

ST. MARY'S PAINSWICK ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

REPORT

2023



1. St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The PCC is responsible for cooperating with the Rector in promoting within the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibility for maintaining and administering the Church Rooms and the Lychgate office (the latter on behalf of the Beacon Benefice). The Parish is part of the Beacon Benefice, the other Benefice Churches being St. James the Great, Cranham, St John the Baptist, Edge, St John the Baptist, Harescombe. St John the Baptist, Pitchcombe. St. John the Apostle, Sheepscombe.

2. Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting (APCM) in accordance with Church Representation rules. During the year the following served as members of the PCC.

Rector: The Reverend Sarah Haslam

Associate Priest: The Reverend Andrew Leach

Churchwardens: Mrs Susan Welbourn and Mrs Margaret Radway replaced by Mrs Lindsay Gardiner and Dr Dylan Davies in May

Treasurer: Mr. David Rawson

Elected Members of the PCC are/were:

Mrs Delyth Allen, Mrs. Liz Eden, Mrs Judith Lindley (Secretary), Mrs Mandy Garstang, Mrs Karen Goddard, Mrs Elizabeth James, Mrs Pamela Swain, Mrs Joan Warner, Mrs Frances Watson, Mr Christopher Bray (stood down in mid-2023).

Mrs. Frances Watson serves as the representative on the Deanery Synod.

3. Committee Structure

There are three Sub-Committees that report to the PCC: Pastoral, Finance & Fabric, and Mission & Outreach.

4. Clergy and Licensed Ministers

Rector: Reverend Sarah Haslam

Associate Priest: Reverend Andrew Leach.

Retired Ministers: Canon Michael Irving
Reverend Paul Kenchington
Reverend David Reynish
Reverend Helen Sammon

Licensed Readers: Sue Hartley, Liz Eden, Mike Campbell.

5. Church Attendance

At the end of 2023 the number of persons on the Church Electoral Roll was 94.

In 2023 the average Sunday attendance was 70 adults, 3 children, 68 communicants.

Easter Sunday attendance was 156 adults, 23 children, 130 communicants

Holy Week attendance was 285 adults, 25 children, 216 communicants

Christmas Eve attendance (midnight mass) was 130 adults, 1 child, 66 communicants

Christmas Day attendance was 140 adults, 30 children, 100 communicants

Special services with high attendance included the church carol service (200 adults and 28 children), the Croft School nativity service (approx. 150 adults and 100 children) and the All Souls service (112 adults and 16 children). The church was full for Reverend Sarah's Induction service

and for the crib service, though numbers were not recorded, as was the case for the ever-popular Clypping service.

In 2023 there were 4 Baptisms, 0 Confirmations, 5 Weddings and 12 Funerals.

Clergy Report for the Beacon Family of Churches

The Lord is my Shepherd... I arrived here in February 2023 on a Long Leadership Placement at the invitation of Bishop Rachel Treweek and after much prayer. I thoroughly enjoyed Holy Week and Easter here, which brought a marked increase in numbers of worshippers through many of our benefice's church doors as well as Painswick Playgroup's 'Easter Bunny', through the doors of St Mary's! This seemed an encouraging sign that the 'Covid effect' was beginning to lift. Then followed May, which turned out to be a month of celebration for me as it saw the King's coronation and the joy of a wedding in Sheepscombe on the same weekend, and then I was delighted to be appointed Rector following an interview process later that month.

