

Brinsley with Underwood PCC

Annual Report for the year 2023

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest.” (Matthew 11:28, The Message)

This booklet contains a report of the activities of the church in the parish of Brinsley with Underwood during the calendar year 2023. This has been the first year post COVID pandemic that we had a reasonably normal year of activities. There have been changes since 2019: some people have decided they can no longer commit to the levels of activity they gave previously, and few people have increased their contribution, income is still recovering and remains a cause for concern especially as costs have risen. One thing remains constant: our trust in a gracious, loving, and generous Saviour who loves to see His people grow.

Our prayer as we read and reflect on these words of scripture, as we dwell on them and let them change us, is that we would be filled again with Holy Spirit, revitalised and renewed. And the people who we live amongst would be blessed by our life with them as they see Jesus living in us and changing us to become more like Him.

Editors: Paul and Rachel Lake

Overview

Vicar's Report

Rev David Stevenson

God is good all the time, all the time God is good.

Jesus warned us that in this world we will have trouble but be of good courage for I have overcome the world. As Christians it's not always easy, especially when you cannot feel God's presence with you, and he does not apparently appear to answer our prayers – at least not in the way that we had hoped – to continue to trust in God's promises towards us.

Despite our circumstances, we should continue to rely on his provision for us. We know he is almighty; we know he is faithful; we know that he loves us and has our very best interests at heart. Even when everything is going wrong, we can be completely confident that his promise to never to leave us is reliable, and that underneath are the everlasting arms. We need to tie our faith not to our feelings which are unreliable but to the facts, which never change, and despite everything continue to offer a sacrifice of thanks and praise to God as a sign that we trust him whatever the future holds. In countless ways, down the years my testimony is that God genuinely wants the best for me and that is timing is always perfect.

2023 was a particularly difficult one for some of us as we have struggled with various serious health issues. This is meant that we have not been able to do all that we would have liked or hoped by way of serving God. I'm very grateful to you all for all your prayers during the course of the past year for my own health issues. I'm pleased to be able to report that the consultant was very happy with the outcomes of my treatment I had in the autumn, when I saw him recently.

Over the past few months, we have greatly missed Pat's contribution to the life of our church and I'm very grateful to Julian, who despite caring for Pat has played a more active part in the

worshiping life of our church. We continue to pray that Pat will make a full recovery from her operation and will once again be able to play a significant role in the ministry of our parish.

For me there were two highlights during 2023. The first was in January when we welcomed the director of Discipleship and Mission of the Diocese Rev Dr Canon Richard Kellett to commission Rachel and Paul as local missional leaders. This marked an important development in the life of the parishes of Brinsley with Underwood and Eastwood. I'm pleased that the Diocese is being innovative in its approach to providing ministry across the Diocese given the falling number of those offering themselves for ordination, with the renewed vision seeking to stop the recent decline and encourage new growth.

It has been very encouraging to see Paul and Rachel ably supported by Gayna continue to grow in confidence in their ministries. This has enabled me to take a bit of a step back from ministry in the parish so that I can concentrate a little bit more on ministry in Eastwood. Something which I will continue to do this year.

And secondly the confirmation service we had with Bishop Andy back in June last year in St Mary's. It was encouraging to see John as well as candidates from Eastwood and Annesley make that important step of faith and publicly affirm their faith in Jesus.

During the past year we've also seen some other people step into new roles, Sarah taking over from her mum as church warden in Underwood, Jen Summers as our safeguarding officer, and Dawn Justice as our treasurer.

Paul, Rachel, Bob, Gayna, Gary and Bid, have been involved in some training provided by the Diocese looking at how we can ensure that mission is at the heart of our church life. We have already seen some fruit from this training with the introduction of praying for five. Over the coming months we will be reflecting on how we can change the culture of our church, so that we are able to play our part in the Diocesan vision, of growing disciples with compassion, courage, and confidence.

So many people play a significant part to ensure the smooth running of our church which goes largely unnoticed. I'm not going to attempt to name them all, I simply want to say a big thank you to everyone for all they do to serve the Lord in our parish however big or small that role is. As always, I want to say a big thank you to DI and the rest of my family for their encouragement and the sacrifices that they continue to make in order to make my ministry possible.

Ministry Development

Paul and Rachel Lake were licensed as Local Missional Leaders in the Parish leading activities with the encouragement and support of Rev David Stevenson. Paul and Rachel are also Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM) along with Gayna Hall in the Parish.

