

# The Anglican and Methodist Church of St Andrew, Paddock Wood



## **ACM MINISTRY REPORTS 2025**

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025

## Contents

|                                                        |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Ministry Team .....                                    | 3  |
| Alone at Christmas & Afternoon Tea .....               | 3  |
| Bereko Committee .....                                 | 4  |
| Chaplaincy .....                                       | 5  |
| Children's & Families Work.....                        | 5  |
| Choir .....                                            | 7  |
| Coffee Shop .....                                      | 8  |
| Communications Committee .....                         | 8  |
| Community Engagement.....                              | 9  |
| Deanery Synod .....                                    | 10 |
| Fair Trade Shop .....                                  | 10 |
| Friends Together.....                                  | 11 |
| Girl Guiding Paddock Wood.....                         | 12 |
| Home Groups .....                                      | 12 |
| Music Group.....                                       | 13 |
| Open House .....                                       | 13 |
| Pastoral Committee .....                               | 13 |
| People, Appointments & Governance (PAG) Committee..... | 14 |
| Property & Fabric Committee.....                       | 15 |
| Safeguarding .....                                     | 16 |
| Scouts.....                                            | 16 |
| Scripture Union Hungary .....                          | 17 |
| Wardens' Report.....                                   | 17 |
| Weald of Kent Methodist Circuit.....                   | 18 |



## MINISTRY TEAM

*There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:*

***Ecclesiastes 3:1***

As we sit and write these reports we are no doubt looking forward to Spring and the sunshine and signs of new growth which accompany it. After what has been the wettest and coldest start to a New Year for some time, we look to the seasons and place our hope in these times of change.

The scripture that started this thought reminds us that there is a time for everything. Those familiar with how the passage continues know that it then offers a catalogue of everyday events to remind us that God is in all of them. The challenge very often is to notice what God is doing and to respond effectively. All too often we can look at things that don't happen or aren't to our liking, and complain. The Christian life encourages us to have our eyes open for the new things God is doing, to interpret the signs and to join in. It is all too easy to keep on doing the same thing, week after week, and to miss the opportunities that God hands to us and just dismiss it. I have been intrigued recently that we have had at least four young men step into St Andrew's with little or no experience of Church, and yet the stories they tell of their encounters with God and prayer are very real. What is God saying or showing us, must be a question I ask? So what questions do you ask as you see and observe opportunities or events?

Between now and our next ACM we will all need to learn to have eyes open, and to be flexible as some of the familiar events, people or ministries may not always take place, or just won't be there. These may however, create opportunities for us to look again at what God is calling us to do and be, as his Church. This is undoubtedly a new season for us all and a chance to seek God in prayer, as he reveals the next chapter in the story of St Andrew's Church.

Bryan and Kirsty

**Rev'd Canon Bryan Knapp & Rev'd Kirsty McGhee**

## ALONE AT CHRISTMAS & AFTERNOON TEA

Once again, in 2024 we were able to hold an Afternoon Tea in June and a lovely Christmas dinner for those who spend a lot of time on their own. I think this was the 9<sup>th</sup> year we have been able to do this.

The Afternoon tea was a happy and fun day with entertainment from Angus Morton and Sue Lovell's Paddock Wood Community Choir including some songs with actions.

Our Christmas Day meal, as usual, was beautifully cooked by Kevin and a band of brilliant helpers to serve the tables and look after everyone. We looked after 35 people including a group who live in the woods at Beltring. They joined us last year (2023) and happily returned again in 2024. It is such a pleasure to see people enjoying themselves at our Christmas meal.

The date for Afternoon Tea this year is yet to be arranged and, of course, we have a Christmas Day to look forward to.

**Gloria Crouch**

## BEREKO COMMITTEE

Our companionship link with the parish of Bereko, Tanzania, is progressing well.

The Bereko Committee works to Church Council approved Terms of Reference. In practical terms, it is run through the Bereko Community Partnership (BCP), as the church representatives are also the Bereko Committee members. Occasionally pure church matters require a separate decision made outside the BCP meeting.

The Bereko Community Partnership comprises representatives from the Town Council, Mascalls and Paddock Wood Primary Academies, ourselves and St Justus Roman Catholic church. We meet three times a year and work together on a number of awareness and fund-raising events.

Our next visit to Bereko is anticipated to be in October 2025 and will be led by Rev'd Kirsty McGhee.

The major project that we have been supporting, the Bereko Garden Group, seems to be in some difficulty, we think due to a breakdown in relationship between the local leaders. It is very difficult to understand from afar though, so this will be a focus for our visit in October. Having said this, a part of the project is growing fruit trees in the schools and Kurasini Primary School has had great success with their banana tree project. They have used a healthy banana crop to feed the pupils and also to sell to raise income for the school.

The Primary Academy is still interested in the link, although it is a shame that those who have visited and made relationships with the schools when we visited in 2023 have now moved on. Both teachers remain involved however.

Mascalls Academy is active in its fundraising and awareness raising activities. A teacher will join our visit this year and is doing so with a view to taking out sixth formers in future years.

During 2024 we were able to continue our now usual range of awareness and fund-raising activities: water stand at the Paddock Wood half marathon, Paddock Wood carnival, soup lunch and the Bereko Quiz evening. Our thanks go to Mascalls Academy for providing the hall and all facilities free of charge for last year's Bereko quiz.

