

# **St Nicholas, Great Wilbraham**

[www.fulbournandthewilbrahams.org](http://www.fulbournandthewilbrahams.org)

*Working together to be a Christian Community of Worship,  
Welcome and Care*

**Deanery of Fordham and Quy  
Diocese of Ely  
Parochial Church Council**

## **Annual Report & Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024**



Parochial Church Council 2024

The following served as members of the PCC

Incumbent: The Revd Alice Goodman

Licensed Lay Minister: Steve Mashford

Treasurer: Jeremy Barnett

PCC Secretary: Jackie Beadsmoore

Representative on the Deanery Synod: Steve Mashford

Elected members: Allan Painter, Diana Raikes, Jackie Beadsmoore

Benefice Safeguarding Officer: Mary Kendall

## **Background**

The purpose of this report is to paint a picture of the life and activities of our village church here in Great Wilbraham in 2024, and to note the condition of the church building and the state of the church's finances.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the vicar in promoting the whole mission of the Church of England within the Parish of Great Wilbraham, encompassing all pastoral, missional, social, and ecumenical aspects of the Church's work. St Nicholas, Great Wilbraham is part of a plurality with St Vigor's with All Saints, Fulbourn, and St John the Evangelist, Little Wilbraham with St George, Six Mile Bottom. The PCC has maintenance responsibilities for the church building and the churchyard.

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or are elected by Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The PCC meets at least 4 times a year, but also operates through a number of groups or committees which meet as required during the year often as a result of issues raised at PCC meetings. These include the Standing Committee (The only committee required by law with the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC), the Fabric Committee, which organises structural repairs and general maintenance, and a Worship Committee which works with Steve Mashford, our licensed lay minister, to plan the 'Come and Join' services.

## **Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.**

As a benefice we have a policy showing we are committed to valuing, listening to and respecting children, young people and vulnerable adults. This includes safe recruitment, supervision, training and DBS checks where applicable. This policy is available in Twelve and each church. Our Safeguarding officer is Mary Kendall.

## **Facts and figures 2024**

The average attendance at the 'Come & Join' services held at St Nicholas on the first Sunday of the month was 17 adults and 2 children. At our service of Holy Communion on the third Sunday, it was 14 adults. More than 240 adults and children attended our services on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning in 2024.

Our mid-week Iona prayer service at 9.30am on Wednesday mornings has continued with, on average, six people attending. Our 'Wednesday Church' after school service was held from January to April, with a very small congregation.

During the year there were two baptisms (Katerina and Rosa Chouliaras), one funeral (Stan Wilson), one Service of Thanksgiving (John Beadsmoore, whose funeral was at Great Chesterford Crematorium), and three burials of ashes. Three well-attended services were held for Great Wilbraham Primary School. A Harvest Songs of Praise service was held in October and an All Souls service was held on 2 November.

There are 39 church members on the new St Nicholas Electoral Roll, the same number as on the 2023 Roll.

The main points on the church finances in 2024, which are detailed in the Annual Accounts, are:

- We started the year with General Funds of £898 and ended with £64, having used £8,300 (2023-£4,500) from the rental income of 5 Benstead End to ensure we settled all our costs.

- We continue to be grateful to church members for their financial support. £13,552 (2023- £15,601) was donated in the year including Gift Aid tax recoveries and collections. Fees from the thanksgiving service and the funeral totalled £913 of which £368 was paid on to the Diocese.
- We paid the Ministry Share of £11,811, insurance of £3,098, and heating and utility costs of £4,977. The total of these three costs in 2023 was £17,804. The joint expenses due to St Vigor's, Fulbourn and other costs totalling £2,160 (2023-£2,408).
- We made two donations to charities from church funds-the Head to Toe charity for Fulbourn Hospital, £400, and the Great Wilbraham Anne Ward and Benstead Charities £600. An additional £1,404 was raised during the year for specific charities, as listed in our accounts.
- In addition to monetary support, as part of our Harvest Festival outreach, generous donations of food and household items were given to Jimmy's Night Shelter, having been donated by the Wilbrahams community.
- A summary of the repair costs is given in the Fabric report.

