

St Edmund's Church Crickhowell

In the Diocese of Swansea & Brecon

Annual Report for 2024



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Rector's Report

It is with great joy and a deep sense of purpose that I present the Annual Report for St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell. This report marks a significant milestone in our ongoing journey—from being a single parish to becoming part of a commissioned Ministry Area. Over time, I hope our Annual Report evolves into more than a yearly obligation—becoming both a reflection of who we are and a source of inspiration for us and those around us.

A highlight of this year was the participation of several active members from St Edmund's Church in the Leading Your Church into Growth (LyCiG) conference in Swanwick. The principles learned there are already being applied locally, and we look forward with anticipation to the launch of our Mission Action Plan on Pentecost Sunday. We pray the plan will renew our vision and vitality across the Ministry Area.

I want to express heartfelt thanks for the dedication and faithfulness of our Church Committee, churchwardens, and the treasurer, as well as those who lead various groups and teams. Your service is a cornerstone of our shared ministry. I would also like to offer my heartfelt thanks to our outgoing warden, Sue Foster, whose support has been invaluable—both to the church and to me personally.

Managing the daily operations of a church like ours is not easy. I am deeply grateful to everyone who contributes to keeping things running smoothly. Their dedication ensures that our churches function effectively for both visitors, church members and the community each day and act as a place for mission and contemplation.

While we continue to mourn the loss of some of our most faithful members—whose legacy remains woven into the fabric of our churches—we also rejoice in the arrival of new faces across our congregations. Their presence is a sign of God's ongoing work among us and a reminder that the church continues to grow and evolve.

As we continue to see legal, financial, and structural challenges within the Ministry Area, we are grateful for the support from the Church in Wales through initiatives like the Church Growth Fund, which is available to assist wherever

there is potential for growth. We are especially encouraged to have the youth worker, whose dedication and hard work are reflected in the gentle growth we've seen in our youth ministry.

With gratitude for all that has been and with prayerful expectation for all that lies ahead, I commend this report to you and invite you to journey forward with hope and faith.

Revd Canon Rana Khan
Ministry Area Leader of St Catwg

Pastoral Team

Care Home Ministry

Nell Cawley, Anna Chaplain for Crickhowell, Llangattock and Llangynidr, continues to head up the care home teams. There is a weekly service at Greenhill with Frances and Jilly assisting Nell; Mairwen attends where possible and takes a communion service once a month. The communion services are well attended with 20-24 communicants. This means we are able to build up friendships with the residents and offer support to staff, family and friends.

Securing funding for Nell's post for the next year (September 2025-26) is a priority for 2025.

The Bereavement Journey team in Crickhowell is gaining confidence with Cathy Richards leading and supported by Mairwen, Nell, Jeanette, and Anthony Silwood providing the tech skills. This ran again in the Autumn of 2024 and will run in Spring 2025. If you know of anybody who you feel would benefit from this course, do get in touch with us to find out the next dates.

As we move forward, we are looking to register as a **Bereavement Friendly Church** in 2025 as we look at ways of building relationships with the families of the bereaved so that our ongoing support can be more intentional.

Nell and Mairwen continue to offer support to the monthly **Caffi Croeso** at Maes y Ffynnon. The hall is so full that you have to prebook your attendance, such is the demand for this amazing provision for those living with dementia and those

who care for them. It is sad to reflect how many people's lives are affected by this disease and important that we can make our church a friendly place for those who are struggling.

If you know of somebody who is housebound and would appreciate **Home Communion**, please get in touch with Mairwen.

If you feel able to offer an hour or so a month to give **Pastoral Assistance** to somebody who is housebound or frail, training is available. Again, please contact Mairwen.

Evangelism

The TELUSK team meets on the first and third Sunday evenings in the month for worship and prayer at the Parish Centre in Gilwern. We have continued to develop our response to the Leading your Church into Growth course. The showing of "The Chosen" video series in Gilwern has continued to be very well received. The team also contributed to the launch of a Mission Action Plan for the Ministry Area as a platform for furthering the outward-facing ministries of the churches. We have been set the task of planning to undertake a mission event in autumn 2025.