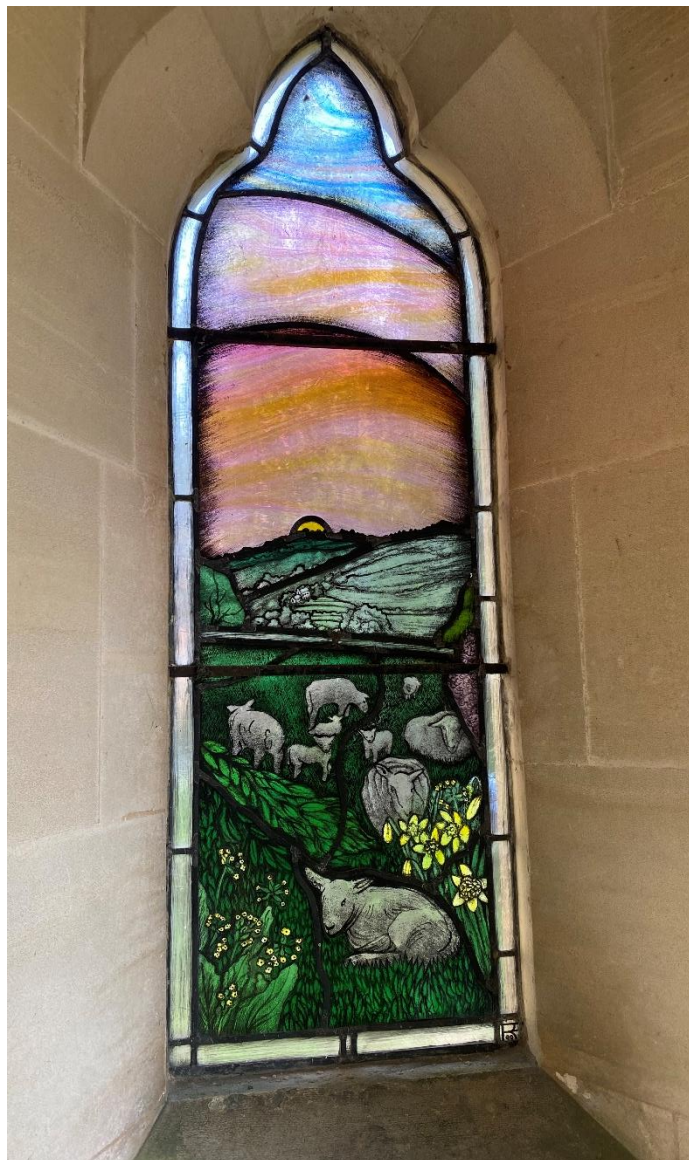
The Songs of Praise service in June – to mark the reopening of Edge church following the devastating fire of 2021 – was a time to take stock and deepen our trust in the unfailing love and faithfulness of the Lord our Shepherd. This service was all the more powerful as we reflected on a number of recent bereavements keenly felt in our communities and the resurrection hope that we have in Jesus.

In July, after consultation with the churchwardens and pccs, we returned to the Common Cup across the benefice which, while met with a degree of apprehension, was in line with a directive issued by the diocese from the previous Pentecost. It felt as though this marked a starting point of sorts, in which the Beacon Benefice were recommitting in faith to: 'learning to live in the light of God's love'.

I took up my post in September – a joyous and very full month that ushered in the start of the new school year, Cranham Feast, my licensing service, Painswick Feast (including the annual Clypping Service), a bout of COVID for Reverend Andrew and then myself, and of course we began our harvest celebrations.

Harvest is a time of thankfulness, and as ever we had a terrific time at Harescombe – with thanks to Tim Mayo for his no-nonsense account of the farming year just gone. We give thanks for the Lord's goodness and for his church: all of you who have served him and this community so faithfully. Personally I have been hugely thankful and felt incredibly blessed, as it has been evident to me right from the start of my time here that this benefice is deeply beloved.

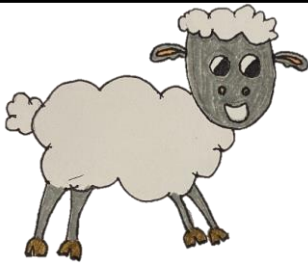
Beloved by you the church; beloved by the local communities who have in the past few years literally fundraised to 'raise the roof' of Pitchcombe, Edge and (most recently throughout 2023) Painswick churches, but also beloved by the God of Love who called me here.



Before we knew it, we were ushering in Advent – with Posadas and baptisms! After two baptisms earlier in the year at Painswick and another at Pitchcombe, it was wonderful to now celebrate some more baptisms, in Sheepscombe and then in Cranham, on two consecutive Sundays around this time.

Our annual Christmas preparations and celebrations arrived (for me) with the Painswick Goodwill Evening on the last Friday of November, and ended with Cranham's Nine Lessons & Carols Service on Saturday 30th

Our annual Christmas preparations and celebrations arrived (for me) with the Painswick Goodwill Evening on the last Friday of November, and ended with Cranham's Nine Lessons & Carols Service on Saturday 30th December. Christmas saw increased number through our church doors as well



Meet Sherlock, a new sheep on the block/in the flock here in the Beacon Benefice, part of the Stroud Deanery of the Diocese of Gloucester. Sherlock is a curious sheep, and his quest is to find out more about a special baby called Jesus, who was born to be our Good Shepherd. Sherlock is the symbol representing our BAA (Beacon All Ages) Development approach here to the C of E's priority for the 2020s to become a 'younger and more diverse' church.

Introduced in mid-December, families in our benefice are beginning to learn already that wherever they see an activity or event advertised in one of our parishes with a picture of Sherlock or of his friends and family next to it, they know that this means there is plenty to see and do for sheep of all ages who want to learn about Jesus, have fun and feel part of our flock here in The Beacon Benefice.

As a rural benefice of seven parishes spread across the hills and valleys of the Cotswolds, we have decided to take a home-grown, grass-roots approach to growing strong communities that will support our young people and their adults through all the changing sceneries and scenarios of life.

