

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
St. Petroc's Church South Brent**

**A Parish in the Dart and Avon Mission Community
In the Deanery of Totnes in the Diocese of Exeter**

Registered Charity Number 1211219

*Address for correspondence:
The Vicarage, Hillside, South Brent TQ10 9AN*

Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31st December 2024

Team Rector

Reverend Prebendary Professor Gina Radford

Bankers

NatWest, Paignton (B) Branch, 15 Victoria Street, Paignton TQ4 5DE

Independent Examiner

Mr Robert Barclay
Yonder Cross
South Brent
TQ10 9DR

Our website

www.stpetrocsandstmarys.org.uk

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Petroc's Church South Brent

Annual Report

For the Year Ended 31st December 2024

Aims and Purposes

St. Petroc's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church; pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the well-being of the church finances and the upkeep and maintenance of the church and church room buildings. Both buildings are located in Wellington Square, South Brent TQ10 9AQ.

Current Situation

The parish is part of the Dart and Avon Mission Community in which the Rev Prebendary Professor Gina Radford is Team Rector. Gina is part time and is officially on duty on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday each week, but does amend her timetable to fit in with weddings and funerals particularly. She lives in the Vicarage in South Brent.

Gina is supported by a Ministry Team including an LLM and retired clergy. Until August 2024 the team included a curate, who moved to become an Associate Priest elsewhere following the completion of her training with us. The Team meets monthly. In addition, lay people are encouraged to develop and grow their skills and talents in leading aspects of worship. It has been wonderfully encouraging to see lay ministry in its widest meaning grow and develop across the Mission Community. In our churches, with the exception of St. Petroc's, which has a weekly service, second services are lay-led, and this has allowed people to explore and develop their gifts in this area.

As a Mission Community we have developed an exciting vision for our future direction with staffing, to enable us to connect with our communities more effectively, particularly in Buckfastleigh, where the local church runs a Foodbank. This has been an exiting time for us, with all our PCCs coming together to share and explore ideas and opportunities. To this end we are delighted that we have appointed a new Team Vicar (0.5wte) who will join us in May 2025, and will be based in Buckfastleigh, though serving across the whole Mission Community. We hope to develop our vision further in the area of pioneering, and are exploring opportunities for this.

This is an exciting time for us as a Mission Community. However, we also face the realities of maintaining our churches, many of which have significant maintenance and fabric issues; and continuing to grow as disciples of Christ whilst recognising the demographic changes and challenges with regards to attendance in some of our churches. We are blessed to have wonderful and very supportive Churchwardens and PCCs who give so much to the churches and communities they serve. We are truly blessed and thank God for all they and so many others in our congregations do.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC remains committed to the community of South Brent, enabling as many people as possible to worship in the parish church, taking the message of the Gospel to the wider village, and supporting and serving the wider community, as well as growing disciples and the whole body of Christ in this place. St Petroc's is a church for the whole parish, whether they are regular worshippers or not.

The PCC has an overview of worship and is very supportive of the ministry team by supporting existing services and offering constructive feedback and practical help.

The worshipping community at St Petroc's works hard to enable all people of whatever background to discover, establish and grow their faith through worship, prayer and exploring our faith together. We seek to learn and grow in our knowledge and trust in Jesus.

The provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish and outreach work remain a priority. Our Pastoral Visiting Group supports members among the church community and beyond. This includes monthly services in our two Nursing Homes. These are led by the Rector, supported by members.

We seek to be the generous people of God, and to look beyond our own community to offer support. We donate to a number of charitable and other causes, and see this wider giving as an essential part of our life together. The PCC has agreed a policy of giving away 10% of its unrestricted income to charitable causes.

In addition, the Churchwardens are members of South Brent Feoffees, which the Rector chairs. This group supports both individuals and groups within the village, with a particular concern for those in greatest need.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and Prayer

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

St. Petroc's is a growing church, and numbers have increased in this past year. We have had a number of new people join us, including at our Family Service which now welcomes 70+ adults and 10+ children each month.