Jackie Smith who continues to serve as an LLM In Eastwood, Jane Ellis' licensing as LLM was deferred to January 2024 due to health concerns, and Di Stevenson is due to complete LLM training in Oct 24. As is normal all LLMs in Rev David's parishes are licensed to both parishes.

Growing Disciples

Paul and Rachel Lake

Growing Disciples has featured as a standing item on the PCC agendas throughout the year. It provides a space to review how we have sought to engage with people to grow in faith and deepen their faith.

We continue to develop our Experience offerings to schools. Our connections with Underwood School remain very good, as well as their usual church services for specific occasions, we have welcomed 5 classes for Experience classes through the year. It was excellent to host Brinsley School in St James for a visit on Baptism in May, sadly we had to cancel an Experience Harvest visit at short notice. Real education brought one class in for Experience Christmas too. Our prayer is that all of these will continue to develop and that we can host some classes from Bagthorpe school too.

We provided booklets for Lent, Thy Kingdome Come and the Coronation.

A Pasta Party (Praise-Ask-Sorry Thankyou-Amen!) was run on Ascension Day to help engagement with Thy Kingdom Come

As the Diocese sought to renew its vision there was an opportunity to engage with monthly prayer meetings. On one occasion several people met Bishop Andy at Eastwood for morning prayer, and some went to Southwell on several occasions to participate in the evenings of contemporary worship.

An Alpha course ran again from October to December, only one new person engaged with it, and another attended again as a refresher. It became a lovely small group with an opportunity to share and support one another. An opportunity arose for us to link with Toton Church Alpha group for an away day at Stapleford.

A small team started the Leading in Evangelism course run by the Diocese in September. As a result, the Thy Kingdom Come Pray for 5 cards were reintroduced in October's café worship and a prompt introduced during our weekly intercessions.

Peter, Jane, Paul, and Rachel attended a Christian Resources Exhibition and picked up few sample resources and ideas.

Discussions started with Ashfield District Council on engaging volunteers to help with Churchyard maintenance which it is hoped will have the effect of both improving the churchyard and developing new friendships.

We were delighted to hear that "Growing Disciples, Deeper, Younger Wider" will be replaced by "Growing Disciples of Christ with Compassion, Confidence and Courage." It recognised the need to help all generations engage with the vision and to encourage those who enter our doors for our other activities to engage with faith also. The Diocesan conference had a lot of similar emphasis to the Leading in Evangelism Course including encouraging confidence in sharing our faith and praying for 5.

Diocesan Vision Refresh

Paul Lake

Through the year the central team have been working on the Diocesan Vision for the next 7 years. This was outlined in draft to Clergy in October, it was shared more widely with Parish Leadership teams in March 2024 and will be shared more at the 2024 APCM.

Public Worship

Rev David Stevenson

Successes, items for praise

- Morning Worship and Sunday Celebration have continued with new people appearing now and then at both services. The morning service continues to be broadcast, we have moved our primary broadcast channel to YouTube and post a link weekly to Facebook too;

audience numbers continue to be good, although the need to broadcast later in the day is clearly not helping our reach. Faculties are approved in both churches to enable internet installation.

- Remembrance Sunday services were again held in both villages, and we supported the Act of Remembrance at Brinsley Garden of Remembrance. These services were well attended (70+ people at each,) with Scouts attending in Underwood.
- Carol services in Underwood and Brinsley were well attended. Huthwaite Prize Band was no longer able to support the Carol Service in Underwood, it was lovely to have a contribution instead from Underwood School and the Brinsley Community Choir joined us again in Brinsley.

Sunday services continue at 10:30am, alternating between St Michael's and St James with Holy communion on the first and third Sundays monthly Café style worship was reintroduced on 5th Sundays. At 5pm in St Michael's Sunday Celebration: an all-age family friendly service continues to develop its identity.

Groups and Activities

We would, again, like to say a big "Thank You!" to all those who volunteer as organisers and helpers in all our events. Your contribution is noticed and appreciated by so many others in the community. None of these activities would happen without your energy and enthusiasm.

Living with Loss

Jane Fletcher

The Living with Loss Bereavement Support Fellowship Group continue to meet on the first Thursday of every month from 2-4pm.

Successes, items for praise

- Regular monthly attendance remains between 10-14 members.
- As one person leaves because of changing circumstances/needs, another person joins the group.
- Nicky Smith's invaluable help and her continuation in researching new ideas for the craft-based activities which prove to be an enjoyable and encouraging resource/healing 'focus' for the group.
- For many members of the group this meeting continues to be a lifeline for fellowship and support.
- We especially welcomed another member into the fellowship and support group with sensitivity, care and compassion.

