and who have in the past carried out these duties has dwindled since 2015.

The reality is:

- 3 out of 5 weeks, back area and nave NOT vacuumed etc
- 2 out of 5 weeks kitchen, toilets, and ramp NOT cleaned
- 3 out of 5 weeks pews NOT dusted and vacuumed
- 3 out of 5 weeks chancel to choir and lady chapel NOT dusted and vacuumed.
-

*I would like to congratulate the 11 who do this unseen task and thank them for their continued commitment month by month.

If many people do a little it reduces the load on a few people doing a great deal. Surely, we can do better than this?

Rachel Thompson, Co-ordinator

Craft Group Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

No pandemic to stop us in the last 12 months, and the group seems to be very popular. We are happy to offer fellowship to many in our church building!

We have enjoyed an evening a month with a variety of crafts:

David Swinton has taught us a little about painting with watercolours.

One evening we made a lot of noise hammering tacks onto wood in a pattern, then wrapping string around them to create a picture. That was a bit headache provoking with over 30 crafters wielding hammers!

We have handled silver clay for jewellery making after a demonstration, made a mosaic coaster and Christmas always brings fun crafts to make.

We are trying to repurpose items at present going with the environmental theme, using buttons and beads!

Crafting possibilities are endless however we need people to come up with ideas and demonstrate! If you know of anyone do let them know we need them!

We have continued to ask for £5 per person per class and out of this fund the resources we need. We are very aware of the rising cost of heating and lighting so have also donated towards this each month too.

The charities we have been able to support over the past year have included:

- East Anglia Childrens Hospice, Run for Reggie
- Mercy Ships
- Red Balloon
- Family Fund
- DEC appeal to support Syria/Turkey earthquake
- RNLI

Judith Hyde and Rachel Thompson

Eco Church Group report to the APCM 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

This group formed in December 2022 in response to the St Thomas a Becket strategy which includes an area of focus on Creation Care. The topic of creation care as part of our strategy was introduced at the parish away day in October 2022 and anyone interested was invited to form an Eco Church group. The group currently includes: Shan Oswald, Judith Hyde, Pip Cadman, Val Molloy, Hayley Challinor, Jayney Marsland, Erika Marsland and Maggie Tate-Druiff.

The key aim of the Creation Care strand of the strategy is to pursue the A Rocha bronze/silver/gold Eco Church award, including to achieve Bronze in 2023. This has been our main focus as a group and we are pleased to report that subject to PCC approval, we have an application ready to submit on behalf of St Thomas a Becket Church for a Bronze Eco Church award! Some areas will need much focus in future months and years if, as a congregation, we are to improve our care for creation and move towards Silver in 'Buildings' and 'Land'. Encouragingly, in some areas our focus on caring for creation in church services and the launch of Fen Church sees us in the Gold for 'Worship and Teaching', our commitment to using Fairtrade coffee and to recycling and reducing waste brings us into Silver in 'Lifestyle' and involvement in local environmental action from individuals in our congregation contributes to Silver in 'Community and Global Engagement'. If you would like to view the questions asked, visit: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/> and click 'View Survey Questions'. If you would like to join the focus group as we move forward, please speak to one of us or email Maggie.

Early on, the group discussed the need to break down environmental action into small, manageable actions that we can encourage one another to do together as a church, to mobilise us and prevent us from becoming overwhelmed. We chose 6 areas for focus throughout the year, which have been presented on a board by the font in church, changing every 2 months. These are:

- Refill and Reduce (Jan-Feb) – working with Ramsey's Little Fenland Eco Shop
- Reuse and Recycling (Mar-Apr) – displaying information about recycling points in Ramsey

To come:

- Travel (May-June) – in progress...
- Clothes and Home (July-Aug)
- Food and Drink (Sep-Oct) – to coincide with Harvest season
- Sustainable Christmas (Nov-Dec)