We hold weekly 9.30am services at St. Petroc's. Our main services follow the pattern of a Family Service on the 1st Sunday of each month, a Village Eucharist on the 2nd and 4th Sundays and Service of the Word on the 3rd Sunday. In months where there is a 5th Sunday, we join with the rest of the Mission Community for a joint service. We also have an 8.00am service of Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer on the 3rd Sunday.

Services are filmed and placed on the website, which enables those not able to attend in person to worship.

We have committed to continue to offer a virtual access to our worship for the foreseeable future thanks to the faithful support of a member of the congregation who undertakes the filming each week.

We have coffee and fellowship after the service in the adjacent church room. This is very well attended, and coffee and fellowship time can sometimes be as long as the service!

Weekday Morning Prayer takes place twice-weekly and is regularly attended by up to 10 people, both in person and by Zoom.

A weekly Thought for the Week study group meets virtually to discuss matters arising from the Sunday sermon.

We have a number of active bible study and prayer groups, which meet on a regular basis and a celebration of World Day of Prayer takes place annually. In addition, Lent courses are held.

We have a large and flourishing band of bell ringers, who have regularly won awards.

There is a small but growing branch of the Mothers Union.

Our Civic Service of Remembrance was very well attended. Our Christmas services were very well attended and a truly joyful time – especially our Carol Service and our Christingle with a full church on both occasions.

In addition to our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate, mark and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. We see Life Events services as a very important part of our mission. At baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through the funeral service family and friends express their grief and give thanks for the life that is now complete in this world and commend the person to God's keeping. We have celebrated 2 baptisms this year, one Thanksgiving, with 4 weddings and 18 funerals, including crematorium services, being held during the year.

St. Petroc's is blessed and very grateful to have the active ministry from retired clergy and other members of the Mission Community Ministry Team.

In addition to our two highly talented organists, we have an excellent choir who together support us at our 9.30am services. We also have a band which plays at Family Worship and on other special occasions, and an enthusiastic group of young actors who bring bible and other stories to life for the congregation.

All are most welcome at our services. At present, there are 122 parishioners on the Electoral Roll, an increase of 3 from last year.

Christmas

Our usual Carol service was held on the Sunday before Christmas and our Christingle Service was held on Christmas Eve. 642 people attended our Christmas services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Deanery Synod

We have two Deanery Synod representatives.

The Church

We want our Church to be open to our community for private prayer. It is open from about 9.30am until the early evening every day.

The interior of the Church is cared for by a dedicated group of cleaning volunteers and the appearance of the Church is wonderfully enhanced by the work of our very active team of flower arrangers.

We engaged a new architect, Jeremy Chadburn, to conduct the Quinquennial inspection in March 2024 and his report, issued later in the year, included the following statement:

"This church is clearly cared for and there is a real attention to keeping the maintenance up. This results in enormous dividends for the fabric condition. The PCC and Fabric committees should be commended for their efforts in keeping this fine building in good condition, especially in its location, which is quite a harsh environment. The only area of ongoing concern, despite very good efforts to resolve it is the dampness in the tower."

It should be noted, however, that the work conducted on the tower was not wasted (see comment from the QI below) and will form the basis on developing proposals to find a long-term solution to the water egress problem. Our new architect is working very positively with the PCC to achieve this.

"The church has undertaken a great deal of investigation, repair and review of the damp tower over the last 10 years. From the PCC's description the results have been disappointing after all the works and expense that has taken place. To perhaps give you a little reassurance on the works undertaken

to date, they have not been wasted. The DAC/Historic England and SPAB would agree that the process you have been through is necessary to eliminate the issues one at a time. I would say that we could not go to the next stage without the work you have done to date.

To summarise the works, I assume were undertaken:

- De-point the tower externally, remove poor deep mortar.
- Remove vegetation and fill voids with a group or deep pointing in a lime mortar.
- Repoint the tower externally in an NHL lime mortar.
- Repoint and repair the parapets and harling render the inner parapet facing.
- Internally repair the bell chamber walls and use tile repairs to fill larger voids.
- Remodel the roof hatch to provide ventilation to the high-level part of the bell chamber.

All this work has been executed to a high standard. The contractor that undertook the work has a good reputation."