Items for prayer, needs

- We hope that the leaders can continue to run and support this group.
- It is important to be able to recognise the needs of each other and to encourage other bereaved people, with sensitivity and understanding, to see if they would like to join the group.
- To continue to assess what we do as a fellowship/support group to make sure it is relevant to needs.
- To listen and discern.

Pie Club

We give thanks for:

- During the year we have continued to meet in person and in public.
- We have welcomed several new blokes into our midst from our church, other churches, and none
- Our finances remain good, and we have been able to support several charities.
- New challenges and opportunities for community involvement have presented themselves, mainly Tools with a Mission and Eastwood Shed

Prayer needs

- Introduction to people who might come and share their stories with us
- Looking ahead: someone to take over as the lead.

Some facts and statistics: -

- Our finances are generated by free will gifts and sorting and selling scrap. We started the year with £658 and finished the year with £473.
- During the year through our activities several charities, BwithU Parish, Christian Vision for Men, Nuthall Christmas Lights, Disaster Emergency Commission, Mick & Lynn's retirement from the 'Stute and Tools for a Mission benefitted financially by over £700.
- Our regular Pie and a Pint night on a Thursday keep us in touch with the communities of Brinsley and Underwood. Supper at the Durham Ox in the 3rd week of the month is enjoyed by us and any regulars, and our First Saturday breakfasts seem to be going down well now we have settled on The Hole in the Wall as a regular venue.
- The church and local community were treated to a Christmas sing-along at the Durham Ox. One of our group served as a steward at CVM's #tg 23 weekend. Several have helped with church activities.
- A small group of us have a Local House of Prayer which concentrates on blokes in our community.
- Our relationship with Tools for a Mission has grown, we have had several van loads of tools taken away, we realised several hundred pounds of gifts to TWAM through cashing scrap metal and are now seeking to assist with tool refurbishment as well as converting redundant tools into cash for their funds.
- During the year several Piemen have been instrumental in getting Eastwood Shed up and running and whilst we do not seek to make it part of The Piemen there is a symbiotic relationship and several blokes from the shed are now coming to Piemen events.
- Sadly, a few of the blokes now find attending difficult and we must find new opportunities to stay in touch. Numbers have held constant at about 14 regulars with a few periodic visitors, but we continue to see growth which gives even more opportunity for discipleship and evangelism.

Iron sharpens iron.

Place of Welcome Café, St James

Karen and David Hammond

We give thanks for:

- The café has continued to flourish over the past year.
- We regularly get up to 60 attendees and it is heartening to welcome young people during schools' holiday who come with parents/grandparents.

- Animals are also welcomed adding to the interest and enjoyment (sometimes chaos) of the morning!
- Prayer opportunity is always available to those who ask for it.
- A 'Thought for the Day' saying, generally of a lighthearted nature, is available on each table, hopefully creating an opportunity for discussion or possibly thought provoking.
- A jigsaw puzzle is available but generally the café attracts people who want to meet up with friends to chat.
- We have been most fortunate over recent months to receive overspill cakes/pastries/bread from Lidl, when they are available, Councillor Liz Williamson has kindly collected these on the café's behalf. As may be expected they have been hugely popular, and it is heartening to learn that some attendees take produce to neighbours and friends who are unable to attend due to age/infirmity. It is a lovely thought that the joy of the café spreads beyond the doors of the Church.
- Wrapped biscuits remain available every week.
- We are truly grateful to Peter and Jane Fletcher who help with the running of the café and Nicky Smith and Georgina Allen who have assisted when required.

Community Café – St Michael's

Mary Simpson-Eyre

The Chatterbox Café is still going well. Lately we have had a few new people come that didn't know we existed until a few weeks ago... we have only been running for about 13 years! We are running short of space and will have to try fitting in more tables to fit everyone in. We have our regulars who seem to turnout when we least expect them. More people seem to be bringing cakes, it gives people chance to bake a cake who might not bother as they are otherwise on their own.

I would not be able to run it if it wasn't for all the help I get. I thank my husband Stewart for helping set up, Sonia for coming to serve, Helen Smith for washing up every week, and for Penny White for coming at the end to stack Chairs away and do the money.

Open Church

Gayna Hall

Another year of offering open Church on a Wednesday afternoon. Whilst sometimes attendance is small, I feel that there have been times when someone has needed to be in a church, and we have been there, and open!