Other notable actions to celebrate involve groups and individuals much wider than just our focus group. We now have cycle racks installed at the side of church (opposite the war memorial), and a huge thanks to Shan for arranging this. An area of the churchyard is being developed for planting wildlife-friendly flowers and plants. Bug houses and bird feeders have been introduced to the churchyard. On Mothering Sunday, wildflower cards were distributed to everyone in place of cut flowers. Many from our church participated in the Tenants of the King Lent course which encouraged

both discussion and action towards safeguarding the environment as central to our Christian faith. We now use mostly recycled paper in the church office. Prayer for the environment is said on Sundays and in daily Morning Prayer on Zoom. The Becket Flower group are working hard to use sustainable flowers and greenery in church, and individuals are growing flowers in their gardens ahead of the Flower festival in August. Some of us have attended the Ramsey Eco Action Group coordinated by the Ramsey Neighbourhood Trust to network with other local groups thinking about environmental action. Members of our congregation have joined Ramsey River Care litter picks, as well as litter picking while out walking.

We have much to celebrate as we remember that 'the earth is the Lord's and everything in it'.

Maggie Tate-Druiff

maggie@ramseysandupwood.org

Fabric and Finance Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

During the year we have undertaken our usual checks and maintenance on the building. We now have a book at the back of the church for people to report faults so do please use it if you spot one. The major improvement was the painting of the walls in the church and the kitchen - hopefully everybody has noticed the difference. Our thanks go to those who helped with this but particularly Shân and Martin who gave up several days to complete this. Unfortunately, there are some very high areas that have not been done because, for health and safety reasons, it requires a professional to do this.

In line with our Parish Strategy, we are looking forward to the future. As part of our environmental awareness we are hoping to install some bike racks so that people can cycle to church rather than drive. For several years as light bulbs go we have been replacing them with LED bulbs and we are now looking to replace the strip lights with LED ones. Our most ambitious project here is investigating the feasibility of installing solar panels - if they're good enough for King's College Chapel they should surely be good enough for St Thomas à Becket!

We are also looking at how to make our church more welcoming and how to adapt it to accommodate not only our church activities but also community activities. Replacing the inner doors with glass ones would make the church more open and welcoming and removing the pews would give us much more flexibility. It would also be good to have a nave altar. None of these projects will be easy and they are expensive but they are doable – so watch this space!

Lesley Barker

Fundraising Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

The Committee - Richard Hyde MBE (Chair), Janet Reed, Jane Cusworth, Jan Bowd, Bill Seegar, David Cusworth and Malcolm Bowd have met on six occasions.

11 th June 22'	"Alan Morris Big Band"	£ 530.00
23 rd July 22'	"50/50 Auction on The Green"	£2500.00
10 th Dec 22'	"Tinsel & Brass"	£ 875.00
11 th Feb 23'	"Organ Recital"	£ 731.00
	Total	£4636.00

We have introduced holding a raffle at a few of our concerts which have made concerts worthwhile.

A few publicity banners have been updated thanks to Malcolm B (Thank you David C for moving the light at front of Church!) We have ordered a banner for refreshments when being served on the patio for "Bands on the Green."

We thank the congregation and the community for their support for these events either by purchase of tickets or donations towards the draw.

The committee is fully involved with the Church Fete on June 3rd 2023

We welcome offers of help and ideas for Fundraising.

If you would like to join this committee, please talk to any of the above. "Fundraising" often interpreted as "money grabbing". However, the importance of the committee is to support the finance of the Church.

More importantly, we engage with the non-regular Church goers in the Community as a large part of our outreach.

Future planned events

29th April "Alan Morris Big Band"

17th June "Rotary Voices"

11th Nov "Bury & Ramsey Concert Band" (Remembrance concert)

9th Dec "Tinsel & Brass" Somersham Town Band.

Richard Hyde MBE

Ladies and Men's Breakfast Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

During the year, the men have been meeting monthly, usually at The Rendezvous Cafe in The Mews and the ladies, alternate months, at Ramsey Bowls and Golf Club. Although attendance numbers are relatively few, there is always great fellowship and a good English breakfast to be had! Occasionally, the men have joined the ladies for breakfast which is always very enjoyable!