The work of the BCP is also promoted in the Town Council annual report. This year we were unable to speak at the Town Council's AGM due to a last minute change of date.

We continue to sell, at our cost price, palm crosses made in Kikilo, a village in the Bereko parish, which provides an income source for the church family there.

We have, as always, sent funds for Julius' annual salary (£650) and also £350 for the parish share to the Diocese.

Since our visit in 2023, we have developed an unexpected mission for individuals in Bereko with disabilities. The BCP has decided that, normally, this support should come from individual donors rather than funds raised, which are prioritised for community projects. The individuals supported so far are:

Abdulrazak - a 14 year old boy with clubbed feet who has had both legs operated on through the charity Kafika House. We sourced the charity and have funded transport and accommodation, so his father can visit him while he is away from home

Hairath – a three year old girl who has been provided with a prosthetic leg, again through a charity sourced by us. We have also funded travel and accommodation for her and her mother

Amina, Ashura and Hangali – all provided with hand-cycles, sourced and funded by us

Gervase – operations on both eyes to relieve blindness. A church donor has funded travel, accommodation and medical costs.

The pastor, Rev'd Julius Kaka has worked hard to identify individuals who need support and keep communications going between us and them. We pray that this work might bear fruit, witnessing for Christ in this strongly Islamic community and supporting the work of Julius and the small church there. Certainly, Julius is very encouraged.

In conclusion the work of the Bereko Committee is going well and the partnership within Paddock Wood remains strong.

**Sue Chalkley**

## CHAPLAINCY

Chris Sutton continues to serve as a prison chaplain.

I have visited police stations in Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and been given a long service award; SECAMB have given me a long service award too.

**Brian Banks**

## CHILDRENS & FAMILY WORK

**Voyagers Sunday Group sessions** continued to meet on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday mornings each month during the Sunday Services. Numbers varied between approximately 3-10 children attending, but the children have had fun during the sessions which usually include playing games, having a Bible story, and a craft activity.

**Messy Church** is held once a month on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday and has continued to be a really good way of engaging with the younger families who join us each month. We continued to look at the stories from the Jesus Storybook Bible and from September started looking at the Parables Jesus told. We have time of worship, followed by craft-time followed by a light tea.

**Little Pickles**, the weekly Monday morning Toddler Group, saw numbers gradually increase over the year, with new parents/grandparents/carers attending most weeks, which is really encouraging. Some were new to Paddock Wood, others were new to parenthood. At Easter we held an Easter-Egg Hunt in the church for the children and in July we held a **Teddy Bears Picnic** in the church gardens following a Little Pickles session which was enjoyed by all.

**Rhyme Time**, the weekly music group for parents & carers and little-ones where we have a time of singing nursery rhymes and playing percussion instruments, continued to meet each Tuesday morning. Approximately 6-10 parents/carers & children have been attending these sessions, which are really appreciated by the parents who are looking for activities to do with their little-ones.

**Fun Club**, the after-school club for KS1 children at Paddock Wood Primary Academy continued to run on Mondays after school. As in the previous year, we did have to limit the numbers to about 15 children, due to the number of volunteers available to help at this club. In September, we still had around 15 children attending, with a short waiting list, which is really encouraging. We continued to look stories from the Old Testament and since September, have been looking at the life of Jesus.

**Who Let the Dads Out?** met six times during 2024. This group meets on a Saturday morning, with the aim of dads getting out with their children, meeting other dads whilst their children play and enjoying freshly-made coffee and bacon rolls. Our numbers are only approximately 10 dads and their families attending, but they really appreciate when we are able to hold sessions, and I'm often asked when the next WLTDO session will be.

**Assemblies at Paddock Wood Primary Academy** continued on Tuesday mornings for both KS1 & KS2 children. Up until the Summer Term we looked at New Testament stories and since September have started going through the Old Testament stories, and seeing how God had a plan for his people, but also has a plan for each of us.

At **Easter** we provided an 'Easter Experience' for the Years 5 & 6 year-groups, where the children came up to the church and learnt about different aspects of the Easter Story, learning about the Last Supper, Peter's denial, Pontius Pilate, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. It was a privilege to share with the children and staff and appreciated by them too.

In the Summer Term, together with Kirsty, I also held some '**It's Your Move**' sessions for the Year 6 children, helping them to look at what to expect as they made their move to secondary school.

In the Autumn Term, children came up to the church to hold a **Harvest Festival Service** – we had two services, so that the whole school could attend.

Then on the last day of their Christmas term, the children came up to the church again for two **Christmas Services**, in which each of the year groups took part.

### **Other Activities:**

In the February Half-Term we held a **Pancake Pandemonium Party** as it was Shrove Tuesday. Approximately 40 children attended and helped to make pancake batter, which Kevin kindly made into pancakes whilst the children played some pancake-themed games, such as tossing pancakes & pancake races.

In the Easter holidays we ran a **Pop-Up Week** for youngsters here at St Andrew's – with a sports morning, a baking morning & a games morning. We had an average of about 30 children attend each and the parents were very thankful for activities being provided in the holidays.

We also held our '**Messy Good Friday**' activity where families came along to make some Easter crafts before coming into church for a short Good Friday service followed by hot-cross buns. Once again, we had families who do not usually attend church, come into the service to hear the Easter story.

During the Summer Holidays, we held our annual **Holiday Club** with just over 60 children attending each day and a volunteer team of about 15. Our theme was 'On Your Marks' to link in with the Olympics.

