

## **Church Annual Review 2024**



St. Botolph's Church, Chevening

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Chipstead Chevening Church Hall,

Chipstead

**Rector: Rev Hannah Adams** 

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### Who's Who?

## **PCC**

Hannah Adams		Rector
Joseph Devine	2023	Churchwarden
Sally Munro	2023	Churchwarden
Lela Weavers	2021	Deanery & Diocesan Synod ex-officio
Graham Higgs	2023	Deanery Synod ex officio; Treasurer for PCC / CCC
Fiona Jordan	2023	Parish Safeguarding Officer; Hall Manager
Donna Hill	2023	Parish Administrator
Peter Wilson	2023	PCC Secretary
Andrew Taylor	2023	
Hannah Williams	2023	
Christopher Austen	2023	
Susan Wandless	2024	
Jo Baxter	2024	(co-opted)

## **Ministry and Group Leaders**

Safeguarding inc. DBS
Prayer Ministry
Sally Munro
Pastoral Visiting Team
Worship
Tower Captain
Church Fabric
Church Hall Manager
Fiona Jordan

Play Café Hannah Adams, Jo Baxter and Amy Donovan

Mpendo Parish Link Sandra Tolhurst Communications Nathan Adams

Electoral Roll Secretaries Clare & Richard Marriott

Church Key holders Various

Treasurer Graham Higgs Small Groups Hannah Adams

Children & Young People Vacant

## **Rector's Report**

"What's in your hand?" is a question that sums up the life of our church during 2024. This question changed Moses' life as God called him to save the Israelites from captivity in Egypt. It's also a question we explored in our Vision Sunday in September 2024. Moses had a staff, we have our skills, talents, time, passions, professions, finances and so much more that begs us to question: What could happen if God used what is in my hand?

2024 was a year where again and again we offered what we could and God did amazing things with it. Our biggest triumph was our 30 in 30 fundraising challenge. Together we raised the funds needed for our sound system both for the church and the hall. Since its installation, it has enhanced and enabled us to worship more freely, has created a better atmosphere in that no one is struggling to hear and we can provide so much more for pastoral services as well as hall users.

This wasn't the only "success story" from 2024 – we had record attendance at our annual Community BBQ in June; we reintroduced School Services seeing the pupils and their families from Chevening School fill the church – who can forget their wonderful renditions from Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat! We had our first Harvest Pub Quiz bringing us together as a community for fun and good quality time together (with a bit of healthy competition thrown in!).

At the start of 2024 our finances were struggling but thanks to the hard work of our Treasurer, Finance Working Group and due to everyone's kind generosity we are in a much healthier position. In addition to this we have seen a growth in the attendance at both morning services; we have met our goal of starting a new Small Group and our weekly Play Café continues to grow, welcoming new guests each week some of whom have become part of the church family after they started attending Sunday services.

However, we don't do this simply for the sake of doing it or to make us feel good, we do it because we want to see God's love transform the lives of our community. Our vision remains the same: to be a beacon of hope where we have a dream to see God's transformational love at work in our own lives and our local community. We will do this by being a community where everyone can belong, and can grow in knowledge and love of God inspiring a desire to serve.

Creating the foundations for this are our values summed up in this sentence, "We are a **loving family**, **rooted** in scripture and prayer and willing to be **courageous** to see God's kingdom grow." Over 2024 we have seen those values create a culture within us that has seen us be a loving family; we have rooted ourselves in God's word and in prayer in our Sunday services and mid-week small groups and we have been courageous in taking steps of faith in taking on new and exciting things. As Rector, I continue to count it a privilege to serve alongside with each member of this church family. My prayer for us going forward? That we embed those roots further, get bolder in our faith and be unafraid to follow the will of the Holy Spirit into this season of the life of this church.

**Rev H. Adams** 

## **Church Warden Report**

In 2024, it has been great to have 2 church wardens working in partnership with Hannah, the PCC, the office team and our church family. We have both felt supported by the whole church family, which is a huge encouragement to us both.