Much investigation work was carried out during 2024, including visits to other churches, and meetings with potential suppliers. Following discussions with the Archdeacon and representatives of the DAC, it became apparent that a full Faculty Petition was required. A series of proposals are being developed in conjunction with the DAC, our church architect and Historic England with a view to submitting final project details during 2025.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care in the parish by the Rector and members of the congregation is a very high priority. Holy Communion and other services take place regularly in the Willows and Windward residential homes. Home communions for housebound members of the congregation take place regularly, together with other pastoral visiting. In addition, there is the regular visiting for funerals, baptisms, weddings and other pastoral matters. The Pastoral Visiting Group coordinates work in this area.

Work with Children and Young People

We continue to have a number of committed and energetic teams which work with children and young people in the parish:

People with under Fives (PUFFS)

Puffs is going from strength to strength this year, especially in terms of the numbers attending. We regularly have a dozen little ones each session from a total of 32 on the register, with a stack of buggies parked at the foot of the stairs to the Church Room every Monday morning.

The sessions run on much the same lines as described in last year's report. This year we seem to have an influx of newly arrived babies, which is great for the parents involved. These include grandparents and Dads, and new contacts and relationships are formed at an important time in the lives of these families.

Thanks should go to those on the two rotas of helpers, including to our founder, who comes with her Christmas, Epiphany and Easter puppet stories, keeping up her links with the group.

Sunday Morning Services

Young people are always welcomed at our Sunday morning services, with a Family Service on the 1st Sunday of every month. There is a Sunday Activity Club which has children attending on the majority of Sundays, when they take part in Christian based activities, the results of which can be viewed on the notice board to the left of the choir vestry.

During the Family Service We seek to involve the children by taking part, and have a group of about 20 children and young people who variously attend. It is wonderful to see the younger members growing in confidence as they take part in reading, plays and various activities as part of our worship. The age range is very broad, from babies to teenagers.

SPARX

SPARX, which was a development of Messy Church, has been held on the third Saturday of the month in the Church Room throughout 2024 and included activities linked to a Christian theme, discussion, games and, importantly, food!

Given that the majority of our SPARX members have moved up to secondary school, it has been decided to discontinue SPARX in its current format in 2025 and we seek ideas on how best to engage with those attending secondary school.

Primary School

We have a state Primary School in the village, with which the Church has established links. The Rector takes regular assemblies. In addition, the school is welcomed to church for all the major festivals. The church has a very positive relationship with the school.

The Bridge Project in South Brent (previously 'Youth Bus')

Ivybridge Youth for Christ (IYFC) currently undertake this important work as part of their regular Christian outreach to young people. In South Brent the events are held in term-time on Wednesday evenings with the aim of providing a safe place for the youngsters to chat with each other or with those adults present (a staff member and at least one volunteer) if they so wish, away from the pressures of school and sometimes family life as well. Typically, between 15 - 25 young people attend each time, many of them quite regularly, resulting in some really meaningful conversations especially if they are in small groups or just one-to-one. The number of young people attending has grown.

We were delighted to have been awarded a Diocesan grant to develop this work in 2024 (The Bridge Project) to become more of a Youth Group to enable the Christian message to be introduced to attendees.

Safeguarding

There have been no safeguarding incidents brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Officer during 2024.

The Diocesan safeguarding office keeps our Safeguarding Officer updated with changes in requirements, and the Mission Community safeguarding personnel keep in contact by email.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to comply with the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Mission and Evangelism

Mission is key to what we do as a church, both within our regular worship, and in engaging with our wider community.

We hold a monthly Family Service, which has proved very effective for enabling people who may not be used to church an opportunity to experience a more informal and accessible service. The children help take the service, doing dramas, reading, doing the prayers and playing in the band.

We held our annual Good Friday village walk. A cross is carried to the top of Brent Hill, where the Rector leads a short service. It was a wonderful occasion with well over 100 people and various well-behaved dogs making the pilgrimage. We are very grateful to the landowner who kindly allows us to access the hill.