During the October Half-Term, we held a **Light Party**, where families were able to enjoy some 'light' themed crafts and a meal together. A great turn-out and at least one family have since enjoyed coming along to Messy Church since that event. There was also the chance to do a '**Lantern Trail**' where families had to try and find 13 different posters of 'lanterns' around Paddock Wood and then try and work out from the anagrams a Bible Verse.

At Christmas we ran a **Christmas Crafts** session for families to make Christmas crafts together. This was very well attended and enjoyed by the families; we saw new faces and built some new relationships with new families moving into the area.

### **YOUTH WORK IN 2024**

**Survivors** Sunday Group, our group for young people who attend church more regularly used to meet on the 1st, 4th and 5th Sundays. However, since Sarah left in 2023, we have only met on the 3rd Sunday mornings during the morning service, with Jo Young and Sara Durie helping Hanna to lead this group of youngsters. Again, numbers can vary from between 2-8 youngsters. However, plans for 2025 are to hopefully offer Survivor Sessions more often, as some of the Voyagers Team are happy to lead the Voyagers Sessions so that Hanna can lead the Survivors sessions.

**Pathfinders Youth Group** continued to meet on Tuesday evenings in the Winter Hall. This Youth Group is for youngsters aged 11-14 and had approximately 10-12 youngsters attend most weeks, most of whom attend Mascalls Academy. We usually have some board-games out for the youngsters to play, as well as football or table-tennis or badminton. We have had sports-challenges, quizzes, scavenger hunts, baking evenings and had an Outdoor Cooking event in September and a Swimming outing in November. We usually finish each session with a Thought for the Week and have encouraged the children to think about how God can have an impact on their lives.

**New Gen Youth Group** continued to meet on Wednesday evenings, up until the October Half-Term. Numbers had dropped after the summer holidays, as the eldest left school, and although the older youngsters from Pathfinders were invited to attend New Gen as they moved up a school year, none of them made the move. After two weeks with just two youngsters followed by two weeks with no youngsters attending, it was decided to drop this activity for the time-being, but invite the 'New Gen' youngsters to outings with the Pathfinders. So in November, a couple of the New Gen youngsters joined the Pathfinders swimming trip, and also joined in for the Christmas Party.

Unfortunately, the **IGNITE** lunch club at Mascalls School stopped running after the May Half-Term. Very few youngsters had been attending, with 'no-shows' some weeks. Also, Ruth, from Brenchley, who had also helped to run these sessions could no longer do so due to new work commitments. Despite suggesting coming in to do Assemblies to promote the lunch club, this was never taken up, and as I didn't have permission to 'walk around & promote' the club on the school playgrounds, it was decided that I should step back from this club. Max Allen the RE teacher, in whose room we met, has since taken a new job abroad, so prayers for a new link to be made at the school would be most appreciated.

At the end of the summer, I stepped back from leading the Pathfinders & New Gen groups and from September, Marion Trask then took on heading these two youth groups. Unfortunately, due to having a fall and injuring herself, Marion has now stepped back whilst she recovers, and I have stepped back into leading the Pathfinders Group.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who have helped with the Children & Families and Youth work over the last year. Without the support of all the volunteers, none of the above could happen!

**Hanna Rosser**

## **CHOIR**

As organist, I provided organ music for two Sunday morning services each month and for big festivals and any special events in church, including hymns, preludes and postludes, music for reflection during Communion, ensuring appropriate tempo and dynamics to support the hymns and ensuring a smooth and reverent flow of music throughout each service.

As choir leader I rehearsed and accompanied the choir during their weekly practices, preparing for their performances and performing choral music during Communion, focusing on musical accuracy, blend and strong interpretation. Coordinating the music performed by the choir and organ, with the liturgy and preaching, ensuring a smooth flow of the services and appropriate musical support is always the main focus of my job.

It is with great sadness and heavy heart that I have to report that the number of choristers lost in the last year, due to illness, aging population and family issues is growing bigger, which seriously

jeopardises our choir's future. We have been struggling for years to find new singing talents, whether young or young-at heart.

However, choir was performing strong last Christmas, including festive works by British and European composers. I selected the music for the Carol service and assisted with other performers, ensuring a diverse and engaging musical programme, enjoyed by both congregation and performers.

I am looking forward to the next year of worshipping and providing the musical support for services.

**Tatyana Angelova**

## **COFFEE SHOP**

We have had another good year in the Coffee Shop – a faithful team of volunteers to serve and make cakes and lovely customers to enjoy our facilities and refreshments.

During the summer months, we experimented with opening the Coffee Shop on a Sunday afternoon. We had in mind reaching out to those who might find Sunday afternoons a bit lonely. We had very few customers come along so we won't be repeating that in 2025.

We also wanted to start a games corner for which we needed people to help, but no one came forward. That has also been shelved.

Some of our volunteers have had to step down, some on health grounds, some for employment reasons. We have said goodbye Chris, Joan, Kat, Sunnie and Lillian who all served in the coffee shop and to David and Sylvia who have supplied us with yummy cakes. We say hello to Karolina and Sue who have joined the team. We are still looking for someone else to serve and would welcome any cake makers to join us. Please get in touch with me if you would like to help.

Plans for 2025: We have just started 'Craft Club at the Coffee Shop' twice a month on a Wednesday. As I write this, we have had one session and three people came along. So watch this space for more news on that venture next year.