After the changes in 2023, it has been good to focus on the vision we put in place to Belong, Grow and Serve. We have been blessed to see growth in the following areas:

- Church Congregations, at both the 9am and 10.30 have increased in numbers which is hugely encouraging.
- Youth Breakfast, has formed and has been meeting monthly, with good conversations between our young people.
- Home Group, a new group has been created with good attendance and fellowship.

In 2023 we had to make difficult decisions to stabalise the church finances, we have been blessed to see that the changes have been positive with the previous overspend avoided in this year - putting us in a sounder position for the year ahead. We would like to thank Graham for all his work to manage and guide our finances, it is a huge amount of work and vital for the sustainability of our church.

Looking ahead to 2025 we both have offered to stand again as wardens, as we are pleased to work together to support both Hannah and the church family through her upcoming maternity leave. We are currently working with the archdeacon, to see how the diocese can support us through this time - we shall keep the PCC and church family updated as we get guidance.

We must say a huge thank you to everyone who helps at Chevening, we are a family who pull together to support one another and our church - so we think this is a true expression of what we believe in the love of God. The PCC, Standing Committee and all the team in the office do an amazing job for the smooth running of the church.

We are excited to see what God is going to be doing in our midst here at Chevening, as we love and support one another and take God's love into our community and beyond.

Joseph Devine, Sally Munro

## **Secretary Report**

Chevening PCC meets approximately once a month. It has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent in promoting the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibility for the maintenance of St. Botolph's Church and the Chevening Church Hall complex, incorporating the Chapel of the Good Shepherd and Homedean House.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules 2020. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC where there are vacancies.

Across 2024, the PCC met for ordinary meetings eight times (excluding February, May, August and December). The Standing Committee met in between PCC meetings, minutes of which were presented and approved by PCC. The PCC also had an extraordinary meeting in May 2024 to approve the accounts ahead of the 2024 ACPM.

Peter Wilson, PCC Secretary

### Treasurer's Report – including summary of accounts

#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW 2024**

#### Income

Total incoming resources were £146,342 (2023 - £114,482) and these are detailed in the financial statements. Voluntary unrestricted income has increased to £115998 from £106,511 in 2023. The income had benefitted from a gift of £10,000 from the estate of a parishioner.

Fees for weddings and funerals etc were £3,501 compared with £2,805 in 2023.

## Expenditure

Our expenditure on church activities was £128,930 (2023 – 152,605) and this includes our parish contribution to the Diocese of Rochester of £45,957 (2023 - £60,000) which includes the Rector's stipend and associated costs.

Generally, our expenditure has been strictly controlled this year but there continue to be a number of repair and maintenance issues which will need attending to in the current year. We are due to have a further Quinquennial Inspection in the near future and this may need prompt attention.

#### Reserves

As a result of our activities in 2024, our unrestricted funds increased to £57,759 from £39,709 in 2023. Restricted reserves increased from £79,672 in 2023 to £79,800 after completing the investment of a new and upgraded audio visual resource.

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance of unrestricted funds of at least £25,000 to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time. Unrestricted reserves, at the year end, amounted to £57,759 which, after setting aside the minimum referred to above, is equivalent to around 18 weeks compared to 6 weeks in 2023.

Our restricted reserves, including the Building Fund which consists of monies given and retained towards meeting the costs of major repairs to the fabric of the church itself including such costs as may arise from our Quinquennial Inspections. We also have funds remaining after completion of the work on the nave roof which, in the opinion of the PCC, may be used for further essential roof repairs and church maintenance. These funds total £54,804.

It is the policy of the PCC that funds held in excess of foreseeable needs shall be invested with the CBF Church of Egland Deposit Fund with the CCLA.

### The Chipstead Chapel Charity

Although the Church and Chapel Charity are separate corporate entities it is normal to refer to them as part of this report.

Total incoming resources were £34,954 (2023 - £35866) with expenditure of £43,760 - 2023 £21,037) resulting in a deficit for the year of £8,806 (2023- surplus of £3,549). This deficit was entirely caused by one-off items of expenditure including refurbishment of the toilets and additional audio visual resources. The balance of unrestricted funds to be carried forward total is £24,200 (2023 - £33,006.