Anyone is welcome to the breakfasts which are usually held on the first Saturday of the month. However, please check the date as sometimes it is changed because of other events/availability of the venue.

Judith Hyde

Mission Report for APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

Once again we would like to thank all those who support us in our work. One reason people seem happy to support us is the fact that, through Ken and Rachel from FNKD, we have a direct link to our brothers and sisters in Uganda and know exactly how our money is being used. Once again people were very generous in their support for the Christmas hamper appeal and 27 hampers were donated by our parish – quite an achievement in these difficult financial times.

Our sponsored children are continuing to do well. Annicent is now in his final year at university and Moses is nearing the end of his vocational course. There will be no shortage of young people to replace them and FNKD have suggested that we fund some training sessions. This is a scheme they are running to teach young people practical and life skills so that they can support themselves and is proving very successful. Johnson, the youngest, is thriving. If you would like to help us by donating a small amount monthly, quarterly or annually then do speak to Martin or Lesley.

Ken and Rachel are now able to visit Uganda once again and were able to go last summer and this Easter. They always go with suitcases full of gifts from their sponsors, including ourselves, and I am sure they will be returning with items from Uganda to sell on their stall at the fete. As a committee we will be having a stall at the fete selling “re-gifted gifts”. Sadly, Ken and Rachel were unable to visit in February as planned but we hope it will be possible to set another date for them to come and speak to us.

With fewer sponsors than in the past we are looking for ways to raise more money to help with our sponsorship. As well as our stall at the fete we are hoping to have a sponsored walk which will include a visit to at least one of the churches in the benefice. So, all you walkers out there - sign up, find some sponsors and come and join us.

Lesley Barker

Music Report to APCM – 28th May 2023
St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

Thanks to choir members who attend practises and services and to the reservists who help sing at funerals and weddings. It is good to report that a junior choir has re-commenced with attendance at some of the practices and services.

Thanks to Fiona who orders the music and Sheena for filing the music although she has now retired from that post. Thanks to Jackie who has taken on that role as well as sorting and cataloguing the music. Thanks to those who sorted new choir robes.

Neville Palmer

27.4.23

Pastoral Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

This past year has been an exciting time, re-starting several ways we connect socially and in services outside of our building.

In the early summer 4 of us met together to consider those who had not returned to church services post-Covid. We spent an evening making cards and sent them out to 26 folk, reminding them they were not forgotten, and mentioning that Becket Seniors Lunches were re-starting in July. We had a good response to the cards, which had been appreciated by those receiving them, who were mostly our more senior 'senior' citizens.

Becket Seniors Lunches have been meeting since July on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, offering a 2 course lunch with tea/coffee for £3, (The Christmas meal was £5), and we are regularly serving at least 25 meals. My thanks to Andy, Chris and Pat, our regular caterers, to Amy, now Judith, lead organiser for these lunches, and for those who help with serving and washing up (you are so appreciated!).

Coffee mornings have also re-started, though we are keeping these at larger venues, rather than using individual's homes. They are held every other month on the 2nd Wednesday morning, and we have met at Jones Court (thanks to Mrs Badcock), Ramsey Forty Foot village hall, and the British Legion Hall. These are successful fund-raising events, and my thanks to our volunteers helping, and Judith for organising.

Also, last summer we began taking communion services into the **care homes** again – The Red House on 3rd Wednesday afternoons, and Florence House on 4th Wednesday mornings. It is a wonderful outreach to those who can no longer attend church and include past congregation members. They particularly enjoyed the carol services before Christmas, when my regular little teams were joined by some other choir members to increase the volume of singing! I feel so supported by Sheena, Jan, Judith, Pip and Chris who make up my regular teams.

I am also offering **home communion** and/or home visits to any who are now housebound and this has been much appreciated. For some people, emotional support by phone or a visit has also been welcomed. Yvonne Wright has joined me as a Pastoral visitor. If you know of anyone who could benefit from this service, please let me know, and we can see if they would like contact.