**June Dean**

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Firstly, I would like to record my thanks to the members of the Communications Committee for their help and support. During the year 2024-25, the committee included Bryan Knapp; June Dean and Clark Chan (jointly responsible for *Contact* production), Hanna Rosser (Children and Youth); Linda Hobbs (*Contact* distribution). During the year Carol Barnett and Ken Hesse stepped down from the committee, and Siobhan MacKay (Operations Manager) joined us. With Bryan's departure, Kirsty McGhee has kindly agreed to join the committee.

The church continues to communicate with our members through ChurchSuite and through the weekly Day-by-Day newsletter (distributed via ChurchSuite and also available in hard copy at services).

There is also the information screen in the foyer, which is seen not only by those who attend services but also by those who use our halls.

To communicate with a wider audience, including those who have not yet come into the church building, we have *Contact* magazine, which goes to approximately 625 homes each month (with quite a few copies taken free of charge from the display in the church foyer). The circulation figure is unchanged from last year. The committee has considered ways of making *Contact* more appealing to

general readership (without turning it into a version of Town Cryer). One innovation has been the inclusion in each issue of a section signposting sources of support (enormous thanks to Siobhan for producing this material).

We also have the St Andrew's website and two Facebook pages (a general St Andrew's page and a dedicated Children and Youth Page) and an Instagram page recently linked to the St Andrew's Facebook page. We are planning to seek advice on the user-friendliness of our website and on the effectiveness of the content and presentation of our Facebook/Instagram posts.

There is also a YouTube page which hosts audio recordings of our main services.

We have made sure that, for all our social media channels, there is more than one person with access to maintain the account and to upload content, to make sure that we will not experience access problems if someone is (for example) unwell or on holiday.

There was a St Andrew's X (formerly Twitter) account, but it is not in use and there are no plans to revive it. The committee will, in due course, consider whether St Andrew's ought to join any of the rivals to X that have become popular, such as Bluesky. However, we want to make sure that we are making best use of our current media before expanding into any others.

We have continued with our use of themes for *Contact*, the Facebook/Instagram 'Thought for the Day' posts and Sunday services. There has been very little feedback on whether people find this extended use of themes helpful. During the vacancy, we will be reverting to the lectionary for our Sunday services (so that visiting preachers are not taken by surprise) but we will be maintaining monthly (though not weekly) themes for *Contact*. The Thought for the Day posts will necessarily become less 'thematic'.

Communications will obviously play an important role during the vacancy. In recent months, we have included material in *Contact* to reassure people that the ministry of the church will continue and to encourage people to step up to support St Andrew's. Regular updates on the progress towards finding a new Vicar (and calls for volunteers to help where help is needed) will be included in future issues, as well as in Day-by-Day.

Our key strategic focus for communications remains mission, sharing the Good News of God's love with anyone who will listen. It is important to maintain our focus on outreach, especially as Paddock Wood continues to grow.

As well as active engagement with, and participation in, events such as the Paddock Wood Carnival in July and Paddock Wood Lights Up @ Christmas, and our links with the Hong Kong community and Kent Chinese Christian Church, we need to find ways of reaching out to the people who live on the new estates. Social media offers one way, but we also need to identify ways of making personal contact with new residents. This is something for which volunteers will definitely be needed.

**Peter Hungerford-Welch (Chair)**

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Sadly, this committee has only met once in 2024 due to falling numbers or busyness of those remaining members. However, we have continued to organise and respond to opportunities to engage with the local community and be a Christian presence. St Andrew's once again had a stand at the Paddock Wood Carnival in 2024 which attracted a good number of visitors and we were joined by the Bereko Partnership group and friends from Paddock Wood Baptist Church.

We also had a stand at the Lights Up event at Christmas which was re-scheduled owing to a storm; another event took place two weeks later however numbers in attendance were low, as were we stall holders. However, thanks to some intrepid members of the congregation we had our Christmas tree filled with stars which we later transferred in readiness for the Memorial Service.

Sadly, we have tried on two occasions this year to run the UK Welcomes Hong Kong course but with no takers. Our guess is that those have come from HK are now being supported by those who have been here for the last two years directly and so such a course isn't needed. However, this will continue to be monitored. Plans are being made for a Chinese New Year event on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025.

**Rev'd Canon Bryan Knapp**

## **DEANERY SYNOD**

There was only one meeting this year in November.

The meeting was held at St Margaret's, Lamberhurst, led by Rev Andrew Axon (Area Dean) and centred on a presentation from Rev'd Wil North, vicar of Barming & Associate Archdeacon for Tonbridge Archdeaconery.

He explained that parishes in vacancy can sometimes feel somewhat aggrieved by the process of appointment. His associate role had arisen due to the increase in workload of the administrative ministry of archdeacons and the need to share this more widely. It was felt inappropriate to push this burden onto Area Deans when they have parish responsibilities. His talk then continued as to how best to assist when a parish is anticipating a vacancy.

He advised using the gifts of volunteers, as far as practically possible to fill areas of need that the current incumbent had taken on and any remaining clergy may need to share out other tasks to competent and experienced others within the parish. He also mentioned that parishes should work with the deanery so that they can operate within a deanery plan, as far as possible.

The Area Dean took back the chair and announced his resignation from the role at the end of the year. The meeting is due 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Paddock Wood.