Generally we have regular attendees. Dog walkers always glad of a sit down and a cuppa, a family who came to inter their mums ashes and were able to sit in church on a cold day and enjoy a chat and a cuppa, people visiting graves who like to come in and have a look round; it's always good to see how much they appreciate the church being open and to be welcomed inside.

During the cold weather, we offered soup and toast, and we were very grateful to Selston PCC for granting us £500 towards the heating costs.

We run on a Wednesday, as the heating is usually on for the Choir in the evening, so it incurs no extra heating costs. In summer, if warm, we move outside, and we do get a lot of people joining-in our picnic afternoon.

I would like to thank Jen Summers and Yvonne Derbyshire, who co-host this with me, and bring lots of games for us to try.

Little Angels

Rachel Lake

Numbers have fluctuated throughout the year, however the number of children attending dropped dramatically after the summer holiday. Typically, over seven in the early part of the year but only one or two later in the year. This has reportedly been a pattern seen in other groups, such as Little Stars at Selston.

- The most regular and appreciative attendees are often grand-parents who refer to us as a "Godsend".
- A good number of carers are male
- The children usually engage with a Bible story and simple prayer
- We are grateful to Jen Summers who helps out but is understandably unavailable when school offer her work

We miss Gayna who has stood down as a regular helper as she has several other ministry commitments. We are grateful that she continues to support when she can to cover absence and illness. However, she is most missed for her conversational skills, and we would welcome anybody who is simply willing to chat to people and be another pair of eyes.

Needs

- We would also appreciate a handyman who could make some wheeled storage units to tidy up the passageway storage

Youth Outreach

Rachel Lake, James Spriggs

For over a decade a team from the Church were able to offer a free open access Youth Club on Friday evenings at Underwood Community Centre.

Our aim was to provide a safe space for young people on Friday evenings. In the autumn and winter, pool, table tennis, table football and air hockey were available. Young people were free to chat about anything that bothered them.

We are hugely grateful to James and Kate Spriggs who led this for so many years with many other helpers.

The revised layout of the community centre made the setting slightly more difficult for us to use. This led to a little bit of vandalism of the Pre-school Playgroup equipment and just before Easter a night of very poor and threatening behaviour.

James Rachel and Kate did visit the recreation ground during the summer period as was the usual programme. It has been noticeable in recent years that far fewer young people have been out on the park.

When September came, we decided not to re-open in the Community Centre because of other commitments and a general lack of volunteers. James really hopes that this is just a sabbatical and he would like to open again in future.

We are grateful to our local councillors at Parish, District and County level and the staff at Selston Parish Council for their support over the years.

Prayer and Fellowship

Wednesday Night Home Group at Nicky Smith's

The group continued to meet with a regular attendance of 6 at Nicky's home on Wednesday evenings throughout 2023 and followed a number of Bible Studies, which always seem to generate much helpful discussion

Monday Afternoon Bible Study

Gayna Hall

Our Monday home group led by Gayna is a very friendly and educational group. We have some great discussions on each topic. We can also share personal problems and spend time in prayer. We have all forged great friendships as well as a greater understanding of the bible and God.

Local Houses of Prayer

Bob Tyers

We are grateful to Bob for providing encouragement and coaching to groups of people across the East Midlands who are exploring praying for their network and area. Within our congregation a few groups are meeting to pray that people would be blessed by getting to know Jesus Christ. It is our prayer that more people would join in prayer to see the kingdom grow with one or two others.

Prayer Partners

Jane Fletcher

A group continues to pray for specific needs as they arise so that you can know that others are sharing privately your need. Please let Jane Fletcher know if you have a need that you would like to know that a few people are praying for.

Our Management Processes

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Andy Palmer

The PCC has met 6 times in the year to manage church business and arising issues. These are given more coverage elsewhere in this report. Dawn Justice was appointed Treasurer. We record our gratitude and thanks to Helen Baker who has served faithfully as Treasurer and previously as PCC Secretary for many years.

Newstead Deanery

Portia Newling

Deanery Synod met three times in 2023. We worshipped together and shared all the positive news from around the deanery – new initiatives including Foodcycle, contemporary worship services, Alpha, and different kinds of children's groups.

Our guest speakers were: James Halstead from the School of Discipleship explaining the various courses found and booked on the new Learning Hub to support discipleship and lay ministry; Jonathan Pickett from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches explaining the roles of the Chancellor and the DAC in the faculty process;

and Martha Skinner from FoodCycle, a national charity addressing food poverty, social isolation and food waste.