Worship and Music

Sunday Worship arrangements

We are blessed by the large number of creative people who lead our worship Sunday by Sunday. Church services rely on the contributions of many in our congregation. Thanks to those who make the church look beautiful, particularly with lovely flowers week by week and for special occasions. Our worship leaders have continued to co-ordinate many of our services, ably supported by church members who have led the intercessions and read Scripture. Thanks too for our Eucharistic Assistants who regularly support this sacramental ministry. We are all grateful to Simon, Vicky and Phillip who have continued to live-stream and record our Sunday services and other meetings.

Music Group

The Music Group has continued to support the Worship at St Edmunds this year with traditional and some more contemporary hymns and songs. We have singers and instrumentalists, and the regulars are supported from time to time by others. If you have any musical skills and wish to join our group, please contact Vaughan Bennett our Leader.

Children's Work

Messy Church continues to be a wonderful way for families to come together, have fun, explore faith, and experience God's love in a relaxed and welcoming environment. It's been a real joy to see how this ministry has become a part of our church family's rhythm over the past year.

We are truly blessed with a small but very committed team, including a wonderful retired ordained couple (Sarah and Richard) whose support, experience, and care have been such a gift. Sadly, a few team members have had to step back, and we do feel the gaps when someone can't be there. Please pray with us for new people to join our team — perhaps even you!

Messy Church has continued to meet monthly, and we are so thankful for the regular families who come along. Although we haven't seen much growth in new families this year, it was a real encouragement to see so many attend our Crib and Christingle services at Christmas. We also led Good Friday Service this year and it was well attended. We're also grateful to our local school for sharing our Messy Church invitations through Scoop, helping us reach more families.

This year, we also started setting up activities for children every Sunday, making sure there is always a story and something fun for any child who comes. We want every child to know they are welcome and valued here. We're hoping to refresh and brighten the children's corner soon, making it even more inviting.

Please keep this ministry in your prayers. It is a precious part of our church life, and we would love to welcome more people into this work of loving and serving our families.

Open the Book

Last year I mentioned in my report that one more member of the team to augment the six of us would be beneficial, so I was delighted when the new youth leader joined the team and added her commitment and enthusiasm to the weekly assemblies. With 7 in the team and a spread of talents and commitment to the role, we are a strong group. Hence it has been slightly disappointing that the school has begun to tell us at the beginning of each term which weeks we are invited to go into school in view of other events that are happening. We fully understand this, especially when demand for the hall is heavy before Christmas and the children have many interesting additional events. So, we are no longer required weekly throughout each term but count it as a privilege that we are still welcome, and the children are such good listeners and remember much of what we tell in the Bible stories.

We have continued telling stories from the new Bob Hartman book, going in chronological order through the Old Testament but going onto the New Testament for the Christmas story and taking four stories leading up to Easter, ending with the resurrection. We have a designated narrator, and parts are taken by the team to dramatize the characters in the story, usually dressed accordingly and often asking for volunteers from the children.

Three of us recently attended a morning of Air and Share in Newport, organised by the Bible Society. The trainer/facilitator was excellent, kept the pace with lots of activities and ended with a celebration of the 25th anniversary of Open the Book and crème doughnuts! We felt inspired by her enthusiasm, reassured by meeting with volunteers from other groups and full of renewed desire to continue the assemblies. Especially useful was the ideas for props different teams had made and used to illustrate the stories. Kerry took some of ours, which were appreciated by others.

There will be a change to the co-ordinating of the group after the Easter holiday when Helen Fraser from the Evangelical Church, Christ Church, will replace Alison, on health grounds, but she will remain a team member. We also hope to reduce our vast number of dressing up clothes to a manageable sizes collection! Having said that we are still looking for soldiers' outfits.

Schools Ministry

At the beginning of 2024, two members of the St Edmunds Youth Team continued to be involved with Open the Book at Crickhowell Primary school. The new Youth Leader employed by the church at the end of August, also joined the OTB team.

The former Youth Leader helped at a schools' sports mission event run by Ian Tricker, the Schools and children/youth worker for "Hope for the Valleys". There were 2 days of sports activities and a Christian message for each year group in turn.

On July 1st, the Youth Leader delivered a session on "It's Your Move" to the pupils in year 6 and gave them all a booklet. The booklet and session were devised by Scripture Union to be used as package to help their transition into High School. The booklets were partly funded by Crickhowell Evangelical Church (Christ Church) and St Edmund's church.