Our children and grandchildren face a whole new range of exciting and sometimes daunting opportunities and challenges as they navigate the world today. We aim to provide a hospitable, safe, fun and caring culture in which everyone can be known, belong and hopefully flourish on their journey.

By prayerfully investing our time, skills, passions and other resources in supporting the children and young people here, we hope they and their adults in our wider communities may become curious about our relationship with our Good Shepherd, Jesus, and will join Sherlock and the rest of our flock as we learn how to live in the light of God's love. With your support, may our communities grow to become a beacon reflecting this light and love.

as (delightfully) increased engagement outside of them in our local communities. Special thanks as ever go to Chris Swain, Beryl Berry, all other of our organists, musicians and worship leaders, our ministry team and of course our church wardens and their teams of volunteers, who worked tirelessly to enable us to share the Good News of Christ our Saviour's birth in so many ways.

Earlier in 2023, as part of the process of getting to know one another and listening to God, the benefice council, the ministry team and I met frequently as we began to think about how we could address some of the practical issues that we faced – not least the need to address the demand for making our services more accessible to a wider range of people and also to reach out to new and different people in our community. Among other things, we quickly began a piece of work to formulate a new Sunday service pattern, which was rolled out in January 2024.

We are continuing to collate feedback on this, so that we can fine-tune as necessary our regular service pattern later this year. However, we are delighted to have introduced an all age, benefice-wide family worship service into our regular pattern of Sunday worship (aimed to be more accessible for people of all ages and also for those who are new to faith), a service of midweek morning prayer (from November 2023), a midweek communion service (from February 2024), and we are beginning

to trial a number of other services that extend our range of regular worship services in the hope of serving a wider variety of people's spiritual needs according to the resources and gifts we have among the body of Christ here.

As a part of this effort, Chris Swain and the choir from Painswick have brought fresh vitality to recent Eucharist services at Pitchcombe on the second Sundays of the month, which has been greatly appreciated by worshippers there, and this Holy Week saw the return of choral Evensongs to Painswick and also to Pitchcombe.

Also in the background, we have been working on new ways to reach out to our communities, including launching a baby and toddler group in Painswick, looking at a new way to work with our mission partners Sportily, and we have been gradually starting to re-engage with the school communities. As I write this report, I note we are soon to advertise the role of a part-time Beacon All Ages (BAA) Development Minister, who will assist me in coordinating and delivering activities, events and services to support our local children and their adults so that they are more able to have fun, faith, and feel part of our Beacon Benefice family.

As you will undoubtedly have begun to realise, there has been much else besides to give thanks for, celebrate, honour and build upon this year. I would be remiss if I did not again praise Revd Andrew and the wider ministry team, who had devoted themselves unquestionably and unstintingly during the vacancy. The prayerful and practical ongoing commitment of the experienced team is a tribute to their Christian faith and witness – we are truly blessed to have them in our midst.

It is also with our heartfelt thanks and well wishes that we thank Revd David Newell, who has now stepped down from licensed priestly ministry here and say goodbye (but note our personal loss) to see experienced lay reader Liz Eden return to Sussex after being such a gift to our community here. We wish her and her husband Paul every blessing as they move and we will continue to hold them in our hearts and prayers.

Meanwhile however, we have also seen Karen Riding and Victoria Soutar (two of our regular worshippers from Sheepscombe and Cranham) successfully complete Lay Worship Leading training courses, and Mary Sparks (from Painswick) should also be thanked for her increased role in pastoral ministry, including distributing communion to the housebound and leading acts of worship in our care homes.

All in all, it is very clear from writing this that everyone in the benefice has worked extremely hard to align ourselves with the direction it was felt the Lord has been leading us in: thank you to all our faithful prayer warriors whose prayers have undoubtedly helped to pave the way.

Before I sign off for this year, I would like to remind us all of a verse from a hymn that Liz Burge from Painswick has been prayerfully sharing at our meetings recently. I do so because it gives me a sense of peace in the fact that all the 'new things' that we can see springing up here come from Him and (lest we feel exhausted or overwhelmed thinking about all this change!) are to take place only in his strength – rather than through our own...

"Be still, for the power of the Lord Is moving in this place: He comes to cleanse and heal, To minister his grace - No work too hard for him. In faith receive from him. Be still, for the power of the Lord Is moving in this place" Amen.

- Revd Sarah

Churchwardens Report

This year must stand out as an unusually significant year in the life of our Church – after several testing years of waiting and persevering, God has certainly answered our prayers. Our new Rector Sarah was appointed and installed in September, and St Mary's Church building has a complete new roof. The preparation and beginnings of these major events were guided from the start of the year and before by our Warden predecessors Margaret and Sue, whose 'big shoes' Dylan and I have attempted to fill throughout the year since we were elected in April. It has been quite a learning curve, and we deeply appreciate all the patient help we received from them in the hand over, and often since.