#### **Investment property-5 Benstead End, Great Wilbraham**

The property has been let for eleven and a half months in the year. The rental income in 2024 was £25,000. The major costs in the year were the installation of a new, oil fired boiler, £7,663, and repairs, new guttering and drains, £6,140. Other annual costs were £2,823. We continue to be extremely grateful to Graham Clarke for his management of the property, free of charge, throughout the year.

#### **Fabric report 2024**

As detailed in the Fabric reports for the last two years, the priority for 2024 has continued to be carrying out the smaller repairs highlighted in the Quinquennial review, prepared for us by our architects, Archangel in 2020. The repairs fell into two categories, stonework, mainly on the exterior, and windows and glass.

The stonework repairs were completed by January 2023. Window and glass repairs have been carried out in three parts. The third part was completed in 2024, £4,520.

Following discussions with Archangel, the agreed repair work in 2024 comprised:

- Pointing repair work on the exterior of the south side of the Chancel; and
- Repainting all the gutters and downpipes.

The cost of this work was £17,460. Both this work and the window repairs were generously funded by the St Nicholas Trust. In addition, we were able to reclaim VAT charged on costs, £3,162



The team managing the churchyard worked heroically over the year to obtain all the bureaucratic approvals needed to erect a secure storage shed in which our new churchyard mower is held. The work included obtaining two grants totalling £4,100 towards the total cost of £6,359. Many thanks to the team for persevering to ensure this project was successfully completed. Other fabric, churchyard and

professional costs totalled £1,547 in the year.

Our next Quinquennial, will be prepared later this year. This will form the basis of the fabric work to be undertaken between 2025 and 2030.

As at 31 December 2024, we held a total of £10,082 in our fabric related funds in anticipation of whatever work is recommended.

### **Outreach and Pastoral Care**

Eucharist every third Sunday; in addition there is 'Come and Join,' our informal Sunday service on the first Sunday of the month.

Services for the great festivals of the church year, and occasional offices (baptisms, weddings, and funerals) for the great events of human life.



The work of the church continues to be led by the vicar, the Revd Alice Goodman. Steve Mashford continues as our LLM, helping with the running of the services and being a vital member of the PCC and our Deanery Synod representative. Our 2023-24 pastoral assistant, Emma Bourne, was a wonderful addition to the team, and is now preparing for ordination. Sian Hornby is our efficient and reliable benefice administrator. Raúl Arkaia was with us as ordinand on attachment for half of 2024, most notably for the Good Friday Walk of Witness. In September we were joined by Emily Clough, our pastoral assistant for 2024-25, and, in October, by Catherine Cox, our 2024-25 ordinand on

attachment. Gill Humphrey continues as our Director of Music, with Nigel Start on the guitar, and, on high and holy days, with the Wilbrahams Community Choir.

The vicar serves as an ex-officio trustee of the Benstead and Ward Charities. Along with the Pastoral Assistant (in 2024 Emma Bourne, succeeded by Emily Clough), our ordinand (in 2024 our ordinands were Raúl Arkaia and Catherine Cox) and Ben Davidson, the vicar leads Collective Worship and teaches RE in Great Wilbraham School. Ben Davidson and the Vicar are also Foundation Governors.

In addition, the benefice has a welcoming presence on Fulbourn High Street, 'Twelve' which houses our benefice office, a shop, and a meeting place, and we maintain an up-to-date benefice website, thanks to Dr Martin Herrick, our webmaster. [www.fulbournandthewilbrahams.co.uk](http://www.fulbournandthewilbrahams.co.uk), and have a presence on social media.

We held our August coffee mornings again in 2024, mostly in the churchyard, joined with Little Wilbraham in hosting Lent Lunches, and ran a joint Wilbraham Churches stall at the Wilbrahams Community Food and Craft Fair.

We faithfully work to maintain our beautiful Grade II\* listed building.

Courses on theology and Scripture have been led by our pastoral assistants. Please read on for Emily Clough's report.



Bereaved families are visited and supported by the vicar. On 2 November we held our All Souls' Service to remember by name friends and relatives who have died and to light candles in their memory.

We would achieve very little, however, without our wonderful volunteers. So many people in Great Wilbraham, not all of them regular church-goers, help the church, not just financially, but by cheerfully giving their time and skills.