In December, the new Youth Leader met with the Headteacher at Crickhowell High School to discuss the future relationship between the church and school. She was offered to host 6 assemblies for the first half of 2025. The content will include cultural diversity and protected characteristics from a Christian perspective.

St Edmunds Youth Group continued with weekly meetings in the parish hall or park, providing some food (donated by team members) playing games, making pizzas, craft activities and tried to include some spiritual content, sometimes from a visitor. The most effective way was with an Escape Room with bible-based clues in church.

We continued writing letters to pen pals in Uganda. Youbab came to club to share his experience of the 2 months coaching sports at the Rukungiri school.

The former leader and youth team members continued to partake in courses, mostly run by SU as well as safeguarding training courses. SU staff visited once a term to lead or assist with activities such as a Summer Day camp in the woods and park.

During the summer, we interviewed for the post of part-time Youth Leader. We were pleased that Gaby Kelland was successful and started the job with a “baptism of fire” Summer Camp Day in August!

3 teenagers continued to chime the bells every Sunday service and special occasions. In December, they and some members of club played handbells for the Christmas market event, sheltering in tents from the torrential rain. Some members of club also took part in the Christmas Nativity service, which was a success!

Eco Church Group

2024 was a more challenging year for the Eco Church Group as several members were limited in their active participation by illness and/or increased other responsibilities. Some of our ongoing projects have also been harder to complete than we anticipated.

However, there have been some positive action in each of the categories:

Worship and Teaching

On 4th February, the Creation Sunday service theme was conservation and featured teenager Emily Morton reading her own beautiful, prizewinning poem, and we watched a video sent by Penpont (near Brecon), explaining their conservation work and training. Emily also works there in her holidays.

Buildings

We continue to work on ways to improve energy efficiency.

We sadly had to discontinue the collection of blister packs as it was not possible to get them to TerraCycle without a fee. Crisp packets, silver-lined coffee bags and biscuit/cake wrappers were collected in church or taken directly to collection points at most supermarkets. Candles from church and home were collected and taken to a craft workshop for people with special needs near Brecon. Cleaning products continued to be replaced by more eco-friendly ones

Land

Simon Harbutt continued to mow and work on other areas throughout the year, keeping the churchyard looking beautiful.

The east end of the churchyard was designated in the Churchyard Plan to allow the many wildflowers identified in a survey to flower, and for a path to be mown for good access to each grave. Although there were many compliments there were some objections that it was 'untidy'. It was therefore decided to only allow the edges and a few patches of flowers to thrive and bloom in 2025.

For 'Churches Count on Nature Week', some teenagers photographed the wildflowers and surveyed pollinators, using a specialised app on their phone. Messy church also had an afternoon in the churchyard identifying flowers and insects, and planted seeds to take home.

The butterfly count was very disappointing. This was the case nationally which showed an 80% drop in butterflies! Very alarming.

On 7th July, we took part in Crickhowell's 'Open Gardens Scheme' again and welcomed many members of the public to look at the many flowers and enjoy the refreshments. It was organised by Crickhowell Garden Society. From the proceeds of this and other events, CGS kindly donated £200 towards the cost of the planned churchyard improvements.

The faculty application to resurface the east path, install plinths for new benches, restore the shed and site the finger-post to the Parish Hall was submitted. It was returned, requiring some more detail and archaeological involvement. An archaeologist was eventually found, who wrote a very supportive email.

Community & Global Engagement

We invited those who were running the 'Race to Zero' to hold displays in church during the 'Open Church Saturdays' in August. There were also sales of garden produce, cakes, second-hand books and other 'pre-loved' items each Saturday

Sadly, Tearfund had to scale back its UK work, but they continue with overseas projects. We held our annual Big Quiz night on 16th Nov and raised £720.

We continued to raise awareness of other Eco-related topics by advertising particular months or days assigned to e.g. #NoMowMay, Plastic Free July, Second-Hand September, and Global Recycling Day, National Bird Count, Stop Food Waste Days and provided links to engage with COP29 and Wales Climate Week in December.

Lifestyle

We continued to share lifestyle tips in the newsletters, MA magazine and our Eco Church website.