We have developed a very accessible and attractive website thanks to the expertise of David Brett, a member of the church. It has superseded our use of 'A Church near you' which we found was not the best fit for our needs. It is aimed not only at our regular members, but also at anyone who may be looking in interest. We have pages with prayer resources, worship resources, young people's resources, as well as information about our activities and services. The Rector writes a weekly "Dear Friends" letter with a homily on the Sunday's readings, together with prayers, notices and a diary for the week ahead. This is emailed to everyone in our email group, and is available on the website and the Church notice board for the general public to read.

Facebook posts for weekly services and associated events are posted every week and reach between 200 and 700 people.

A Christmas card was sent to every house in the parish with the times of the Christmas services. Our Parish Magazine (The South Brent Messenger) has been relaunched quarterly and is distributed to almost every household in the parish and Rattery, without charge.

St. Petroc's Lending Library of Christian-based books continues to be used by a small number of readers. Books especially relevant to the time of year in the Church's calendar are placed on the top shelf with a selected few showing the front cover in full to help attract attention. The agreed extension to the library has been achieved through two stand-alone bookcases placed behind the choir stalls in the Catherine Chapel.

We held a variety of events to engage with our community, including a monthly Coffee in the Car Park, a monthly Parish Breakfast before our Family service, a monthly Parish Lunch and a very well attended Christmas Grotto in the church to which lots of families who wouldn't otherwise come to church and enjoyed the activities, fun and warm hospitality.

We are blessed in having a very active Hospitality Team, who see their gifts in this area as a real opportunity for mission.

Our members also support a range of activities in the wider community, including Compassionate Café (which the church co-founded), lunch clubs and coffee mornings in the Old School Centre.

Ecumenical Relationships

We have been very successful in establishing close relationships with the other churches in the parish in recent years. Combined services are held at the annual Covenant Service at the Methodist Church in early January and on Remembrance Sunday at the Parish Church. There is a combined Service of Light at the Roman Catholic Church on the first Thursday in December. Anglicans take an active part in this service. Personal relationships with members of the other churches are very strong. The World Day of Prayer takes place each year, the venue rotating around the three churches.

Churchyards

St. Petroc's has three churchyards in its care: the historic graveyard around the church building; the 1910 Cemetery in Station Approach, which takes its name from the year it was opened; and the adjoining Millennium Cemetery, opened in the year 2000. St. Petroc's churchyard contains three Grade II listed mediaeval tomb chests, and the stone wall facing the car park and roadway is also listed, as is the small lych gate and the base of the mediaeval stone cross outside the main lych gate.

The lower third of St. Petroc's Churchyard is earmarked as a wildflower meadow, and as an improved wildlife habitat for birds, butterflies, insects and bees. The grass here is allowed to grow long in the Spring and Summer and mown in the Autumn.

St. Petroc's Churchyard and the 1910 Cemetery are both closed to new burials and interments, unless these take place in family plots. The Millennium Cemetery is open for burials, or interment of ashes, for any resident of South Brent, regardless of their faith. We see the cemetery as very much an amenity for the whole parish and we are grateful to the Parish Council, who make a contribution of 50 per cent towards the cost of grass cutting in the 1910 and Millennium Cemeteries.

We keep watch on unauthorised items placed on graves and continue to remove these, hopefully in a sensitive way. All three churchyards remain areas for quiet contemplation and also as havens for wildlife.

The churchyard and 1910 cemeteries are officially signed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to indicate the presence of such graves.

During 2024 we have welcomed a new chairman of the Churchyard Committee and conveyed our grateful thanks to the retiring chairman for all his work over the years.

Financial Review

When setting the budget for 2024, we were cognisant of the many factors impacting on incomes, together with the inexorable rise in costs. In February, the PCC accepted a budget for the year which acknowledged that we might not be able to meet all our expenditure commitments. The General Church budget indicated a deficit of £3,600 for the year. It was also agreed that, despite these constraints, our charitable giving should be maintained at 10% of our regular income. Expenditure was to be strictly monitored and controlled and only essential items should incur cost.

In order to fund the installation of a new "state of the art" heating system a "Heating Project Appeal" was launched in the Spring. It is very pleasing to note that this was generously supported by Parishioners, and was further supplemented with grants from both the South Brent Community Energy Society and The Archbishops Council. Gift aid, where applicable, was claimed from HMRC.