#### **Report from Steve Mashford on 'Come and Join':**

Our 'Come and join.....' Worship services take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at St Nicholas Great Wilbraham at 9.30 in church. If you join us and there is a sketch/drama look out for one of our budding actors Nick, Nigel, Jeremy or Helen. We have live music provided by Gill on the electric piano and Nigel on guitar. Also after the service join us for a coffee, chat and a piece of cake. There is always something for you to take away from the service to remind you of the theme. We look forward welcoming you to 'Come and join' in 2025, and for you to share your story.

#### **Deanery Synod Report**

Our Rural Dean Canon Rev Eleanor Williams from Burwell, encourages us at each meeting to share our stories of what encouraging signs of growth in our parishes that make up Fordham & Quy Deanery.

Our speaker in the June meeting was Mike Kelly who is the Diocesan Development Officer focusing on the work with Children, Young People and Families. His presentation was on the subject of LYCiG (Leading your church into Growth). It followed on the theme from the Archbishop of York Rev'd Stephen Cotterell, of how we grow a younger church. Mike spoke about four areas Grow Confidence, Grow Commitment, Grow Competence and Grow Creativity. The Mission and Ministry team are there to support parishes in Ely Diocese.

Our first meeting in 2025 will be at Fordham, and the speaker will be Francis Burkitt. Francis is a member of Ely Cathedral Chapter and will be sharing with us ministry of the Cathedral and ministry within the Diocese and particularly the cathedral's role in providing a focus for the life of the Church of England in the Diocese.

#### **Report from Emily Clough, pastoral assistant:**

In Great Wilbraham, I have been deeply involved in spiritual and educational initiatives that foster both faith and community. I have led morning prayer on Wednesdays, creating a space for reflection and devotion. Additionally, I have taught courses on Women in Scripture, Iconography, and The Way of the Cross, helping to deepen theological understanding. My engagement with the primary school has been particularly meaningful, regularly leading Thoughtful Club—an exploration of emotional literacy through biblical stories—supporting the prayer day, and sharing meals with the children to build relationships and encourage conversation. These activities have been a rewarding opportunity to nurture faith, learning, and fellowship within the community.

#### **Report from Ben Davidson on our work with Great Wilbraham School:**

The last year has really seen Great Wilbraham Primary School grow as a church school. With the important SIAMS denominational inspection on the horizon, the school has revised its Christian vision and values, defining the latter as love, courage, thankfulness and wonder. These - with their

Christian and biblical inspiration - have formed the basis for several collective worship sessions run by Alice, Emily, or myself, but are intended to infuse all the school does, and we hope to see the school thrive as children and staff gain a richer conception of what these values mean through their work and play.

This richer Christian conception has also been fed through Emily's popular successor to happy-sad club, which focuses on exploring the feelings and emotions of characters in Bible stories, helping the children grow in their ability to reflect and express their responses to these stories and events in their own lives.

Another major and ongoing area of development relates to the children's spiritual lives. Last term, Alice, Emily, Catherine, and I held an enrichment afternoon on prayer, which saw the children participate in several different forms of prayer, from walking a prayer labyrinth to making chains of prayer beads. Alongside this collective prayer life in school is fuller, with the old school prayer (which former pupils at the primary school remember and still say!) restored, and the Lord's Prayer said weekly in collective worship. Alice has very generously provided two new icons of Saint John and Saint Nicholas, and these will improve the collective worship space and hopefully inspire the children's imaginations.

The school continues to enjoy its use of our church buildings and the support and activities of our church community as we journey through the Christian year together, and we look forward to the ways in which the relationship will grow and flourish this summer term and in the new academic year.