**Graham Higgs, Treasurer** 

## **Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment**

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding in the Church has very much been in the public domain this last year, with the release of the Makin Report <a href="https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/reviews-and-reports/john-smyth-review">https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/reviews-and-reports/john-smyth-review</a> and the subsequent resignation of the previous Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev Justin Welby. The release of the report and the circumstances surrounding its content, remind us all how constantly vigilant and responsible we all need to be, to ensure the Church is and remains a safe place for all to be.

We remind ourselves that the PCC and the Incumbent have a shared obligation to:

- Ensure the Church has a Parish Safeguarding Officer
- Uphold the requirement to carry out DBS checks for those who are required to have one.
- Formally adopt and uphold the recommendations made by the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidelines.
- Ensure that safeguarding training has been carried out by PCC members and those in role leadership.
- Display 'Promoting a safer Church' Poster with safeguarding contact details.
- Keep 'Safeguarding' as a topic on the agenda of PCC meetings as recommended by the Diocese and at the APCM.

The Church of St Botolph's takes very seriously, its responsibility in safeguarding and safer recruitment of

both paid and volunteers. We will continue to uphold the recommendations from the Diocese through training, DBS checks and accountability through regular reporting to the PCC.

We all have a shared responsibility to make sure our Church is a safe place to be for children, young people and adults who may be considered vulnerable.

Anyone who has any concern about a person who is at risk of, or is being abused, or presents a risk to others, child or vulnerable adult should seek advice from the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the Incumbent, the Diocese Safeguarding Advisors or the Police in an emergency.

### Safer Recruitment

This is a vital element of providing information through disclosure, for those involved in paid or voluntary work within the church. The PCC has an obligation to find out, by the process of applying for a DBS certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) if an individual has any criminal convictions that make them unsuitable to work with children, youth or adults who may be considered vulnerable.

All members of the PCC are required to have a DBS certificate as well as those who lead certain activities and ministries within the church.

Fiona Jordan - Parish Safeguarding Officer and Lead Recruiter (DBS) safeguarding@cheveningchurch.org

#### **Electoral Roll**

Every six years a new Electoral Roll has to be prepared. Those on the previous Electoral Roll are informed so that they may re-apply.

At the time of the 2025 APCM, there are 107 (2024 - 257) Parishioners registered on the new Church Electoral Roll.

Of the 107 Parishioners 53 (2024 - 133) are resident in the Parish.

Of the 107 Parishioners 54 (2024 - 124) are registered outside of the Parish.

If anyone has not filled in a new Electoral Roll Form and would like to be registered on the new Electoral Roll please either collect a form from the Church or the Church Office or download from the website.

**Clare and Richard Marriott** 

## **Prayer Ministry**

Prayer is the foundation to who we are and what we do as a church. Throughout 2024 we had a (term time) weekly prayer meeting to pray not only for our church but for our community and for the events in our world. It wasn't a quiet year so there was plenty to pray for! We tried to keep record of what we prayed for and if there were any answers to prayer. There was even an onsite prayer meeting on Chipstead Rec a couple of days before our Community BBQ, and we saw record attendance! We prayed for our sister church in Mpendo and their harvest; for those struggling in and out of our church family; conflict in our world; for unity in our church and to see people come to know Jesus through Alpha.

Each week saw on average 5 people in attendance, and whilst this meeting wasn't about how many people attended, we as a group discussed how can we encourage more from our church to pray. These solutions were then decided to start in later 2024 and into 2025:

- Instead of the weekly prayer meetings, Small Groups are encouraged to leave time to pray
- In our monthly Newsletter, prayer requests would be given to help guide Small Groups and individuals as they pray
- We will start a termly Prayer & Praise Night in early 2025
- To provide a space and time on Sunday for people to receive prayer

Let's continue to pray as a church and to see God's Kingdom come.

Rev H. Adams

## **Pastoral Visiting Team**

The pastoral team of Rev. Hannah, myself, Lela, Simon, and Lynn have continued to contact and visit those who cannot attend church but would like to maintain the contact. Pastorally caring for those in our church community offer vital care and spiritual support. Thanks to those who have been involved especially to those (in and out of the Pastoral Team) who helped cover whilst I was away visiting family in Australia.