This year saw the start of a new triennium, so the leadership team was elected. We said goodbye to Claire as Lay Chair and Martyn Bowler agreed to act as interim Chair, as well as remaining in the post of Treasurer. Clergy representatives are: Revds. Trevor Raaf, David Stevenson, Hazel Robinson and Julie Cotterill. Lay representatives are: Joanne Parr, Peter Cook and Peter Fletcher.

In addition to regular business, Newstead Deanery Synod discussed the appropriateness of having fossil fuel companies in the Diocesan investment portfolio, with a view to sending a motion requiring divestment to Diocesan Synod.

We were able to increase our contribution of Deanery Share in 2023 based on previous years' but didn't quite match the targets set by the diocese. The process allocating deanery share was reviewed in readiness for 2024.

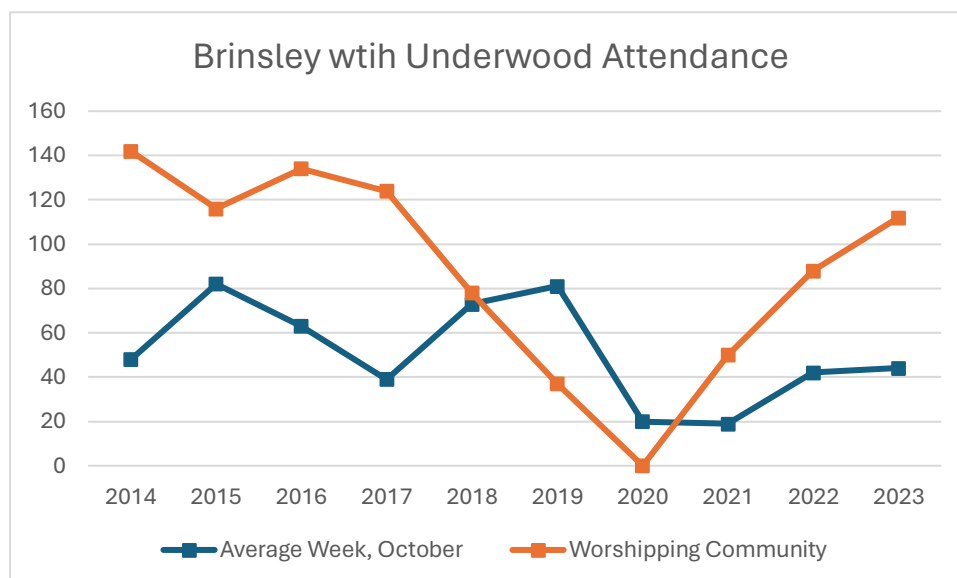
Selston with Westwood welcomed the appointment of Revd. Lee Gordon, while Huthwaite, Kirkby in Ashfield and West Hucknall remain in vacancy. Paul and Rachel Lake were licensed as Local Missional Leaders in Brinsley with Underwood. We were particularly delighted to welcome Revd Canon Dr Richard Kellett as our Area Dean, starting in October.

Electoral Roll

Andy Palmer

The electoral roll has increased to 72 members at the time of the 2024 Annual Parochial Meeting compared with 66 reported in 2023.

Statistics for Mission



Shows a small increase in average October attendance, which has been biased down a little through attendance at Rev Lee Gordon's installation in Selston with Westwood Parish on one Sunday in October.

Our Worshipping Community – all those who worship with us on a reasonably regular basis, including online – is showing signs of steady growth post Covid.

Safeguarding

Jen Summers

We updated our Safeguarding Policy in January 2023 in line with the recommended model policy and Jen Summers was appointed as our Parish Safeguarding officer in January 2023 subject to completion of training. In January all PCC members confirmed they had read Promoting a Safer Church and the new policy on recruitment of ex-offenders was approved in line with Church of England requirements.

A new Parish Dashboard system which is very helpful in managing Safeguarding was introduced in July and all red actions were closed out in September.

Our Buildings

St James the Great

Peter Fletcher

What has happened over the past year?