Currently, there are 5 regular members in the Eco Church group which meets 3-4 times/year. We would welcome anyone with an interest to join us. We will continue to strive to reach the gold standard within the next 1-2 years using the new Eco Church survey and aim to reach the church's overall goal to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Men's Prayer Breakfast

We meet in the Parish Hall twice a month on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at 8.00am. We enjoy exchanging news etc. while eating hot croissants and rolls with fruit juice and hot tea. One of us then leads a discussion on bible readings or associated readings. This is then followed by requests for prayer and prayer itself. We usually finish at about 10.00am. We always come away refreshed and encouraged. All men are welcome from any parish or denomination.

Home Groups

Alternative Home-Group

During the year 2024 we continued to study "1 Corinthians", taking a short break for the Lent Course. We came back together after Easter to start a study on Angels. We looked at the 9 classes or spheres of Angels.

From Angels we moved on to the book of Genesis taking each chapter in turn. Come Advent the Bishop recommended we follow the new Advent course from the Diocese. However, we found this impractical for us to follow so followed a

course based on the readings on Advent. In the New Year we will go back to the book of Genesis and finish the remaining chapters.

We now meet on a weekly basis instead of fortnightly as before and continue to meet at Liz James home and thank her for her kind hospitality.

Bryn Nant Home Group

This is really a misnomer as we haven't met in Bryn Nant all year.

We meet every Wednesday to share Fellowship, Faith and Fun. Sometimes we just meet for a chat, occasional glass of wine or cuppa, depending on how many people we have or what is going on in the wider world.

Our studies have been based on Celtic Daily Prayer that Dilys and Eric diligently sorted out for us. It contains, bible readings, reflections and meditations. They sparked lots of really interesting and surprising conversations and each week was totally relevant to what was going on in our lives. You Tube provides us with worship songs for us to join in with and really adds to the evenings.

We will continue with this theme into 2025.

2024 was a really testing time for our group as we supported Ruth through her illness. She came to every meeting that she was able to, and it was a real privilege for us to spend time and pray with her. What was really moving is that she chose the Celtic prayer that we use each week, as part of her funeral service. It's comforting to know that she valued her time at Home Group, she was a dearly loved friend, and we miss her very much.

Glan y Dwr Home Group

The Home Group divided into three parts during the year with the Zoom Group now meeting separately and the launching of a discipleship group for young believers. Highlights for those who remained, included studying the book of Judges and Pete Greig's short video series on Prayer.

Mission Group

The past year has been relatively quiet in relation to involvement in overseas mission as a church. We had an inspiring meeting in June when we had a visit

from Dr Nam Chen, leader of CMS Asia. At the meeting we had the privilege of hearing Rennie and Melloney Gold's story of their call to serve overseas which led them to spend over 20 years working with CMS in Pakistan. Judy Cave visited John and Alice who run Rukungiri School and Orphanage in Uganda. This work has been a blessing to many at St Edmunds over many years. Blessings are both due to the regular visits from John and Alice, and also the opportunity for individuals to visit and participate in the ministry.

Carl and Sally worked with United Beach Missions in New Quay in the Summer and were also able to visit the Metropolitan Mission in India in January of this year. The work of the Mission continues to thrill and inspire as children are cared for and supported in the children's home, churches are encouraged with outreach and support of their rural, often poor, congregations and many relief projects provide help to those who are struggling.

Alison remains involved in Tear Fund and organised a very enjoyable and successful quiz evening in support of Tear Fund in November of last year. Our CMS mission partners, Joel and Fiona Kelling, are currently in the UK whilst Joel pursues further study. We hope to invite them to visit the church during the summer months before they return to serve in the Middle East. Regular collections (four times a year) for Brecon Food bank have continued and the church includes the CRiC Centre and Dial a Ride in the annual round of mission giving.

We hope to relaunch a regular opportunity to pray for mission by holding a monthly meeting starting on June 7th. The purpose will be to encourage us as a church family to be more informed as to the needs of those who had never heard the good news of Jesus as well as to connect to, and pray for, the church worldwide. More details to follow.

Rukungiri Orphan Partnership

I had the great privilege of taking my daughter Jenny and her family, as well as my son Simon, to Uganda in July 2024. It was so interesting to see things anew through the eyes of my 2 grandsons aged 10 and 14. Simon was born in Uganda during the time that we worked at Kisiizi Hospital that is about 25 miles from

Rukungiri. I got to know Alice and John Tumusiime during this time as Alice came to the hospital to deliver her babies while we were there. Alice and John started up the school in Rukungiri that we support when the AIDS epidemic was at its worst (1990s) and have been helping orphaned and needy children ever since.