**Linda Hobbs**

## **FAIR TRADE SHOP**

Sales continue to improve gradually in the shop with a 12% rise in Food. We held our Spring Cream Tea and Craft event in May and our Christmas event in November which were both very successful.

With the money made from sales we will be looking to make grants of £5,000 to various charities.

The charities we are supporting this year include overseas and more nearer to home ones than we would normally. They are; Practical Action, Project Possible (previously ROPE) and Tools For Self Reliance, charities which are fighting poverty around the world through practical and sustainable action. MAF a charity that spreads the Gospel and provides medical care, building materials, schools and teachers to remote communities. Local charities we are supporting are Hospice in the Weald, the Community Store House, Kenward Trust, and Crossways.

This brings our total donations from the shop to £216,361.

The Fair Trade Shop will continue its policy of sourcing its goods from suppliers who are committed to the principles of fair trading and who guarantee to provide a fair and decent return to the primary

producers in the developing countries concerned. We are aware of the environmental impact some of the packaging has, as are moving to plastic free wherever possible.

This year we will continue to developing our links to the community through social media and advertising. We are very grateful to Penny Dean who is helping the shop with its marketing through local magazine articles and social media. We are also holding more external sales. We are now doing regular sales at East Peckham Methodist Church on the first Saturday of the month and the occasional one at the Tonbridge Methodist Church similarly on the first Saturday of the month.

We are struggling to find people to help with the running of the shop and the roles of Staffing Manager, Food Manager and Nearly New Manager have to be fulfilled and at present are being done by myself. Jan Dyer has stepped down from the committee and her duties are being covered by Carl Warren.

At the time of writing this there are 26 volunteers (plus the 6 committee members). If more volunteers can be found we would be able to expand our opening times and do more external sales which would be a great help.

Next year is our 50th Anniversary and we will be looking at ways we can celebrate this milestone.

After 12 years as the Fair Trade Shop Committee Chairman, I will be stepping down in September. I have thoroughly enjoyed this role and will happily remain on the committee and continue to support the shop in any way I can.

I should like to thank the Staff, the Committee, Church Council and the clergy for their support this year. I would ask that the Church Council continue their support for the shop by shopping with us and praying for our suppliers in these very difficult times.

Current members of The Fair Trade Shop Committee: Katharine Garland (Chair), Carl Warren (Treasurer), June Dean, Jean Saggars, Barbara Farnham, Eve Byrne.

**Katharine Garland**

## **FRIENDS TOGETHER**

We continue to meet twice a month for coffee and biscuits but sadly we have lost a couple of people over the year. On the other hand we have welcomed a few new members so our average numbers have not altered much. We enjoyed a lovely Christmas lunch at the Angel Bowls club when we joined other Friends' Groups.

As always, our grateful thanks to our volunteers, Colleen Hughes and Isabel Burrows, for making this possible unfortunately Chrissie Latham has had to step down due to ill health, however she does join our meetings whenever possible. Once again, we must also thank Rev Bryan Knapp for allowing us to use the Church Hall free of charge as St Andrew's contribution to the charity.

Finally one of our old members, Monica Laker, very kindly left St Andrew's a sum of money in her will with the request that a portion of the bequest be used for our Paddock Wood Group. It is our intention to arrange for an afternoon tea either late March or early April, at somewhere like Spade Works.

**Jean Saggars**

## GIRL GUIDING PADDOCK WOOD

Girl guiding in Paddock Wood continues to thrive, welcoming new members of all ages across all sections. We have 2 Rainbow units, 2 Brownie units, 2 Guide units and a Ranger unit. The Girl guiding journey begins with Rainbows for girls aged four to seven, then Brownies from seven to ten moving up to Guides from ten to fourteen and finally Rangers for girls aged fourteen to eighteen.

All units in our district offer a wide range of activities covering the Programme: Skills for My Future, Have Adventures, Express Myself, Know Myself, Be Well and Take Action. Every section offers the chance to gain either Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards. In Paddock Wood we are blessed with an excellent team of volunteers who give their time every week to run unit meetings, arranging trips, camping and many extra activities where the girls can gain experiences which they might not have had the chance to experience. In October of last year some of the girls participated in a region-wide event called "Converge on Cardiff" where they completed a large-scale game across the city. Anyone wishing to join in Girl guiding whether as a young member or as an adult volunteer, then please get in touch by dropping us an email: [pwdistrictcommissioners@outlook.com](mailto:pwdistrictcommissioners@outlook.com) we will then steer you in the right direction.

Girl guiding doesn't have to stop at eighteen, we have a Trefoil Guild offering Girl guiding for adults. They meet every second Monday of the month at various locations. They have learnt new skills along the way, enjoyed a meal out and have joined in with Paddock Wood District Girl guiding in decorating Christmas Baubles. For more information, please email [pwtrefoil@outlook.com](mailto:pwtrefoil@outlook.com)

Each year we actively take part in the Carnival and the girls enjoy the atmosphere and fun of the day. In the last year we have successfully fundraised for our units through a tombola stall at both the Carnival and somewhat blustery Lights Up Event. The year ended with our annual trip to the Pantomime: Snow White which was attended by over 100 members, always a noisy but fun event. In January, and new to our fundraising efforts there was a highly successful Quiz Night, with 13 teams attending and they enjoyed the mixture of challenging and fun questions. Finally, a big thank you to everyone that continues to make Girl guiding in our district a success.