### **Tower Report from Karen Ostefeld, Steeple Keeper since September 2024**

In the past year we have rung the bells at St Nicholas 87 times- most Thursdays which are the bands practice evening, 19:15 – 20:45 and alternate Sundays for services bar the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in each month. We have had 4 visiting bands across the year. On most band practice occasions we are blessed with between 6 and 12 ringers. Several have been ringing for decades, most of us have been ringing for about 4-5 years and we have been lucky to welcome 2 newcomers across this past year. Our band comes from Little and Great Wilbraham, Six Mile Bottom, Burwell and Bottisham. Our youngest band member is 15 and our oldest over 70. We are grateful for seasoned supporters who come from Bottisham, Royston and Wilburton to help us improve. We are fairly consistently competent with Plain Hunting these days, we are making progress with Bob Doubles. Our service ringing repertoire has grown and we are able to ring with 4 or 5 should we not have a full 6.

Three of our bells date from 1709, one from 1837, the 5<sup>th</sup> was cast in 1958, our newest bell, the treble, was cast in 2008. The bells and frame are checked monthly to ensure they are in safe condition to ring and to note any potential wear and tear which may need prompt attention. In this past year all has been well. Karen Ostefeld has taken over from Paul Lambton in the role of Steeple Keeper, we remain grateful to Peter Sims our Tower Captain who plans and leads interesting and progressive practice sessions for us. Finally we must thank Louise Dobson who travels from Wilburton each week to support early learners and support Peter in continuously improving our individual and collective bell handling.

There have been minor but disappointing thefts from the main church and the ringing mezzanine. We have taken additional measures to safeguard the clock bell hammer mechanism. The off wire for this is now raised and padlock secured with the ringing ropes. The Steeple Keeper also minds the church clock. This has had a simple service recently (cleaned and oiled) and is keeping relatively good time with fortnightly correction. The clock has a self winding mechanism. The clock housing is marginally awry in that it does not sit truly upright and this places wear and tear and stress on the both the clock and self winding mechanisms. Currently this anomaly is manageable. The tower clock and bell access is reached via an upright metal ladder and users must use the vertical zip wire

and harnesses, both have had their annual check and passed for health and safety / insurance purposes. Whilst there are masonry bees present outside the tower there are currently none visible inside. We do have a gathering of Ladybirds at the mezzanine window.

## **Report from Graham Clarke on the St Nicholas' Trust**

### **The St Nicholas Great Wilbraham Trust Chairman's Report for 2024**

The St Nicholas Great Wilbraham Trust is made up by five local trustees and the incumbent vicar. Also, two officers of the PCC (Warden & Treasurer) attend by special invitation, to ensure a continuing strong link between the trust & the PCC.

The trust's purpose is to "raise money for the preservation repair maintenance improvement upkeep beautification and restoration of the church and of any monument fitting fixture stained glass organ or bell in the church but excluding the church yard adjoining the church....and the monies shall be given to the PCC to spend on works specified by the trustees...".

During 2024 the trust agreed two donations to the PCC; first a sum of £4,520 for repairs to the windows and, second, a grant of £14,550 for external Chancel walls repairs and refurbishment of all the rainwear, guttering etc.

The fundraising activities comprised: raising money at Saturday Village Local Farm Markets and encouraging Gift Aid contributions towards both the general fund and the Legacy Capital Fund.

As at 31 December 2024 the trust's general fund amounted to a sum of £6,674 and the Legacy Capital Fund (comprising income bearing investments in stocks & shares) was valued at £236,408, a small increase of £12,580 or 5.5% (plus the £10,515 dividend income received over the year .. see below). The target for the Legacy Capital Fund remains at £500,000 (ALL the capital must be protected in perpetuity), to produce a target income of £20,000 pa. Bearing in mind that over the past 12 years, the building has required in excess of £350,000s expenditure on repairs & improvements, which has averaged at a cost of almost £30,000 per year. So, even allowing for "one off" improvement costs such as the tower conversion (£135,000), our mission is to at least double the Legacy Capital Fund's existing protected capital to £500,000, in order to make sure that the building is preserved to a very high standard for all future generations. Over the calendar year 2024, the total income generated by the Legacy Capital Fund amounted to £10,515 (in 2023 it was £10,924).

For further information on how to contribute most efficiently, please call our new treasurer, Jeremy Davis, initially on 01223 880854 or email to [jeremy.davis3@btinternet.com](mailto:jeremy.davis3@btinternet.com)

Graham Clarke, chairman

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025



Volunteers from St Nicholas' making Mothering Sunday posies with the children at Great Wilbraham School in 2024.