Getting letters from about 300 children who are sponsored is one of the jobs we did on our visit. Chaos but fun! Some of those letters are delivered by hand and the rest need a small team of helpers to get ready to put in the post. We send out a newsletter annually too.

The sponsorship money goes towards food, uniform, medical treatment and teachers' salaries. On top of that we try and help with one off projects like a new toilet block, new benches and desks and help with keeping the solar pump repaired which brings spring water to the school and nursery.

We are grateful to those people at St Ed's who help in sponsoring children or making a monthly donation, but we really need some new sponsors as those who have been helping over a long time are aging and unable to help any more. If anyone feels they could afford £25 a month to help a needy child get a chance at a better future through a good basic education, please contact Judy Cave.

Safeguarding

As a church and part of a Ministry Area we have continued to make progress throughout the year by offering module B training in January and taking part in Safeguarding Sunday in November. We completed the basic safeguarding audit supplied by the province, which has raised awareness of the need for safeguarding as a topic to be for everyone in our community. This was shared with Meleri Cray our trainer who was very positive with her comments and suggestions.

Richard Stunt our MAA has worked very hard using the secure My Church People portal which shows who has an up-to-date DBS and the relevant level of safeguarding training for their role or not which is sometimes the case. Also it contains a list of all volunteers and their roles in our church which has been supplied by our Church Warden.

This has enabled us and the MAC to receive an accurate picture of progress and discussion of the challenges with embedding safeguarding within our church and the St Catwg MA.

I continue to attend the quarterly MASO meetings and liaise with each church safeguarding officer which is a useful support network.

There is still a lot of work to be done by the safeguarding team within our MA to be fully compliant with the Church in Wales Safeguarding Guidance however we are moving forward with keenness to achieve this target.

Wardens' Report

Our services continue to be well attended, averaging 50 people every Sunday with several more watching online. Numbers for the twice monthly Tuesday communion services range from 12 to 15 and there is also a thriving messy church once a month. We have also had a few very successful joint services with other churches in the Ministry area as well as hosting another popular Lent study. Our thanks go to all those who through their commitment and expertise have made these occasions possible.

We continue to be a really busy church which is only made possible by the continued efforts of those who keep the building clean and welcoming. There are always fresh flowers, especially at festival times, and regular volunteers who provide refreshments and contribute to the services with music, prayers and readings. We must give a special mention to Simon and others who make it possible for anyone unable to attend a service to watch online, and also to our faithful organist Vaughan who rarely misses a service.

There are also a number of people who work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the church open every day and also undertake all the necessary domestic duties. The Visitors' book contains many appreciative comments that reflect the input of everyone involved. Again, a huge thank you to you all.

We were also pleased to play an important role in many community events throughout the year such as several school concerts, late night shopping, the Music and Art Festival weekends and the Open Gardens. The Church is also a

popular venue for other occasions of outreach for example visiting choirs and the open days throughout August. Our apologies if we have omitted anyone or any event.

It is with great regret that I (Sue) found it necessary to retire because of ill health from a job which I have loved, and I would like to thank everyone who has supported me since my appointment in 2013, especially Kathryn whose help has been invaluable. I am hoping to stay involved with many church activities but with less responsibility. My best wishes go to my successor Lynda Dickenson who I'm sure will be able to count on the same support as I received.

Fundraising

We had another successful year, not only raising money for much needed church funds, but providing social events both for church members and the wider community.

We kicked off the year with a quiz night. "Pasties, Peas and Puzzles", with a nod to the northern contingent of church goers. A really fun night and one we are thinking of repeating. Total raised was £125.00.

In May we provided refreshments for the Choral Society's Annual Festival, we also served teas, coffees and cakes for the Annual Arts Trail and even managed to squeeze in a very successful coach trip to Stratford upon Avon. It was a very busy but lucrative month and brought in just short of £1600.00.

June saw Crickhowell Open Gardens. The Churchyard was part of this event and, once again, we manned the urn and served hot drinks, cakes and scones. The weather wasn't great, so we opened the church room. It was a bit of a squeeze, but the visitors didn't seem to mind. We raised £220.00 on this occasion.