If anybody would like a visit from our team or knows somebody who would please contact me on 07790597733 or e mail marjoriejanejones@btinternet.com.

Marjorie Jones, Pastoral Team Lead

## **Small Groups**

Last year we had 4 groups that met mid-week regularly and we set the goal to introduce an additional group and I am thrilled to say that we now have 5 groups. This additional group has meant that those who weren't yet in a Small Group were able to join. These groups are a vitally important part of our church and for us as individuals. It's in this space we can go deeper than we can on Sundays, it provides a network of support, friendship and strength as we each grapple on our journey of faith. If you'd like to join one or know more then please get in touch with me.

Rev H. Adams

#### **Church Fabric**

2024 has been a year of maintaining the church after the large projects of the previous years, which included new north roof, installation of Maurice's window and the Chapel & Chancel painting.

Richard Mais has continued to organise many of the fabric jobs and the church yard team, all who work tirelessly through the year to keep our church looking beautiful. At the QQI in March 2025 it was heartening to hear John Bailey comment that "Chevening is the best maintained church of all the churches he looks after" - this is testament to the amazing work of Richard and the church yard team - thank you all.

In 2024 we replaced the AV system which was much needed as the old system was on its last legs with wiring over 30 years old generating feedback and interference. Jimi Gale did a huge amount of work getting everything organised, and the church family were hugely generous to raise the money required to replace the old system. We were also able to improve the sound system in the hall, reusing the old speakers from the church - which has hugely improved the worship in the hall. We held our first Praise & Worship evening there which was a great success.

Looking to 2025 we have Temporary Arch Deacons approval to move the creche to the rear of the church and create a children's space there, in doing so we will move coffee to the south door area - so we hope these 2 moves will help with internal space. The moves mean we will be able to return the Stanhope Chapel to a prayer space, which we feel is much needed and will help the church family.

Joseph Devine, Church Warden

## **Tower Captain**

Sunday service ringing has been a little better this year particularly thanks to the help we have received from members of the Kemsing band, who have enabled us to ring 5 or even 6 bells on many occasions, though only having two or three ringers is still common. The half-muffled tenor was tolled for the Final Hour service on Good Friday and for three funerals, sadly including that of a much-loved friend of the bells, Jean Westacott, for whom we also rang half-muffled on the 6 heaviest bells before her service. On a happier note, we were also able to ring in celebration of two weddings and we were pleased to be visited by a former member of the band and her daughter on holiday from Australia.

It has been a national tradition to ring church bells half-muffled on Remembrance Sunday, the haunting echo effect of the muffling being particularly appropriate for the occasion and a moving experience for the ringers. We were therefore very disappointed not to join in this year: for the first time since they were installed in 1999 our bells were silent because the 11 am Act of Remembrance had been moved to the Parish Hall. In what might have to become a new tradition for St Botolph's, we rang half-muffled on Armistice Day instead.

We are keen to foster ringing by new learners so it was very pleasing that Kent Young Ringers were able to ring a quarter peal for the Confirmation Service in July and to hold several well-attended practices on Saturday evenings.

Unfortunately, our small numbers have not allowed useful Tuesday evening practices to resume but, with morning services being moved to the Parish Hall for all August Sundays, we were able to hold a series of 8-bell practices at 10:30 am attended by other local ringers once they had completed service ringing at their own churches.

Chevening's excellent bells and ringing room are much appreciated by ringers from near and far. This year we were pleased to host two peal attempts (one successful, on the Chevening Garden opening Sunday afternoon). Ringers from Tonbridge District of KCACR held two practices during the winter, and we had four successful quarter peals by local bands during the year as well as hosting visits from the Penshurst ringers and a national organisation, "The Rambling Ringers", on their outings around the district.

As ever, my thanks go to the dedicated members of our small band who are determined, as long as they are able, to keep the bells ringing out to welcome worshippers to St Botolph's.

**Tony Cresswell, Tower Captain** 

## **Chipstead Chapel Charity**

The PCC members are collectively the Trustees of the Chipstead Chapel Charity, which is responsible for the Hall Complex including the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, the Hall and its facilities as well as the Church Office and Homedean.