- Good Friday Stations of the Cross reflection was well received by the 22 who attended.
- Brinsley School visited for a Baptism Experience on Wednesday 10 May.
- St James weekend 22/23 included the Annual Coffin Walk to St Mary's, Greasley on the Saturday morning with 9 taking part, including Joanne from Gillotts and a couple from Northumberland who had travelled down just to join the Coffin Walk. The planned 'Garden Games' in the churchyard was unfortunately rained off but relocated into church with a reasonable attendance. The Sunday morning worship was Café Church with a number sharing their faith stories.
- Remembrance Sunday Service on 12 November was attended by 56 adults and one young person, including 4 Parish Councillors.
- Carol Service on 17 December included musical contributions from Charlotte Mendly and the Brinsley Community Choir with 102 attending.
- Christmas Eve Morning Worship was attended by 29 adults and one young person and the Christmas Day Morning Worship was attended by 18 adults.
- There were 2 Funerals and one Baptism during the year.
- Church was once again open on Saturday 9 September for the Historic Churches Ride & Stride, thanks to Jane, Nicky, Chris, John Rowarth and Karen.
- Place of Welcome Café continues to open from 10.00am until 12.00 noon each Tuesday morning, led by David and Karen Hammond and continues to be well supported with around 50-60 attending, mostly non-church local people. The Brownies, Bakelicious and Keep Fit group bookings continued throughout 2023 and in November, the 'Little Sunshines' Mothers and Toddlers group began a weekly booking on Wednesday's 9.00am -12noon.

Maintenance and Grounds

- Broxtowe Borough Council replaced the turf with granite chippings around the front Cremated Remains area on 2 March.
- A Faculty for an internet connection and audio/visual equipment to St James has been granted an extension of time and we await a response to a recent grant application to the Benefact Trust (January 2024).

- A faculty has also been applied for removing the front plinth wall, which has been causing damp on the wall behind the Altar. The best quotation received for the internal repair is £1,750 plus VAT and grants will be applied to hopefully cover this cost.
- There is also a damp patch in the corner behind the pulpit, which is being monitored. The gutter above and the downpipe have been cleaned out.
- A pressure drop in the central heating system is being monitored by John Dye who is also planning to carry out some modifications to the system once the heating is off.
- Our grateful thanks go to Vaughan Price who once again painted the wooden gates to the new churchyard as well as the wrought iron gates to the church.
- The Fire Alarm/Emergency Lights were serviced, and repairs carried out by Dean Wilson (BWF) who is also assisting with an updated Fire Risk Assessment.
- A replacement hot water boiler was fitted in January by John Dye, who made no charge, with funds raised from a Soup Lunch (£411.81), a £750 grant from Cllr Liz Wilmamson's Notts. CC fund and £300 from the former Wednesday Café surplus funds.
- Once the parked camper van has been removed from the church car park, a sign will be erected restricting the use of the car park.

I give thanks for:

- The return to worshipping in St James alongside streaming services.
- The continuing local support for the 'Place of Welcome Café'.
- Vaughan Price for continuing to cut the new churchyard grass.
- Sue Pike and Chris Smith for organising the church flowers.
- Jane Fletcher for her continued support in a number of areas.

Points of need:

- More people currently viewing services on-line to take the step of attending services in church to support our 'in person' worshipping community.
- Increase in number of community bookings.
- Volunteers to assist with basic cleaning.
- Volunteers to assist with after service refreshments.
- Volunteers to assist with basic d.i.y. and churchyard tidying.
- Volunteers to manage bookings, including opening up and locking the church.

St Michael and All Angels

Sarah Harker

What has happened over the past year?

- Along with our usual services, St Michael's continues to host our Tuesday tots and toddlers play group Little Angels, Rock 'n' Soul Singers on Wednesday nights and our Community Café on Thursday mornings.
- We have also had weddings, funerals, and christenings. It is always a pleasure to know that people want God to be a part of these important occasions.
- We have enjoyed educational outreach with the local School and REAL education through several "Discover" events helping young people explore Christianity.
- Underwood School is a regular user of the church for school services, and it is always wonderful to have the school in.
- Some of the bigger events we have hosted last year included:
 - Scarecrow Festival
 - Teddy Bear's Picnic

- Ride and Stride
- October 31st Gate Meet and Greet
- Remembrance
- School Nativity and Christingle
- Carol Service with Underwood School
- Most of our school activities have been involved with Underwood School. At present we seem to have lost our connection with Bagthorpe school, with them choosing to use their own facilities.

What do we have to look forward to?

- In November 2023 we had the faculty approved to refurbish St Michaels. Our challenge is now to raise funds to complete the project, we have commitments that amount to about 1/3rd of the project, leaving about £500 thousand to raise. Any help towards the work, whether it be to offer skilled work or to help applying for grants would be very much appreciated.
- We have a couple of concerts arranged. One with Rock'n'Soul Singers on 13th April and a joint concert between Eastwood Male Voice Choir and Underwood School on the 7th June. We are excited to be hosting these concerts and feels we are starting to move back into a world pre-pandemic. I would like to encourage anyone who is interested to support these events.