August, the highlight of the year, we held our Open Church Events. Once again it was hugely successful. Lots of visitors and locals came to hear Eric's talk, ring the bells and just enjoy the atmosphere of our lovely church building, and, of course, the usual refreshments were on offer. This was our most successful year so far and raised £2350.00.

In September we hosted the Harvest Supper. This year we took the decision to buy food ready prepared from The Courtroom Café. It was another lovely evening, and we made £205.00.

November we were off to Worcester on another coach trip. A fun filled day with lots of seats being sold. We had the usual array of raffle prizes, and the day provided us with £575.00.

We rounded off the year in December with a Coffee Morning, held in Church. The Bear is too inaccessible for many people now so we will probably be repeating it in church in future. The first date had to be re-arranged because of the dreadful weather but, nevertheless, it was another successful event and raised an amazing £700.00.

The most successful, easy and somewhat surprising fundraiser is the book stall. We have never advertised it and never asked for books, in fact it appeared as an accident really. One year, after the Open Church events, we were just too tired to put them away. To our amazement, when we came back the following week, there was money left in the basket on the table. We thought, as an experiment, we would leave them there and, last year it made £360.00! It seems to replenish itself and provides a steady stream of money.

The total raised in 2024 was approximately £6500.00.

A big Thank You to everyone who supports us in every way. If you would like to join our Fundraising Team, please let us know. We would be very grateful!

Friends of St Edmunds

The Friends of St Edmund's have had a quiet year, the highlight of which was a talk by Eric Gower on "Mr Fieldhouse's photograph" which portrays the nave of the church in Victorian times and made comment on the subsequent changes visible today. The Friends are seeking a separate charitable status and will report back to their AGM in June 2025. They will be facilitating the community contributions towards the establishment of a missional event in autumn 2025.

Treasurer's Report

Overview. Our finances remain tight. However, I am grateful, and proud, for the continued support of the members of the church in their giving of time and money.

This is a giving church. Over many years, even when money was scarce, a sum has been made available for Mission Giving locally, nationally and internationally; this was done in 2024 and looking ahead from 2024 is being done for 2025. Some giving does not immediately leap out from the church accounts. For instance, at some services the donations are facilitated by the church and paid into the church account but are passed exclusively to other charities: in particular, Remembrance Sunday (Royal British Legion), the Star Service (St David's Hospice), and in some years Shelter Cymru/Wales. Others are not shown in the accounts because monies are passed directly to the charity; in particular, the Food Bank, often well in excess of £500 at each collection and occurring usually 3 or 4 times in the year.

A huge step has been made in the appointment of Gabrielle Kelland as Youth Worker from August 2024. The employment contract is with the Ministry Area, because all employments under the new MA arrangements now have to be in the name of the MA. However, it is the Youth Account of St Edmund's Church, built up by the spectacular generosity of individuals, which funds this, aided by the initial contribution of some £9,000 from the Diocese in 2024.

Donations by standing order and weekly envelopes. This is the bedrock of our finances. In my years as Treasurer, I have on two occasions written individually to all members of the church to ask that they review their giving, which had often not been increased over some years. By now many have done so, and I am heartened where this happens spontaneously. Please do look and please do not increase your giving if you cannot afford it and please do if you can. Also, on occasion I receive a substantial one-off donation to the general finances of the church, as I have on at least three occasions since our last AGM. This is critically generous and critically helpful to our survival in doing all we do as a church.

Fund Raising. My belief is that the work and success of the fund-raising team for the purposes of this church is unequalled elsewhere in our MA and I suspect anywhere in our diocese, given the size of St Edmund's Church. It was voluntarily inaugurated as a formal team by those who still work tirelessly in it, following a plea from Martin James the former Treasurer, from memory about 2014 when we last could not pay the full amount of allocated "parish share" but it may be longer. The time and effort involved cannot be overestimated.

Ministry Share. The biggest outgoing by far of St Edmund's Church is, and always will be, the Ministry Share. For the first time since 2014 we were not able to pay in full the share allocated to us, but we came close: in 2024 we paid 95% (taking account of relevant payments in 2023).