It is managed by the 'Chipstead Chapel Charity (CCC) Management Team' which is comprised of the following: The Rector (Chair), The Churchwardens, caretaker Ian Glen, Treasurer Graham Higgs, Parish Administrator Donna Hill and Hall Manager Fiona Jordan.

The committee meets typically each quarter to review and to update the running and the care of the complex.

#### Chapel of the Good Shepherd

The consecrated Chapel of the Good Shepherd is positioned at one end of the Parish Hall and is a beautiful space in which small groups can meet for Services of Communion and Worship. If the large doors are opened fully, it allows the hall to become an extension of the chapel, where many more people can be accommodated. This is the case when the informal evening service takes place once a month on a Sunday at the 5pm Service. In November of this year 2024, the sound system at the hall was upgraded to accommodate a new plug in and play system where hall users can play their music and a significant sized screen was added for the benefit of

church services. It has been a success for groups that hold dance or fitness classes, and the WI have also benefitted from using the microphone for their talks.

The Chapel continues to be in reasonable order and repair.

#### Parish Hall

The Parish Hall provides a wonderful space for community groups and fitness classes to take place during the week. The hall is available to hire every day for regular classes and the weekends for parties.

The hall has benefitted from some investment this year, with the reconfigured and redecorated ladies/gents and disabled loo's. Our thanks to Nigel Hill Building Contractor for the work carried out.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Ian Glen, our Hall Caretaker for being a wonderful and willing hall caretaker and cleaner.

#### The Church Office

The small room off to one end of the hall, formerly known as the Committee Room, now houses the church office and essentially has become the hub for parish business. Part of the office adjoins Homedean. The Church office is manned by the Parish Administrator, Donna Hill on Monday 9-5pm, Tuesday 9-1pm, Wednesday 9-4pm and Thursday 9-1pm. The Hall Manager is also in attendance two days a week on a Monday and Wednesday for a total of 12 hours.

### Play Café

Our weekly Play Café not only is a form of outreach to those in our community and the wider Sevenoaks area, but it is providing a safe, fun and welcome space for young children and their carers. Each week we are welcoming new people along with our regular core. And we have started seeing guests coming along on Sundays, come on Alpha and become members of our church family. In 2024, our two key team members had to step down due to new jobs (I remain grateful to their hard work!) and we now need new volunteers to ensure sustainability and the endurance of this provision for our community.

Rev H. Adams

### **Mpendo Parish Link**

During the past twelve months, Rev. Canon Mussa Mzuri – the Pastor in Mpendo, the parish with which St. Botolph's is linked, in Tanzania - (in the Diocese of Kondoa) and myself, have continued to correspond sending prayer requests for both parishes and words of encouragement. This has included prayer for Rev. Mussa's work, spreading the Gospel in Mpendo. He has asked for prayer for his son and daughter to be provided with employment. They completed their education two years ago, this coming July but have no work.

Recently, we have been praying for rain in Mpendo and Kondoa. Some rain has now fallen, which will be helpful.

If anyone in our church family can speak and/or write in Swahili, please make yourself known. Also, if anyone is interested in visiting Mpendo, please do say. Our brothers and sisters in Mpendo love to be visited and extend a very warm invitation to anyone from St. Botolph's to visit them.

Sandra Tolhurst

### **Deanery Synod Report**

Area Dean: Rev Canon Anne le Bas until May when Rev Tim Edwards (Rector Knockholt & Halstead) was appointed Area Dean; Lay Chairman: Brig. Ian Dobbie; Secretary: Vacant; Treasurer Fr Robin Jones. Standing Committee: John Colyer, Lela Weavers, Jane Belle. There was one Synod meeting in May held at Halstead Church, at which group work was undertaken to share ideas to encourage means of outreach. This occurred at a time when there was no Deanery Secretary and at a time when the new Area Dean was about to have a Sabbatical leading up to Christmas. There was therefore no further Deanery Synod meeting in 2024.