Maintenance and Grounds

- Last year we had a constructive meeting with Ashfield District Council regarding the upkeep of the closed part of the church yard. They were supportive of us setting up a volunteer group to do some of the more hands-on groundwork which their cutters do not have the time to do. It was overwhelming to see the volunteers that turned out at the start of March for the church yard clear up, and we saw 20 years of overgrowth cut back. Thank you to all who came out on that day. Many hands really did make light work!
- Unfortunately, the church yard, both by the church entrances (the cremated remains) and up on the open graveyard has suffered from the abnormal amount of rain, resulting the ground being waterlogged and even having to decline to do burials during the worst of it. This is a sensitive situation, particularly if new graves drop. We endeavour to keep family's sensitivity informed if this happens.
- During the winter we also suffered some internal flooding in the vestry, which was a result of all the bird activity in the tower blocking the drains. Although the clearing the bird nesting detritus should be an annual job, this again has been something that has been waylaid since Covid. Many thanks to Peter and Jane who went up and cleared the mess.
- We do have the occasional leak through the roof in extreme heavy rain.
- Last year we had a second internal light go out. Paul Lake kindly fitted a temporary light, so the choir still had visibility. After some delay on my part, we were able to get the lights replaced this year. Thank you to Paul for scaling the ladders to replace the lights, saving a small fortune. We will get one of the old lights repaired as a backup if needed.

Thank you

- I would like to thank everyone who has supported me during the last year. I am aware that my pregnancy has made it more difficult for me to do various jobs and others have

had to pick up those jobs. But I very much look forward to introducing a new congregation member to you all very soon.

St Michael's Refurbishment

St Michael's, built in 1890, is 133 years old. Through its life the church has been maintained to keep it available for worship and activities and it has been modified as the needs of the community and styles of worship at the time have required. On each occasion funding has been raised by the local community who value the Church's presence in the community. It is now our turn to raise funds for a major maintenance and upgrading project to set St Michael's up to serve the community for a further 50 years.

The project includes a new accessible entrance and toilets, a new kitchen which will be in at the back of the North Aisle, a new oak floor throughout, replacing plywood screens with oak screens in the main archways, an upgraded sound and vision system, chairs to replace the pews. New shingles on the spire, new guttering, and stonework pointing and renovation throughout.

In total the project is expected to cost about £750,000, and we have raised or had commitments for nearly one third of this. We, therefore, must raise about £500,000 to do the project. Most of this will be raised through grant applications, and we hope that the Parish will join in with specific fund-raising activities in addition to normal giving.

We will start the building works as soon as we can cover the costs, hopefully later this year.

38 Main Road, Underwood

Peter Fletcher

A new tenant moved in late June 2023. A large amount of decorating and general d.i.y. was required before the new tenant moved in, which was carried out with grateful thanks to a number of church volunteers.

In addition, a new garage roof was carried out by MTF at a cost of £1,827 in September. In December, following gale damage, a dry ridge system was installed by Brinsley Roofing at a cost of £650.

Financial Report

Unrestricted funds

Receipts of unrestricted funds, the General Fund, totalled £66,880 which was an increase of over £7,000 from 2022. Collections have continued to increase, and the various groups and cafes have been well supported.

The amount received from sundry donations has decreased by £682, but notably had decreased in the previous year by nearly £8,000. A donation of just over £200 was received from Notts Historic Churches from the Ride and Stride proceeds and the regular £500 donation towards the grass cutting at St Michael's was also gratefully received. The number of regular planned givers remained at 24 throughout the year.

Income from Events decreased by £2,000. Room hire at St. James increased by £180, whilst room hire at St. Michael's decreased by £500, due to the loss of one hirer.

The house on Main Road was re-let and provided a gross income of £7,763. We were also fortunate in receiving grants of £7,000 from the Diocese and £500 from Selston Parish Council towards energy costs.

Payments from unrestricted funds amount to £74,503 compared to £54,690 in 2022. This is largely accounted for by the increase of £14,479 in energy payments. Also of note is the increase of £2,966 for the rented property on Main Road, Underwood, which was due to necessary maintenance work at the changeover in tenancy.

There was an increase in maintenance costs for both churches of £1,248, but costs continued to be kept to a minimum due to the routine programme of servicing and inspections, and, where possible, repairs continue to be carried out in house.