**Michelle Boyle, District Commissioner**

## HOME GROUPS

These mid-week groups for: Bible study, prayer and fellowship continue to be a place of spiritual growth for all who attend. We currently have 7 groups which meet, usually each week in peoples' homes, or two which meet in the Wallis Room with a membership of just over 60 people. The groups are long established, but have I know welcomed new members into them over the year. With the flexibility of groups/leaders being able to choose their own studies, this has hopefully allowed them to respond to issues and interests found within the group.

During Lent in 2024 many of the groups took a break and joined together for the Way of Life Discipleship course designed by the Methodist Church. We looked at the themes of: *Worship, Invitation, Welcome, Engage, and What Next* and were joined by Paddock Wood Baptist Church. These themes very much echoed the words that came from our Church Council Day Away two year earlier, as areas within the church life we need to work on.

**Rev'd Canon Bryan Knapp**

## MUSIC GROUP

Members Hanna Rosser, Keith Rosser. Stephen Pághány, Anita Fleming, Ana, Sarah Elliott.

The music group has continued in much the same vein as last year serving every 2nd and 4th service. We have managed to add a couple of new songs to our repertoire whilst continuing with familiar favourites.

The group has faced some challenges this year, not least Hanna injuring her hand rendering her unable to play the piano for a few months. During this time the group managed to continue supporting the services with the kind help of Tony and Joanne.

We continue to hope for more members as this would make it easier for us to cope when 1 or 2 members are unavailable to play. Ideally we would like to have enough members to set up a rota as the majority of us have other commitments within the church meaning we seldom have the opportunity to worship as part of the congregation without having specific commitments.

However we very much enjoy making music and leading the congregation in worship and hope to continue as we look forward to the coming year.

**Sarah Elliott**

## OPEN HOUSE

Open House meets every Friday morning in the Wallis Room, except Bank Holidays and in August.

The atmosphere within the group is one of friendship and lively chat with tea, coffee, biscuits and the occasional piece of cake added in for good measure. We try to inspire a light entertainment with quizzes, bingo, craft and game sessions and a regular Chapel time in addition to guest speakers. This last year we invited Dave Smith to talk about computers, Steve Mewett about his time as a police forensic investigator, RNLI lifeboats as well as PC Connor Geelan to keep us up to date on policing issues in and around Paddock Wood.

The group attracts folk of retirement age and at the moment we number 12-15. We do offer transport to those who need it and this is made possible by a small group of volunteers who help with transport to and from the meeting along with those who help with serving refreshments. Many thanks go to them for making it happen.

**Linda Hobbs & Ron Taylor**

## PASTORAL COMMITTEE

This group has met four times over the last year to support the pastoral work that goes on through groups and individual contact. Events such as our Christmas dinner and summer tea, or Friends Together or Open House continue to be well attended and valued by all who attend. We have again seen an increase in the amount of support required by individuals within the church family and the local community who reach out to us.

Whilst a great number support individually, those 'recognised' within our team are sadly falling in number, and therefore we do not always have the capacity to respond as we might wish to. If you are able to respond and are willing to become part of this group, then please speak with Kirsty. **Thank you to all those who do support and who use their gifts in this way.**

**Rev'd Canon Bryan Knapp**

## PEOPLE, APPOINTMENTS & GOVERNANCE (PAG) COMMITTEE

This report covers the period from 16 January 2024 to 16 January 2025

### 1. People and Appointments

#### (A) Operations Manager

1.1 Following an open competition to find a successor to Christopher Dunn as Operations Manager, Siobhan MacKay was appointed in March 2024. We wish to record Church Council's thanks to Chris for staying on beyond the end of his notice period in order to ensure a smooth hand-over to Siobhan.

1.2 Siobhan has settled in reasonably quickly to the demands and vicissitudes of the job after a challenging start. Following a second a review of Siobhan's working arrangements for the last six weeks to 31 December 2024, about which Council had been informed in November, PAGC is assured that there is currently a manageable balance between both the planned, and the unexpected, aspects of the job. PAGC has concluded after the trial period, that to meet the varied and fluctuating demands of the job, the most efficient use of Siobhan's time is best achieved by her working flexibly, which includes a limited number of hours per week working from home.

1.3 Her Line Manager will keep these arrangements under periodic review in liaison with Siobhan.

1.4 For the record, Siobhan was confirmed in the post in light of her good performance during her three-month probationary period.

#### (B) Youth Worker

1.5 Last January 2024, Church Council approved my committee's recommendation that, to test the state of the market, we advertise the Youth Worker post on a part-time basis as soon as practicable. This was done, but unfortunately there were no serious applications among the wealth of 'dud' ones received. We explored several avenues and sources, including liaising closely with, and seeking advice from, Cheryl Trice, the Diocesan Youth Lead.

1.6 Council Members will recall that at our ACM on 28 April 2024, Bryan addressed the issue regarding our failure to fill the Youth Worker position, albeit on a part-time basis. He said: "*The sad reality is that nationally fewer people are offering themselves for youth working roles and fewer organisations are training.*"

1.7 That said, our Committee in the Spring of 2024 informally interviewed a potential candidate for this post to work here on a part-time basis. However, while the individual concerned was judged suitable, he in the end declined to take matters further after being offered a similar role at his home church.