Rev'd Sarah started with The Beacon Benefice at the beginning of February, preaching for the first time at the Benefice Service in St Mary's. She joined the Ministry Team, in a 'trial' capacity to complete her curacy training over the next 6 months. After due process of interview by Benefice and Diocese representatives, including Bishop Rachel, Sarah was appointed as Rector of The Beacon Benefice and installed by the Bishop at her Induction Service in St Mary's Church on Sunday 17th September. It was a joyful event. Our thanks go to the members of all the Benefice churches for their assistance and contributions on the day providing and hosting the celebration refreshments following the Service.

The Re-roofing Project – a comprehensive report follows below. All aspects of this project have been overseen and managed throughout by Dylan Davies who first initiated and presented it to the PCC and has sought approval from them at every stage. Our Church building and churchyard is the principle feature and attraction of this village and focus of the community. We all, church people, village residents and all the local community owe Dylan huge appreciation and congratulations for steering this through to completion. We thank God for his provision: everyone involved, the availability of substantial financial resources, grants, generous personal donations, and, all the time and effort put into running very successful fund raising events which resulted in all the costs being covered in the time frame.

As new Church Wardens, we now realise and must acknowledge how much of essential Church business is undertaken by others, often behind the scenes and unnoticed. Those who are involved in regular Sunday duties have had to cope with the challenge of Service time change from 10am to 11am. We are very grateful for their willingness to accommodate these changes into their personal routines. The commitment of all of them is very much noticed!

The Choir: Chris Swain and the Choir members have continued with enthusiasm and commitment despite a time of significant change in a number of aspects of worship music and Service styles. (see below)

The PCC and its Sub-Committees: All members in their various roles have overall responsibility to ensure the safe running of the Church and its activities, the Church Rooms and Lychgate Office. They do this with an attitude of service and generosity of time and effort.

Safeguarding officer: Margaret Radway has continued in this role despite stepping down as churchwarden.

Sacristans: Mary and Paul Sparks, Margaret Wilson, Pippa Dickinson, Freda Steed, Delyth Allen and Liz Burge.

Weddings: Sue Welbourn and Jane Burt and the team of wedding stewards

Funerals: Yvonne Rawson

Our readers, intercessors, those on the church opening and closing rota and those who organize

housegroups.

Pastoral work: Delyth Allen coordinates this aspect of ministry and has met regularly with Rev'd Sarah to review and discover where help is needed. Several others continue to give their faithful support as they have in the past.

Flower Guild: Freda Steed and her team of talented flower arrangers (see below).

Welcomers and Sidespeople: A rolling bi-monthly rota has worked well this year, and volunteers have readily adjusted to Service time changes. We are now seeking a few extra helpers to go on the rota for this very important 'first impressions' role every Sunday.

Church Garden: Joan Warner with an enthusiastic team of volunteer gardeners (see below).

Leyhill Churchyard gardeners: Sue Welbourn continues to coordinate and organise fortnightly visits of the Leyhill team who maintain the Churchyard to its high standard. They very much appreciate the homemade cakes provided for them at lunch time as a gesture of care for them. Thanks to the cake makers!

Bell Ringers: Despite not having a regular team Deborah Pickin, our Bell Captain has maintained the ringing for special church occasions like Christmas & Easter, and weddings and funerals, if requested. Visiting bell ringers are also welcomed (see below).

Church and Church Rooms Cleaning: we are thankful for the careful and conscientious work of Kakuli Rosario and Julia Marusich.

Coffee and refreshments: Clare Irving organises and oversees a rota of willing helpers to provide refreshments both after and now before Sunday Services. Some adjustments have had to be made due to the change of Service times and coffee service at 10.30am BEFORE the Church Service. The coffee team have made every effort to fit in with this.

WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO ALL THESE VOLUNTEERS AND VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR DEDICATED INVOLVEMENT AND FLEXIBILITY. We could not serve as the Body of Christ in this Community without you.

- Lindsay Gardiner

Mission and Outreach report

The M&O committee has had a particularly busy year and in order to facilitate all the extra events that have taken place has met eleven times since the last APCM.

In September we had the Induction of Sarah our new Rector which brought about three hundred people to St Mary's for a memorable service followed by a lot of chatter, prosecco and a wonderful variety of food.

Fund raising for the new church roof led to the committee organising two cream teas and two concerts, one in October by the Gloucester Police Choir and one in December when Wycliffe Choral Society sang the Messiah. Refreshments were served at both concerts.