Lela Weavers, (Standing Committee member Deanery Synod)

## **Diocesan Synod Report**

There were, as usual, two synod meetings in June and December. Both discussed, heard reports and voted on various subjects – such as Finance, Safeguarding, etc. In December the Diocesan Vison & Strategy drawn up by a team led by Claire Boxall, Head of Programmes was adopted unanimously.

Also in December, Bishop Jonathan made an unprecedented address in which he said (paraphrased) that "many of us are feeling like sheep without a shepherd given all that we are facing in both the Church and the

"many of us are feeling like sheep without a shepherd given all that we are facing in both the Church and the wider world. With wars and rumours of wars in many parts of the world, the climate crisis, the rise of Al, and the impact of the internet on us and on our children.... Add to that everything else that is happening within the Church of England, following the publication of the Makin Review and the unprecedented resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, along with the uncertainty and anxiety on all sides connected with Living in Love and Faith, and it is not surprising that many of us may end up feeling harassed and helpless, when the spiritual leader of the Anglican Church has just stepped down...... We do need to respond to what has happened in the last few weeks, following the Makin Review, along with other reviews and reports in recent years, which have revealed both personal and systemic failure in the life of the Church at every level. Evil has been covered up, the plight of victims and survivors has been played down or ignored, and this has felt like a betrayal not only of the victims of abuse but also those countless people, clergy and laity who have been working so hard at diocesan and parish level to improve the quality of safeguarding. For this reason I believe the Archbishop of Canterbury's decision to resign was the right and honourable thing to do........ Later we will debate a motion of no confidence in the Archbishops' Council over their handling of these issues."

After some debate, the vote was carried 51 for the motion of no confidence, 5 against, and 9 abstentions. I have attended many Diocesan Synod meetings but never one like this.

Lela Weavers – Diocesan Synod Member, and DAC committee member

## Chevening (St Botolph's) CE VA Primary School Report 2024

Our review of 2024 simply has to include two fabulous features; the first started with a small seed of an idea in January and growing into a splendid whole-school production of 'Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat' in Sevenoaks Stag Theatre in July! It was a huge undertaking and a simultaneously fabulous showcase of all the Chevening can offer. Working around the planned curriculum and activities, each class took responsibility for specific songs and dances, with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils taking on the main character and narration roles. Piecing together the different elements required the skills of experienced school play directors/staff, who leaned on the talents of the wider staff team, complemented by strong commitment from parents who produced the finest scenery, props and programme. Fundraising efforts by all and a packed house of parents ensured that the whole production was financially self-sufficient – an incredible undertaking, considering the costs of hiring the Stag and paying for the ALW Licence requirements. The thrill of being part of Team Chevening was almost immeasurable and we hope that the children continue to be inspired by their involvement in such a successful and rewarding endeavour. We were thrilled to be able to offer a brief preview when the school returned to St Botolph's Church in June 2024 and we were very grateful that some of our School Trustees attended the actual performance in July. Our second fabulous feature of 2024 was a complicated and complex building project, resulting in a new fully-equipped school kitchen in time for Christmas Dinner. Although the preliminary work of securing funds, planning permission and contractual requirements all started well before 2024, the actual 'build' began on the first day of the summer holidays. The start of the new academic year in September enabled the school family to closely observe and be more involved in the continuing project, to the extent that some of our younger children were inspired to plan future careers as architects and construction workers! Serving freshly 'home-cooked' food has been an aim for a number of years and we are thrilled that Chevening children can now regularly enjoy and benefit from this initiative. The new kitchen facilities will also support PTFA activity and wider community plans, as holiday clubs become available. In all the school undertakes, the principles we recognise within the Parable of the Mustard Seed inspire and underpin all activity, debate and decision-making, ensuring our children grow and flourish. In this way, we fulfil our aim to be true to Christ and His teachings, to be known for kind and thoughtful actions and attitudes and to be inclusive in serving, sharing and showing God's love to all. Once again, we are so very grateful for all the practical care, attention and support from St Botolph's Church, particularly Rev Hannah, our Governors and our Trustees. If you would like to know more about our work, please see www.chevening.kent.sch.uk or contact the school.

Karen Minnis - Headteacher