Baptism Preparation is currently offered primarily as an evening group, 3-4 times a year, by Iain and myself, and has proved to be an enjoyable way of going through the meaning of Baptism, and familiarising parents and godparents with the service, as well as sharing experiences of parenting! On occasions this has also been offered as a home visit when more appropriate.

As highlighted above, these many ventures could not be achieved by one person alone and I am very thankful for all those helping. If you would like to get involved with any of the above, please speak to me as you would be welcomed! Pastoral visitors do need to be DBS checked and complete some basic online training.

Val Molloy – Pastoral Assistant

Shoe Box Appeal (Love in a Box) report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

£79 + 33 boxes joined 150 at the Methodist church.

Thank you again for your generosity. We are part of a HUGE outpouring of love.

From now on, in association with the Methodist church the focus of our giving will be through a charity called Link to Hope: <https://linktohope.co.uk/shoebox-appeal>

Their **Shoebox Appeal** has been running since 1992, so we will continue to fill a shoebox but not just for a child but for whole families and the elderly, so nobody's left out.

The shoeboxes will go to the poorest people in Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria and Romania.

More information as the year progresses.

Cathy Moulton

Toddler Time Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

We are delighted to say our Toddler Time group is thriving!

We continue to meet every Monday morning in Church at 9.30am during Term Time and welcome parents, Grandparents and carers with their preschool infants. Our usual number is averaging between 15-20 children each session, ranging from 'babes in arms' to those soon to start school.

We have a lovely session starting with some favourite 'choruses' and nursery rhymes, to a children's story and then a Biblical story (as engaging as possible). We then enjoy a craft activity which adults and children alike enjoy, followed by a drink and a biscuit or two.

Having opened the session with the lighting of our candle, we close with a prayer, the candle is blown out, and we blow bubbles (sending our prayers heavenward)

We are quite a small team (Jayney, Judith and Pip) but we work well together. Iain and Maggie have joined us, and Hayley and Val have visited too which makes good links with the wider congregation (and also Children's work and Baptisms).

We are deeply indebted to Audrey who helps us in a wonderful way preparing refreshments weekly, and she is to be joined by Liz which will be wonderful.

The closing thought is that it is a positive group, with links being made with our Sunday services, choir, Sunday Fun (Sunday school) and an extra evening group for the ladies. We're encouraged, hope you are too!

Pip Cadman

Worship Committee Report to APCM – 28th May 2023

St Thomas à Becket Church, Ramsey

The worship group has continued to work with the clergy to provide worship opportunities in a variety of styles to suit the preferences of the people.

We have established a pattern of two Sundays a month with an early morning said communion service and family worship at 10am and two Sundays with a formal sung communion service at 10am and Evensong. We have been delighted with the number of baptisms held in the past year, which have been incorporated into the family worship on the first Sunday of the month.

The services running up to Christmas attracted a lot of people; holding two carol services was a real boost as more people attended the two than would have come to one traditional service in church. Other services like the crib service may need 'tweaking', but we must remember we are still establishing a pattern appropriate for these post pandemic times.

The Holy Week and Easter services followed the traditional pattern, which now includes a donkey-led procession on Palm Sunday, and this year with the successful addition of a dawn service on Easter morning.

We would like to encourage people to attend services on important festivals which do not fall on a Sunday, such as Candlemas and Ascension Day as well as Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. Some of these services this year have taken the form of a Taizé Communion. In addition, there have been Holy Communion services mid-week during Lent.

The Strategy adopted by the PCC includes a section on worship. One point is to try to use the fifth Sundays more imaginatively. This began in February when we celebrated Candlemas with candlelit procession. We wait to see what happens in July! We have also improved our communication of events through social media and sent out invitations to our baptism families for specific services. We need to consider the best way to continue to provide online services. To live-stream services we need more technical support and better equipment. Family worship which is becoming more interactive does not lend itself to live-streaming, so perhaps we need to separate face-to-face worship completely from the online services on those Sundays.