We are keen to support new initiatives that Sarah has instigated. These have included providing a simple lunch during the Advent Quiet Day and again following the Ash Wednesday service as well as making up the bags for the reintroduced Christingle Service and making sheep biscuits to offer at all the family orientated services. Any offers of sheep biscuit bakers for future services will be very welcome!

Greater links with the Croft School resulted in a church full of families for the start of the Painswick Goodwill with the school choir, the Thameshead Singers and the Church choir singing carols, as well as Sarah running a Christmas Quiz and M&O members helping the children to colour Christmas Cards.

The Christmas Carols and tea afternoon later in December, open to anyone in the parish, enjoyed a second visit by the Croft school choir. After singing some carols the children distributed the Christmas cards that all the pupils had coloured to those who were present with some kept for delivery to others around the village. When not singing, those attending enjoyed a delicious tea.

Apart from the additional Christmas activities, the committee provided mulled wine and mince pies after the Carol Service and planned and led the Crib Service. Both these services were very well supported by local people many of whom expressed their thanks and appreciation for being given the opportunity to celebrate Christmas in this way.

As in previous years the committee organised the Harvest lunch and Marriage preparation lunch. The latter was attended by all couples marrying in the benefice this year and both events were very happy occasions.

Many of us value our involvement in the All Soul's Service in helping some people through the grieving process and others by providing a time for remembering loved ones. Some organisational issues need to be improved this year to ensure that people who lost loved ones in years gone by know that they too are welcome to attend this service.

This year we made some posies for Mothering Sunday but kept some flowers for children attending church to put into posies during the service. This was a great success and will be repeated in the future.

Most recently the M&O committee helped with the Playgroup's Easter egg hunt. We supported Frances who served Free Trade drinks and biscuits to all the families who came into church searching for one of the eggs marked on the map. We had an egg colouring competition for them to take part in and the Lego Easter story showing throughout the day.

Apart from planning events, the Committee have had many open and honest discussions about issues referred to us by members of the congregation as well as our longer-term mission and outreach plans:-

The impact of the new service times and the availability and accessibility of a communion service for some members of the congregation is a concern for many.

The arrangements for receiving communion causing problems for less mobile recipients.

A welcome pack for all new residents to the village possibly linking with the parish council and other organisations.

Welcome events – in gardens around the village.

Baptism gifts – A pattern for knitted squares is available to create blankets.

As in previous years, the committee will continue to hold the aim of 'encouraging and enabling' as central to all that we do.

- Pam Swain

Finance & Fabric Committee

The Finance and Fabric committee has six members; Sue Welbourn, Joan Warner, David Rawson, Ian Eastwood, Colin Moss and Dylan Davies. The committee met five times in 2023. Regular maintenance work coordinated or carried out by the committee included replacing failed bulbs inside and outside the church, cutting the yew trees, PAT testing, clearing gutters and drains, servicing and repair of the roof alarm system, tower clock, fire extinguishers and church and church rooms boilers, and gas safety certification. One task dominated 2023, the re-roofing, which was the largest project the church has undertaken in over 50 years.

The Re-Roofing of St. Mary's, Painswick The Need for the Project

In recent years the church roof had leaked on several occasions, with running repairs required, so it came as no surprise when the 2019 Quinquennial Inspection recommended that both slopes of the nave and of the chancel needed to be re-roofed within 5 years. These roofs were covered with artificial tiles installed around 1970, they replaced the existing Cotswold stone slates. The churchwardens at that time were assured that they would outlast traditional Cotswold stone tiles but this was not the case. The PCC were advised by the church architect, the Diocese and the conservation consultant who is overseeing work on the re-roofing project that natural Cotswold stone

tiles should be used. They are more expensive than artificial tiles but have a significantly longer lifetime (over 100 years) and should be more economic in the long term. Moreover, they match the Cotswold stone tiles on St. Peter's chapel and the vicar's vestry. In addition, as part of the project the badly weathered Cotswold stone tiles on the north facing roof of the vicar's/organ vestry were replaced by new Cotswold stone tiles.

Project Planning

Planning started early in 2022. Three tenders to oversee and manage the project were requested. Based on the tenders, David Newton, a building conservation consultant, was appointed to oversee & manage the project. He produced all documentation for approvals, tendering and project implementation, including the specification, design and access statement, bat survey and strategy, renewal of roof coverings detailed diagrams, location plans, scale drawings and cross-sections. Following competitive tendering processes, the following appointments were made:

- G. Dowdeswell & Sons Roofing, the main contractor, responsible re-roofing work and for subcontracting scaffolding, joinery and stonemasonry
- Goldhill Quarry, supply of Cotswold stone tiles
- Sinclair Johnson, structural engineer
- CTM Wildlife, environmental (i.e. Bat) surveys.