Charity donations were made to Nuthall Christmas Lights £150, Christian Aid £150, Tools with a Mission £425. Framework, Acts 435, Life Words, Christian Vision for Men and The Children's Society also received payments. Many of these charities are generously supported by through the work of the Piemen.

The net result for the year was a difference in receipts over payments of minus £7,623.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months' unrestricted payments. In recent years this has been equivalent to £16,000, but increased outgoings mean that the target figure has increased to £18,625. This figure proved unattainable for 11 out of 12 months. The average amount of unrestricted funds at month end over the 12 months was £12,923, and at year end unrestricted funds totalled £13,555. The PCC may wish to review this policy.

Restricted Funds

Donations totalled £962 towards St Michael's Re-ordering comprising £462 from the Scarecrow Festival and £500 from a Rock 'n' Soul Singers Concert. High interest rates also helped contribute to this fund and the year end balance in the high interest account of £143,123 is retained towards the cost of St Michael's Re-ordering. St James' Re-ordering continues to receive small donations. The Clock fund continues to reduce. £1,124 is restricted in the clock fund and £3,408 towards St James' final refurbishment projects.

PCC OF BRINSLEY WITH UNDERWOOD
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

	General Fund	Other allocated funds	Restricted funds			Total 2023	Total 2022
			St James' reordering	Clock	St Michael's reordering		
Receipts							
Planned giving - Gift Aided	£13,953					£13,953	£14,439
	£500				£60	£560	£800
Collections - St James	£1,989					£1,989	£1,715
Collections - St Michael's	£3,165					£3,165	£2,689
Gift Aid reclaimed	£5,334					£5,334	£5,901
Service fees	£12,538					£12,538	£13,025
Chatterbox Café - St M	£1,728					£1,728	£1,276
Place of Welcome - St J	£2,321	£412				£2,733	£1,670
Piemen	£924					£924	£728
Little Angels	£254					£254	£326
Donations - St Michael's reordering					£962	£962	£2,366
Donations - St James' reordering			£16			£16	£69
Donations - sundry	£2,781					£2,781	£3,463
Donations - charities	£1,132					£1,132	£1,084
Printer	£0					£0	£627
Events	£396					£396	£2,322
Events - St Michael's reordering	£0					£0	£36
Room hire - St James	£1,937					£1,937	£1,756
Room hire - St Michael's	£780					£780	£1,286
Rent - Main Road	£7,763					£7,763	£6,900
Grants		£7,500				£7,500	£720
Miscellaneous	£1,032	£300				£1,332	£60
Interest	£141				£1,345	£1,486	£158
Total	£58,668	£8,212	£16	£0	£2,367	£69,263	£63,416
Payments							
Parish share	£32,976					£32,976	£31,704
Officers' fees	£1,231					£1,231	£1,124
Clergy expenses	£657					£657	£714
Training fees	£60					£60	£368
Organist stipend	£1,000					£1,000	£1,000
Energy	£12,078	£7,500				£19,578	£5,099
Water	£503					£503	£254
Insurance	£5,205					£5,205	£4,787
Licences - music, website etc	£619					£619	£742
Maintenance	£4,290					£4,290	£3,042
Main Road	£3,780					£3,780	£814
Printing/stationery	£129					£129	£934
Charities	£1,795					£1,795	£2,316
Events	£129					£129	£554
Mission	£1,806					£1,806	£1,222
Miscellaneous	£745					£745	£1,550
Broadband at St James	£0					£0	£0
Clock				£260		£260	£0
Other restricted funds						£0	£0
Total	£67,003	£7,500	£0	£260	£0	£74,763	£56,224
Difference receipts over payments	-£8,335	£712	£16	-£260	£2,367	-£5,500	
Statement of Assets at 31 Dec 2023							
Balance brought forward	£22,439		£3,392	£1,384	£140,756	£27,215	
Receipts	£66,880		£16	£0	£2,367	£66,896	
Payments	£74,503		£0	£260	£0	£74,763	
Unpresented cheques	£1,261						
Balance as at 31 Dec 2023	£13,555		£3,408	£1,124	£143,123	£18,087	
Bank balances							
Bank balances	Current a/c				High Int a/c	Total bank	
Bank 01.01.23	£25,954				£140,756	£166,710	
Bank 31.12.23	£18,087				£143,123	£161,210	
Bank balance difference	-£7,867				£2,367	-£5,500	