1.8 We will continue to monitor the situation during this year and to keep in close contact with Cheryl. The committee wishes to place on record its thanks to Hanna (Rosser) for having stepped in after Sarah-Joy left and served part-time as Youth Leader for over a year.

### 2. Staff Pay

2.1 Our Committee has carefully reviewed the annual reports on the performance of all our staff (monthly and weekly) for 2024. On the basis of each individual's good performance, we are pleased to endorse the recommendation of the Finance Committee that our monthly staff be awarded a pay increase of 3.5% for 2025. The performance of our weekly-paid staff member also full met the requirements of the job and she will be awarded a similar pay rise, on the basis of the revised Living Wage rate announced in November (an increase of 5%).

2.2 Church Council at its meeting in January 2025 approved the respective rewards for all staff.

### 3. Membership

3.1 Church Council approved the appointment of Revd. Kirsty McGhee as a member of this committee from November 2024.

### 4. Future outlook

4.1 Our report last year mentioned the possibility that funds from both Methodist and Church of England sources might be made available to support the appointment of a Housing Minister during 2024. However, a number of unforeseen events since, primarily related to the timing of funding, have resulted in a deferral, rather than a cancellation, of the next steps to realising this plan. It is hoped that the barriers to the delayed implementation will be removed in the course of 2025.

**Carl Warren, Chair, PAG Committee**

## PROPERTY & FABRIC COMMITTEE

This year has been a year of big changes in the church buildings.

The FIT payments for electricity generated by the panels totalled £5,319 in 2024 compared with £5,240 in 2023. The LED lights were mainly fitted in November 23 and summer 24

The meter readings I have extracted from the bills are:-

|            |       |           |       |                   |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------------------|
| 12 June 23 | 2326  | 12 Nov 23 | 6364  | (units used 4038) |
| 9 June 24  | 14151 | 10 Nov 24 | 17691 | (units used 3540) |

This saving is 498 units at 29p per unit = £144 over 5 months which would mean about £350 saved over a full year. It is hoped that this will contribute to a large energy saving overtime.

The repair to the buildings fabric have been ongoing. The major changes have been a complete redecoration and new LED lighting fitted in all room except the Wallis room. Thanks to Kevin, Ken and Tom. The main carpets were shampooed.

The carpet in the main church was replaced with faculty from the arch deacon.

We hoped that the CPS would provide suitable people undertaking community service orders to be able to complete the decoration needed to the building but the standards were not good enough. However, the gardening work they undertook for a short while was done well, but we are now back to our own volunteers

The church A/V system was rewired for digital and new microphone points fitted with thanks to Kevin and John for taking on this work, thus saving a considerable sum. The new carpet and A/V upgrade was part funded by a grant from the Diocese.

A new CCTV system was purchased as the old one had failed and extra cameras were fitted. Since then we have had a security survey (instigated by the government) and their recommendations may come to fruition in 2025.

Accessibility: Felicity informed us of all the regulations for wheelchair access and we are investigating the provision of a concrete ramp at the west door and are awaiting grant information. A handrail has been fitted on the altar steps to aid getting up and down at communion.

After the awful events in Southport, a good deal of thought has been given to security around the church and especially for the Holiday Club Week.

We were asked to consider installing EV charging points in our car park, but it was felt unnecessary as most people have access to them.

The clear-up days continue to happen twice yearly and the volunteers keep the grounds well. Particular thanks to Linda Hobbs for all her work in keeping the gardens etc in such good order.

A tree in memory of Joy & Harry White was planted in the flag pole flower bed.

The vacancy group has formed to manage the departure of Bryan, and the search for a new incumbent. The P&F committee will also aid the group by keeping the church working normally through this period of hiatus, and will keep the rectory in safe condition until its sale.

**Kevin Dunn, Chair, P&F Committee**

## **SAFEGUARDING**

General Synod has recommended that an independent body should be set up to include the NST to oversee safeguarding in the CofE. Diocesan safeguarding teams will remain as they are as it is widely agreed that safeguarding at roots level is working well.

This year has seen many in our church re-taking the Basic and Foundation training. Two each of these took place in the Wallis room for those who wanted a group session rather than doing it alone on-line.

National standards are now insisting that everyone (Employee or Volunteer) **working** with children, young people or vulnerable adults must take the Domestic Abuse Pathway.

As there is a reluctance to do training and to put that training into action this year we will be embarking on an awareness campaign. Whilst there is a growing need for mental health awareness and guidance.

The risk assessment form has been amended, so any event taking place on these premises must consider the impact on others using the facilities.

The recent Rochester/Canterbury safeguarding conference focused on spiritual abuse. St Andrew's was blessed to have Greg Barry, our lead safeguarding adviser talk to us on Safeguarding Sunday and there are monthly meetings with the Diocesan safeguarding team.

**Brian Banks & Felicity Lusted**

## **SCOUTS: 11<sup>th</sup> TONBRIDGE SCOUT GROUP**

Scouting has been a long tradition in Paddock Wood and this year we have welcomed the reopening of Seeonee Cub pack, closed a few years ago due to lack of volunteers to lead the section. We currently have 2 Beaver Colonies (6-8 year olds), 2 Cub Packs (8-10 1/2 year olds), 1 Scout Troop (10 1/2-14 year olds) and an Explorer Section (14-18 year olds).