Work was planned to start in spring 2023 and last for approximately four months. Quotes in March and November 2022 gave total project cost estimates of £228,000 and £262,210 respectively, including 10% contingency and excluding VAT at 20%, which the PCC expected to (and did) reclaim under the Listed Places of Worship scheme. The final tendering process in March 2023 gave a total project cost estimate of £295,853, a 30% increase in 12 months, in line with rises in the cost of many goods and services. The timing of the project was unfortunate in that it coincided with a period of high inflation and a change in ownership of the quarry. Although delaying the project was considered, it was felt that this would only result in further cost increases.

Bat surveys showed some evidence for the presence of a common species of bat and as a result minor modifications to the design were made to accommodate them. Planning Permission was granted on 17/11/2022 and Archdeacon's List-B approval granted on 06/12/2022. No other approvals were required.

Project Implementation

Work started on 5 June 2023 and re-roofing was completed in early October, with snagging and minor changes lasting into December 2023.

The north slopes of the nave and chancel were accessed by a scaffolding tower positioned in the corner between the church tower and the north aisle. Access to the south slopes of the nave and chancel and the north slope of the organ chamber/vicar's vestry was by a scaffolding tower in the corner between the south aisle and the vicar's vestry. Work started on the nave, which was stripped and the timbers fully exposed. When most of the new tiles were in place on the nave roof, the artificial tiles on the chancel roofs were stripped and the chancel timbers exposed for the first time in 50 years. Inspection showed that the timbers were in excellent condition. This was very good news as most of the contingency of 10% of the works cost was for replacement and refurbishment of roof timbers. The result was that very little of the contingency was needed and this lowered the overall project cost from the estimated £295,853 (excluding VAT) by just over £20,000 to an actual cost of £274,048 (excluding VAT).

As the project proceeded the church applied to reclaim VAT from invoiced work through the Listed Places of Worship scheme. In total £45,506 was reclaimed. As of March 2024, all costs have been paid with the exception of a 2.5% retention on the works, to cover any defects, in particular delamination due to frost damage over the first winter. It is payable in June 2024.



Re-roofing the north slope of the nave



Re-roofing of the organ chamber/vicar's vestry north slope

Budget

The project budget is shown in the spreadsheet below, along with the actual costs incurred.

Items of work	Nave (both slopes)	Chancel (both slopes)	Organ chamber, north side	Tender	Actual excl. VAT	Actual incl. VAT
Preliminaries	£6,818	£2,273	£1,136			
Protections, scaffold etc (no covered roof)	£5,682	£4,546	£2,273			
Masonry work (reset/repair cope & apex stones)	£3,977	£3,409	£3,409			
Timber work	£1,136	£1,136	£568			
Supply only new stone slate	£85,376	£27,500	£12,125			
Transport	£2,273	£852	£284			
Re-roofing (strip, sort where applicable, felt, battens, re-lay)	£56,819	£17,046	£11,364			
Abutments including leadwork	£2,273	£1,705	£852			
Total	£164,355.15	£58,466.93	£32,011.92	£254,834.00	£254,593.52	
Contingency @ 10%	£16,435.51	£5,846.69	£3,201.19	£25,483.40		
Actual contingency costs: lead repair, new stonework at gable end, scaffold camera rental					£3,635.00	
Budget cost for re-roofing contract	£180,790.66	£64,313.62	£35,213.12	£280,317.40		
Bat ecologist				£1,687.80	£2,617.25	
Structural engineer				£5,000.00	£3,330.00	
Lead consultant				£8,120.00	£9,505.00	
Pre-app, planning permission, printing				£728.00	£728.00	
			Project cost	£295,853.20	£274,408.77	£319,914.93

Fundraising

The fundraising strategy was to demonstrate commitment to the re-roofing project, starting with a core group then to move outwards to encompass groups successively more removed. The core group comprised the individuals on the Parochial Church Council (the PCC). Their contribution was followed by earmarking funds from church reserves and requests for donations to the congregation. Only when the commitment of the church as a whole had been demonstrated did the fundraising effort move to approach groups in the community and further afield. Fundraising covered four phases.

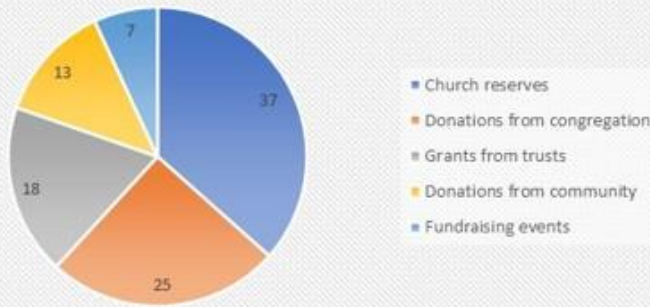
Phase 1 (July 2022 to September 2022) - Commitment from the core group (the PCC) by the end of September the group had contributed over £23,000, including gift aid.