It would be great to involve more people in the preparation and delivery of services. If you would like to be involved in the Family Worship in any way, please let me know. Similarly, if you would like to be involved in the traditional style services through writing the prayers, or serving, being crucifer or would like to help organise some of the services through Holy Week or around Christmas, please do make yourself known. The group of people involved in leading worship is very small and more ALM Worship Leaders would be a blessing.

Glennis Brown

04.05.2023

St Thomas a Becket Church Ramsey
Minutes of the Annual Vestry and Annual Parochial Church Meeting
8th May 2022

Present:

Rev'd Iain Osborne (Chair), Val Molloy, Jeremy Hyde, Glennis Brown, Rachael Bell-Berry, Ian Bell-Berry, Malcolm Bowd, Jan Bowd, Leo Knaggs, Jane Cusworth, Dave Cusworth, John Oram, Nevill Palmer, Susan Osborne, Sandy Boyles, Mike Boyles, Rachel Thompson, Lesley Barker, Adam Southwell, Alan Wilcher, Cathy Moulton, Jackie Southwell, Shan Oswald, Kay Rawlinson, Fay Clark

No Apologies had been received.

Iain thanked Jackie Southwell for her work as Administrator and Val Molloy for taking on the role of Secretary, with support from Jackie.

Annual Vestry Meeting

Election of Church wardens

The following were unanimously elected by all present for another year 2022/2023:

Shan Oswald – doing an extra years on her 5 already served

Glennis Brown

Iain thanked them for all they had done to support him over the past year and Thanked Rachel Thompson for offering to act as Deputy Church warden this year.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the previous APCM were accepted unanimously as a true and correct record.
Proposed: Jane Cusworth Seconded: Rachel Thompson

2. Election of PCC Lay representatives – there were no new representatives, but thanks were given to Jayney Marsland who was standing down, and David Cusworth who had also stood down during the year.

3. Appointment of independent examiner to review next year's accounts – Roger Taylor
Proposed: Jeremy Hyde Seconded: Jackie Southwell

4. Reports had been circulated in a booklet prior to the meeting and copies were available to be read at home. Statutory reports only were discussed at the meeting:
 - i. **Finance Report** presented by the Treasurer - Jeremy noted that at year end we held £103,000, down £7000 from last year. Currently running at a deficit of £37 per week. However, the Parish share has been paid in full.
No church building costs coming up in the immediate future.
As a result of the stewardship campaign £6000 had been added, 30% of those who subscribe had increased their giving.
Gas and electricity, plus inflation, are the biggest problem.

A question was raised as to what had happened to the ex-church hall money – Jeremy replied that Jo Latter had this released from a Trust a few years ago and it had been used for the church walls and other necessary work.

Thanks were given to Jeremy for all he does.

- ii. **Deanery Synod Report** – thanks were given to Mike and James for attending these meetings. Iain is part of the Deanery Steering Group. Changes will need to be discussed in the near future.
- iii. **Electoral Roll** – 115 are currently on the Roll. The next renewal of this will be in 2025. Parish passes are available for all on the Roll, but existing passes are still being honoured, though you can also apply for an updated one.
- iv. **Safeguarding** – It had been mentioned at the Diocese that this is being ‘effectively managed’ in our Team – thanks to Jane Cusworth.
- v. **Fabric** – report was included in the booklet. Thanks were given to Lesley and her team, especially Shan and David Cusworth. The cleaners were also thanked, and also the Fundraising committee, headed by Richard Hyde.

There were lots of other reports in the booklet and Iain thanked all who sustain us as a community.

The bellringers reported that there will be lots of bells rung on 3rd June for the Jubilee, including 2 Quarter peals. They were proposing to open the tower that day, with people invited to go up and chime a bell and receive a certificate saying they had rung a bell for the Jubilee! David Paynter and Elspeth were organising this, and it would be advertised on social media.