Looking forward to 2025 there is a little light at the end of this particular tunnel, a tunnel critical to the finances overall. In 2024 the share allocated to us was £67,206.15. The MA took information from each of the churches in the MA as to numbers attending services over 2024; and have recalculated the percentage attributable to each church out of the total Ministry Share. The figure notified to me for 2025 is, accordingly, some £57,000 odd.

Cost of gas and electricity. This is a large outgoing. We have benefited very much from having committed in May 2023 to fixed price contracts. The current contract for gas, which saw the most explosive rises in price, runs for 3 years from May 2023. Again, looking forward to 2025, I have secured an attractive fixed price and entered into it, from April 2026 (the expiry of the current contract), in order to avoid repetition of what happened out of the blue during the pandemic years.

Outstanding Works. There are two major pressing areas of work needed. One is to secure the West retaining wall of the churchyard above New Road. The estimated cost is enormous and beyond the resources of St Edmund's Church without external grants. Anthony Silwood is pursuing the difficult and unrewarding task of approaching external charitable or public bodies.

The other is to secure the East gable end of the church building itself, which in simple terms would quite like to detach itself from the rest of the church

building. The first, Rolls Royce, quotation for the works necessary was in 2023 some £21,000 odd. However, with the assistance of the structural engineer it looks as though lesser works may suffice, which have been the subject of quotation at £8,480 including VAT but excluding scaffolding.

Looking ahead to 2025, our main fabric fund had substantially diminished, because of significant payments, in particular to the architects in advice, costing and preparation for the churchyard outer West wall works; and the residual lighting fund was smaller. However together they still had a total of £16,300 odd. The Church Committee have agreed in principle to proceed with the works. This is in part motivated by the decision of the present Government to extend what would be relief from VAT for one extra year from 31 March 2025, subject to certain overall limits; but not beyond the year to 31 March 2026.

Youth Account. As at 31 December 2024, the Youth Account, (which is an account strictly reserved to being used for youth work), stood at some £32,000.

Mission Giving. This was in a sum of £4,000 for 2024.

Overall. The overall outgoings average broadly £20 per week for every individual on the immediately past electoral roll for St Edmund's. Finances are undeniably tight for 2025, as they were for 2024. However, we appear to be 'holding up' for now and I am optimistic.

The Treasurer. If wished, I am willing to serve as Treasurer for another year. By May 2026, I will have done so for 7 years, and I will be 77. I wish to retire at the end that year, although of course I will remain available to assist an incoming Treasurer. Over those years we will, in particular, have seen off the pandemic, and the transition to the new Ministry Area, which took quite a lot of personal input in fashioning the new constitution and arrangements. This is not just on my own account. I think it would be good to have fresh blood and thinking; and otherwise potential successors will think it is a life sentence, which it is not! Nor is it as arduous as sometimes people think.

Minutes of AVM held on 28 April 2024

Revd Rana Khan opened the meeting with prayer.

Apologies: Richard & Jan Crole Rees, Sue Foster, Robert Salmon, Julian Stedman

Annual Report and AVM Minutes for 2023: The report and minutes had been circulated by email and a few copies were available in church. Both were accepted.

Financial Report 2023: Anthony Seys Llewellyn gave particular thanks to Phil Reed for his work in processing the Gift Aid claim, Vaughan Bennett for his work as auditor and advisor, and to Martin James who had done so much to ensure that most giving was done through standing orders. Also to Robert Salmon who had highlighted a number of areas that needed attention. Liz James proposed a vote of thanks to Anthony for his work as treasurer.

Elections and Appointments

Sue Foster has been appointed as Rector's Warden and Kathryn Bullon has been elected as People's Warden.

Anthony Seys Llewellyn was elected as treasurer.

As there were fewer nominations for the CC than there were spaces, no election was needed. The following were elected en-block to the PCC for 2024: Kerry Andrews, Simon Large, Anthony Seys Llewellyn, Anthony Silwood, Julian Stedman, Ed Walker, Sherill Worgan.

Ed Walker agreed to continue as Ministry Area Representative for a further year, with Ed Walker acting as a deputy representative.

Appointment of Independent Examiner: Vaughan Bennett has accepted this responsibility for a further year, and Rana thanked him for taking this on again.

A vote of thanks was recorded to Ros Matty for her dedicated work over many years as PCC secretary, Ministry Area rep and editor of the MA magazine.