As a result of these and other fundraising activities, the income for the year exceeded £100,000 and, as such, necessitated the individual registration of St. Petroc's with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

A certificate showing the registration of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Petroc's South Brent was issued on 03 December 2024. The Registered Charity Number is 1211219.

2024 also saw the refurbishment of the St. Petroc's church organ, which had been purchased 2nd hand some 30 years ago. This was funded primarily by a generous bequest from a former parishioner, supplemented by funds already held in readiness for this project.

The work with Ivybridge Youth for Christ, for which we obtained a grant of £5,000 in 2023, commenced and continues successfully.

It is pleasing to note that, despite a "headwind" of some £6,000 when compared to 2023 (an increase in common fund requirement of £2,700, together with the discontinuation of the Energy

Grant of £3,340) St. Petroc's has once again paid its Common Fund requirement in full and the combination of increased giving from our congregation, together with stringent control of costs, has resulted in a small surplus for 2024.

Budgets and forecasts for income and expenditure for 2025 have been prepared and reviewed by the PCC, together with available reserves and, despite the challenges which lie ahead, the PCC is reassured as to the financial stability of St. Petrocs.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to ensure that sufficient funds are available prior to the commencement of any particular project. We have been fortunate in the past to have benefited from the generous support of parishioners and villagers.

Volunteers

The members of the PCC would like to sincerely thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community it is.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council manages the activities of St. Petroc's. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules.

Following registration with the Charity Commission of England and Wales of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Petroc's South Brent, each PCC member is now automatically a Trustee of the Charity. The Hon. Treasurer has been authorised to act as the main contact and administrator.

At St. Petroc's the membership of the PCC currently comprises our Team Rector, two churchwardens, two Deanery Synod representatives and others elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the Church. All members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the Church, including deciding on how the funds are to be spent.

The full PCC met 5 times during the year with an average attendance level of 79%.

Given its wide responsibilities the PCC has a number of sub-committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life. In addition to the Standing Committee, comprising the Team Rector, Churchwardens and Treasurer, there are committees for Fabric, Churchyard, Church Room and Media (Zoom, Messenger & Facebook), together with a Pastoral Committee and a Social Committee. All are responsible to the PCC and report back to it with the results of their deliberations as necessary.

St. Petroc's has a Health & Safety Officer and a Safeguarding Officer, who each report to a Churchwarden. Both the Health & Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Policy are reviewed annually. The Health & Safety Officer conducts annual risk and fire risk assessments and the recommendations are reviewed and implemented by the Fabric Committee.

Administrative Information

St. Petroc's Church is situated in Wellington Square, South Brent, Devon TQ10 9AQ. It is a member of the Dart and Avon Mission Community within the Deanery of Totnes in the Diocese of Exeter within the Church of England.

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956 and the Church Representation Rules 2022) and is registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales. The Charity Registration number is 1211219.

PCC members who have served from 1 January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:

Chair:

Reverend Prebendary Professor Gina Radford

Churchwardens:

Mr. Rob Brighthouse

Mrs Susan Jozsa (also Hon. Secretary)

Elected members:

Mr. Geoff Addy - Hon. Treasurer

Mrs. Christina Cross

Mrs. Shirley Eatwell

Mrs. Stella Gillingham

Mrs. Emma McCulloch

Mrs. Sarah Smith

Mrs Diana Tyler

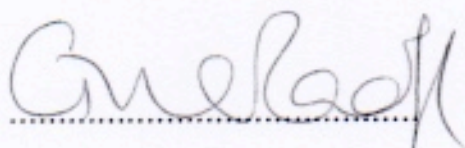
Mr. Greg Wall

Mrs Alaine Willis

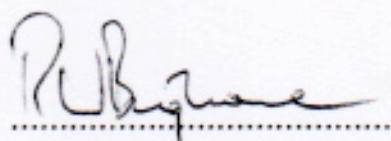
Approved by the PCC on 2nd March 2025 and signed on their behalf by

Reverend Prebendary Professor Gina Radford (Chair)

Mr. Rob Brighthouse (Vice Chair)



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