5. Rector’s Report

This was given with a slideshow of church activities throughout the year. Iain spoke of the ‘Thank you’ banner created by the Craft group and of the many good things that had gone on as he has got to know church and community life here – the Fete, the Flower Festival, and encountering Ramsey traditions such as Plough Day and his ride in the carriage!

He mentioned the finding of the figures stolen off the lectern in 1934 that had now been found coming up at auction and restored now to their rightful place.

Toddler Time has come booming back; Judith, Jayney and Pip had been very good at keeping in touch with members during the lockdowns. He mentioned that Sunday School was now starting back once a month under the leadership of Pip.

The Pilgrimage walk around the Deanery for COP was spoken of. He spoke of the high standard of liturgical worship and thanked Neville and the choir for leading this.

At Christmas there had been lots of positive comments made about the outdoor service on Christmas Eve (which had eliminated the possible problem of too many attending an indoor service causing covid risks)

Palm Sunday and the donkey – he said how processions are fun and a good witness. On the quieter side Morning Prayer by Zoom was being attended by 4-6 people regularly praying for the Parish, and was seeming to work better as an online service.

Iain then spoke of congregation size, with 100-110 attending either in church or online each Sunday, compared with 130 pre-pandemic, has shrunk by about a fifth. Adult attendance has been stable for a while and he is not considering this will continue to creep up now. The Pastoral group are to address support of the elderly and those who have not been able to return to church – services in the Residential homes are re-commencing. With about 1% of the Parish attending we are still quite a large church, and more than most C of E churches. Online worship is being attended by about 30 on average, so remains quite an important service. He remarked lots of effort and time are being put into these films and there are now over 100 online. Iain thanked Jackie and Val Kilner who put together the online services. Regarding the attendance of children at Sunday services, there were 8 in October 2021 compared with 11 attending just before the pandemic. It is hoped the Families & Children's Missioner, funded by the diocese, will bring energy into this .

Finished with the news of the curate arriving in the summer.

Iain closed the meeting with the Grace at 12.30 before we enjoyed lunch together in church.

Requirements and Functions of Churchwardens

- to be officers of the bishop (not the incumbent or PCC): representing the Diocese to the parish and PCC, caring for the incumbent, reporting to bishop or archdeacon.
- to encourage parishioners in the practice of true religion and to promote unity and peace by example and by word.
- to hold ex-officio membership of the PCC, with whom they share many of the responsibilities listed below.
- to be foremost in representing the laity and co-operating with the incumbent.
- to share with the incumbent in planning mission, pastoral care and worship.
- to be willing to lead worship in emergency.
- to pray for, care for and support the incumbent and their family.
- to ensure that the parish meets current the safeguarding requirements of the Church of England, and maintain the highest person standards so as to promote a safe church.
- to have oversight of finance, even though the detail of this will be handled by the treasurer
- to have oversight of the care of the fabric of the parish church, and to report on its condition each year to the Parochial Church Council and to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and arrange for an inspection by a qualified person every 5 years.
- to have legal ownership of the moveable furniture and ornaments of the parish church, and to keep an up-to-date inventory of them.
- to maintain an up-to-date logbook of all works done to the fabric of the parish church.
- to present answers to such questions as are put to them by the bishop or archdeacon in the annual visitation (usually an online questionnaire)
- to ensure that all parish registers and records are properly kept and stored securely.
- to ensure that the PCC (including the incumbent) complies with the requirements of charity law and Church (Canon) law.
- during a vacancy, to share the oversight of the parish with the rural dean.

They may, by local custom:

- be made trustees of other charities that are related to the parish.
- be signatories of the PCC bank accounts.

Churchwardens are not responsible for:

- Governorship of a local school (Church Aided or otherwise)
- Determining burial rights or applications for memorial stones in churchyards

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- Leading worship (except in emergency, unless they hold a Bishop's licence)
 - Chairing the PCC (unless elected by the PCC into that role)
 - Choosing the next incumbent (unless appointed as Parish Representative).