All sections welcome boys and girls and offer a range of exciting and challenging activities across the Scouting programme. This programme offers challenge badges covering My World, My Skills, Teamwork, My Adventure, My Outdoors and Personal Challenges older sections also complete expedition challenges. These culminate in the Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond Chief Scout Awards as they move up through the sections.

The older sections are encouraged to help out in younger sections through the Scouts Young Leader Scheme. With District and County Scouting support Explorers can also work towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards from Bronze through to Gold.

During 2023 we were delighted to win a County award for growing the group and our Young People enjoyed a free activity day at Lower Grange Farm activity centre. They took part in climbing, archery, fencing, caving, karting and many other activities. As well as their weekly meetings all sections enjoyed their own camps during the summer months. The Beaver section even let a parent join in the fun on their family camp!

We would like to thank all the Leaders and parent helpers who volunteer to provide an engaging and informative programme to the young people in Paddock Wood.

**Yvonne Sharman, 11th Tonbridge (St Andrew's) Paddock Wood Scout Group Trustee Committee.**

## **SCOUTS: WILD CATS**

We meet in the Church Hall on Friday evenings doing various activities and training sessions, traditional skills such as First Aid, map reading, knots and lashings and life skills such as DIY, computers, online safety, mixed in with various games. We also have meetings at Lordship Wood or Cart Wood where we can have camp fires, cooking, wide games, rifle shooting etc.

We have Operation Founder coming up where we will probably have three teams competing with 30 or more others in the Tonbridge District, tackling various incidents and using map and compass to find their way around a six mile course.

Summer Camp this year will be at the Kent International Jamboree at Detling where there will be over 5,000 scouts from many countries taking part in a massive array of activities. By contrast, last year we had a traditional camp, at Lordship Wood, cooking on open fires in patrols and generally chilling out.

**Peter Crouch**

## **SCRIPTURE UNION HUNGARY**

Scripture Union Hungary is looking forward to the 2025 season of children's summer camps, which as usual are conducted for the most part in English. So far, two events have been planned for July, one in Budapest, and the other in Tatabánya, a city north east of the capital.

Following on from their "Úton" (On the Way) website last year, they've now released the Úton app, aimed at young people to read the Word, prayers and devotions on the go.

They published two more editions of their "Vadóc" (Madcap!) youth novel series in 2024. More are planned for 2025. To tie in with this series, they've held an illustration competition and an online reading competition comprising three rounds, the winners to be announced in May. All these activities are geared towards getting young people to read the Word as a matter of course.

As part of their expansion, they have a new recruit, Lilla. She had been a volunteer at the camps since 2019 and now joins the staff at their offices in Budapest.

It's hoped that their representative, Tamás Daxner, will be able to visit us in the UK this spring.

**Stephen Pagany**

## **WARDENS' REPORT**

It has been a busy year for our Wardens/Steward team of three. Thankfully we have two experienced sides persons who stand in as Wardens, when needed, to fill gaps in the rota.

Services have always been planned to cover all the needs in faith and other matters, for the congregation and the community of Paddock Wood.

The upkeep of the church and the grounds are maintained by a small group of dedicated volunteers in the P&F committee. For a short while we had a team from the Community Payback Service helping with the garden/grounds. Sadly, this was not a long-term option.

Under the leadership of Kevin Dunn of P&F the halls were redecorated and the church was re-carpeted which now looks very smart and fit for worship for another 50 years!

The wider operational management of the church is now in the able hands of Siobhan MacKay and running like clockwork.

The Lay Readers continue with their duties at services and funerals. The wardens/steward are assisted by a dedicated group of sides people. Sadly three have stood down due to health/family reasons. It would be most welcome for congregants to step forward and volunteer their God given talents to the service of the church and become Welcomers or Sides People.

The coming year will be filled with challenges with Bryan, our Vicar, retiring. However, a strong team is in place to deal with the vacancy period. We look forward to welcoming a new incumbent in the not too distant future.

**Ken Hesse**

## **WEALD OF KENT METHODIST CIRCUIT**

2024 saw John Ritson and Phil Staddon retire from the circuit, and our new Superintendent Jane Braund arrive. We also have a new Circuit Administrator Nicola Martin, and a new triumvirate in charge of Safeguarding.

There has been a slight increase in membership across the churches in the circuit, which is brilliant news!

There continues to be more staff changes on the horizon with Dermot retiring in 2026 and Helen Warmington from the URC retiring this year. We do however welcome our new Deacon Helen Cook in September. She will be based at the East Peckham manse and will be looking at outreach into new communities.

The District have said they're going to start auditing Circuits to check up on our safeguarding, GDPR, EDI training etc. The good news is that St Andrew's is exempt because the brilliant Brian Banks is keeping us going with the Anglican system!

We've had some staff away days and prayer times this year, renewing our vision and thinking about where God might be calling us to focus in the next few years. It has been a really lovely and spiritually deepening time.

The circuit meeting continue to pray for St Andrew's and the incredible opportunities that are opening up as the town gets larger. We hope God's guidance on how the Methodist Circuit can best support mission here is being constantly listened to.

**Rev'd Kirsty McGhee**

## PARISH PRAYER

Lord God, we ask you to bless St Andrew's.  
Strengthen our fellowship,  
that we may support and encourage each other.  
Guide us in our daily lives,  
and help us to be instruments of your peace and love,  
reaching out to those in need and showing compassion to all.  
May St Andrew's be a beacon of hope  
and a source of comfort to all who seek your presence,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