Phase 2 (August 2022 to December 2022) - Commitment from the congregation, commitment from church reserves. At the end of 2022 the total donated by the congregation (including the PCC) stood at £56,831, including gift aid. Further donations followed in 2023. The church applied to the Charity Commission and the Diocese to use the capital in the Lychgate Fund on the project, with success.

Phase 3 (November 2022 to November 2023) - Apply to grant-giving bodies, appeal to village residents, local businesses and those with connections to St. Marys.

Grants received, in chronological order, were £10,000 from the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust, £10,000 from the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust, £10,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation, £4,500 from the Benefact Trust, £2,000 from the Lasletts Hinton Charity, £500 from the Langtree Trust, £500 from a family trust, £10,000 from the National Churches Trust and

Funding Sources, %



£3,000 from the Wolfson Foundation. In total the church received £50,500 in grants. A flyer was produced and delivered to all houses on Painswick and to local businesses, resulting in approximately £35,000 in donations.

Phase 4 (July 2023 to November 2023) - Hold fundraising events.

From July to November 2023 cream teas, concerts and a promises auction raised over £800, just over £1,000 and £17,000 respectively.

Summary

The project was the largest undertaken by the church in over fifty years. It was carried out within budget and works completed within the planned 4-month timeframe. Snags were corrected over the following two months. The overall project cost was £274,048 excluding VAT, £319,914 including VAT.

VAT on all works was reclaimed through the listed places of worship scheme. The outcome was a new natural Cotswold stone roof for the nave, chancel and north slope of the vicar's vestry matching the older Cotswold stone on the remaining roofs.

The church is now watertight and, thanks to the new insulation, warmer than before. It is expected that the new roofs will last well over 100 years, with relatively low maintenance costs.



Before: Photograph showing the roofs to be replaced alongside the existing Cotswold Stone roofs



After: Photograph showing the roofs on completion of the project: all roofs of natural Cotswold Stone

Other Work

Other work carried out by or on behalf of the F&F committee in 2023 includes: repair of the “tea caddy” tomb in front of the church porch, coordinated by David Harley and carried out by Centreline

Architectural Sculpture, brand new noticeboards kindly made at cost by John Elberts, repairs to the badly damaged main path in the churchyard, unblocking and repair some drains, re-surfacing of the assembly hall floor, emergency repair of the church gas supply piping, repair of the donation station, repair of holes in the vicar's vestry lead roof (now watertight), the 5-yearly electrical safety testing and certification of the church, lychgate office and church rooms, visits by Chinnicks and other experts to review the church sound system, replacement of broken and defective microphones, replacing all the remaining fluorescent tubes in the church & church rooms by LED strip lighting, professional clearing of the church and church rooms gutters and flat roofs, a visit by Matt Fulford, Gloucester DAC Heating & Sustainability Advisor, to review the church and discuss potential future heating options.

F&F "To Do" List

Three months after receiving the 2019 Quinquennial Inspection report the UK went into lockdown, putting a halt to all but essential work. Once circumstances improved in late 2021 and into 2022, the priority was on re-roofing and remained there until the end of 2023. Although several items that the QI report recommended addressing have been completed in this period, others are still outstanding. Most should be addressed in the coming months. These include:

- Commission drone survey or rope access survey of tower and spire, cross finials, belfry louvres and other high-level elements and carry out urgent repair recommended
- Investigate cause of subsidence in south wall parapet gutter and repair
- Repair oak board supporting gutter on St Peter's chapel north wall (quotes requested)
- Overhaul and redecorate rainwater disposal system (quotes requested).

Church Rooms

Weekly or fortnightly users of church rooms include: the upholstery group, the art group, the bridge club, the philatelic society and adult ballet. During 2023 we lost the keep fit class and the dog training group but gained the St. Mary's mums and pilates. Occasional bookings continued at a comparable level to the previous year. Overall income exceeded expenditure by over £700. Because of the continued rising costs of gas and electricity, increases to hire charges for 2024 were agreed. Margaret Radway has kindly taken over management of the church rooms bookings.

- Dylan Davies

Church Garden

It has been a difficult year with non-stop rain, losing two committee members Gill McGahan and one who have moved, and with illness. Our average age is 75/80 so we need younger people to help. However we have just recruited Rolland Oxland He has also taken on the bonfire and with the help of Jonquil and will eventually, when it stops raining, burn the woody rubbish although Jonquil has removed some of it and put it on her own bonfire. Jackie Herbert has joined us a very experienced gardener. Spreading the compost was a challenge. One of the prisoners helped and worked very hard but we still needed to employ someone. Freda is in charge of the Spring garden - under the tree has looked amazing.

Over the past few years we have planted a number of shrubs which are now doing well.

We have had many lovely comments as we work in the garden and I am pleased that it is now nearly under control except for the ground elder, a constant battle. We are very lucky to have very experienced helpers and they need a big thank you.

- Joan Warner

Painswick Choir

Notwithstanding the challenges of recent months, overall there has been much to celebrate over the last year. It has been a particular pleasure to welcome Alison Sandville to our ranks, and she is making a terrific contribution week by week. We were grateful to the extra singers who joined us for the Carol Service on Friday 22nd December, and to our regular choir, who together worked especially hard to master one or two particularly demanding carols, notably Tavener's The Lamb and Warlock's Bethlehem Down. It was pleasing that we again had a large congregation,

demonstrating that the traditional carol service format remains as powerful as ever in sharing the joy and wonder of Christmas. Special thanks go to Julian Elloway for his splendid organ playing and to those who provided the mulled wine and mince pies after the service which were greatly appreciated.

The weather was kind for the traditional Clypping service and Painswick Feast in September, and we were very grateful to the Five Valleys Adult Wind Band for once again leading the music so expertly, and to Stephen Aiano who, although unable to be present on the day, masterminded all the arrangements. We hope very much that they will be able to come again this year.

The new pattern and times of services with only one Sunday communion at St Mary's most months came as a shock, resulting in much soul searching as to the way forward for the choir. Nevertheless, our small but dedicated group of singers has continued to meet every Friday, showing great loyalty and a willingness to explore new avenues. Chief among these has been to sing at the second Sunday 9.30am communion service at Pitchcombe, where we are made very welcome and greatly appreciated. We particularly enjoyed the challenge of preparing for a choral evensong on Holy Tuesday at Pitchcombe and at St Mary's on Easter Sunday, which gave a huge boost to the choir's morale. It is some years since we had monthly choral evensongs at St Mary's, so for a couple of our members, this was their first opportunity to sing psalms, canticles and responses. We are particularly grateful to Chris Bray who took on the role of cantor at St Mary's, and it has been good to have Mary Parsons from Pitchcombe with us for both the evensongs and communions. For all of us, both singers and congregation, it has been wonderful to experience the beauty of the words of the BCP evensong, and we hope that choral evensong will become a regular service at Mary's

Choirs have played a vital role in worship over the centuries and continue to do so, and as the only church in the Benefice to have a regular choir, we must do everything we can to nurture it. On behalf of us all, I express our gratitude to each and every one of our small group of singers for all they do to support our worship, and we also thank those who sing with us occasionally for weddings and funerals. The vast body of church music is one of the glories of western civilization and it would be a tragedy if it were to become the preserve of cathedrals. These are challenging but also exciting times for our choir, and we would love others to join us to experience this great heritage. How wonderful it would be, if we could also form a children's choir to pass it on to the next generation.

- Chris Swain

Flower Guild

The members of flower Guild continue to provide flowers for Church services, at their own cost, as well as to arrange flowers, financed by the Church, for Festivals. Unfortunately, because of their decreasing numbers and the increased cost of flowers, the members feel no longer able to provide three arrangements, for weddings, for the fee, set by the PCC, of £100, so decided to withdraw this service.

We wish to acknowledge the help that we receive from Emma Hutchinson for helping us source wholesale flowers for special occasions.

We would be very happy to welcome new members; enthusiasm, but no great skill required!

- Freda Steed

Bellringers, the Ancient Society of Painswick Youths

The last few years have been difficult ones for the Bellringers. We have seen injuries, not caused by ringing I might add, and have had illnesses in our ranks. These problems, along with the later service times, have meant we have great trouble ringing for Sunday services. However we have recruited and trained a new young ringer and we are hoping to find more people willing to put the time in to learn this noble skill. We are doing our best to keep a core of ringers from other towers to help out on the big occasions such as special services and weddings and so we have a quarter peal practice once a month and a 10 bell practice too.

Our new ringer has been improving considerably and has mastered Rounds and Call Changes and is now working on Plain Hunting. This improvement is due to those willing to give up their time to

help. Bell Ringing is a team activity and a ringer needs a good band around them to 'learn the ropes' so to speak.

As always, the steeple keeper has been doing a good job looking after the bells. There is work to be done on the headstocks of two of the bells in the near future, which will require a faculty. The annual inspection will give us more information on this.

The tower at Painswick is very lucky to have a loyal team of ringers who do their best and give freely of their time, but our major need going forward is for new recruits and this will be our priority in the coming year.

- Deborah Pickin