

after church, clean the church, print and distribute the monthly newsletter, assist with logistics and cater for special occasions.

## Administrative information

St Margaret and St Catherine Church is situated at the cross roads of Tey Road, New Road and Green Lane, in the centre of the village. The correspondence address is The PCC Secretary, 18 Scott Drive, Colchester, CO3 4JD.

Sadly, we lost another important member of the ministry team, Mr John Pitts who died on 28 May 2023.

Listed here are members of the PCC who have served at any time from 1st January 2023 until the date this report was approved:

Ex officio members:

- Incumbent: Revd Ian Scott-Thompson (Chairman)
- Reader and Deanery Synod Representative: Mr Iain MacCallum
- Churchwardens: Mrs Coral Wingate, Mr Iain MacCallum
- Deanery Synod Representative and Safeguarding Officer:  
Mrs Jennifer MacCallum

Elected members:

- Mrs Anne Matthews: Secretary
- Mr Richard Gough: Treasurer
- Mr Kenneth Thompson: Vice Chairman
- Mrs Barbara Rush
- Mrs Wendy Doncaster: Electoral Roll Officer
- Mr Mark Wingate
- Mr John Pitts to 28 May 2023
- Mrs Linda Davies
- Mrs Mags Newton
- Mr Peter Vestey

Signed by Revd Ian Scott-Thompson on behalf of the PCC on 8 April 2024

*Ian Scott-Thompson*



## St Margaret's and St Catherine's



Annual Report  
2023

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out on an ad-hoc basis. At the request of those vergering, bell ringing, sound engineering and playing the organ, the fees for providing the service are often retained.

## Structure, governance and management

Since October 2011 the Parish of St Margaret and St Catherine, Aldham, in the Benefice of Marks Tey and Aldham, has been in the Deanery of Colchester and in the Colchester Episcopal Area of the Diocese of Chelmsford.

The PCC is the body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission and exempt from tax under sections 505, 506 or 508 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988. It has no financially related trusts or charities. It met five times during the year.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. Our PCC consists of the incumbent who acts as Chairman, churchwardens, the reader and members elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral role of the church.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. New PCC members receive initial briefing.

***Standing Committee:*** This committee is required by law. It is made up of the Rector, churchwardens, Secretary and Treasurer. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC. The Rector is the Chairman.

***Leadership Team:*** Meetings of this group were interrupted by Covid, but have not restarted. They were led by the Rector, and included the Reader, Churchwardens and a small number of other members. It used to meet on a regular basis to consider all aspects of church life.

***Fabric and Churchyard:*** Mr Ken Thompson, is the lead maintainer of the fabric of the building and Steve Jennings leads the churchyard maintenance. Many volunteers help with maintenance and cleaning on a regular basis. They cut the grass in the churchyard on a regular basis and assist on a one-off church yard maintenance morning and on other ad hoc occasions.

***Fund raising:*** The establishment of the Friends of Aldham Church has already been referred to. However, the PCC and church members will continue to plan and organise other fund raising activities in the future.

***Other Rotas:*** some 50-60 volunteers, amongst other things, welcome worshippers to church, read and lead the prayers in services, provide flower arrangements, serve coffee

<b>Mission &amp; Charity Giving - 2023</b>	
CYO	801
Tearfund	275
New Life Church, Nepal	600
Essex Clergy Charity	91
Friends of Essex Churches	60
Bible Society	165
CPAS	91
Others	100
Colchester CAP	280
Colchester Foodbank	280
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 2,743</b>

### **East End Gable Repair Fund (Designated)**

A new fund has been created to track the fundraising and expenditure for the East End Gable repair. £996 of expenditure had gone out of this fund by the end of 2023.

### **Reserves Policy**

We try to maintain a balance on non-restricted funds which equates to at least three months payments, which would be £5,739 in 2023. Our reserves at the end of 2023 are £20,746 after taking into account the Fabric Fund deficit.

### **Missions and Charities**

It continues to be our financial policy that we should seriously support the wider church. We do this in two ways. Members accept that 10% of their regular giving to Aldham Church will go as direct giving to external Christian causes. Also, we fundraise for specific causes and to respond to appeals.

### **Giving in Kind**

We continue to benefit from the generosity of many of our number who give their time, energy and material goods in order to keep the church operating with a minimum of actual expenditure. Whether inside the church, in the churchyard or elsewhere these efforts are appreciated and we thank all concerned who are on church rotas and who help

## **2023 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St Margaret's and St Catherine's Aldham**

Incumbent: Revd Ian Scott-Thompson  
The Rectory, Church Lane, Marks Tey  
Colchester, CO6 1LW

Reader: Mr Iain MacCallum,  
9 Handford Place, Queens Road  
Colchester, CO3 3NY

Bank: CAF Bank Limited  
25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill  
West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ

Independent Examiner: Mr Colin Smith  
18 Reynards Copse, Highwoods  
Colchester, CO4 9UR

Website: **[www.alldham-church.co.uk](http://www.alldham-church.co.uk)**

## Aims and purposes

Aldham Parochial Parish Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Ian Scott-Thompson, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. As a church community, our aim is that we should all grow into a living relationship with Jesus Christ. We aim to do this through worship for people of all ages and stages in life, and through keeping the wider world's needs in our minds and in our giving.

The PCC is also specifically responsible for the church building and grounds.

## Mr John Pitts

Last year we reported the deaths of two PCC Vice Chairs. Both leaders were not only dedicated service leaders but very talented and effective preachers. This year we have lost another very able lay preacher in John Pitts. Like Keith Rush, John was also a member of Kingsland Church who lived in Aldham but gave most of his time and talents to Aldham Church. We remember his contribution to the life of the church with gratitude.

## Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community.

Our Mission Statement reads:

“We exist to honour God and to enable people in our community discover Jesus”

The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our regular services and one-off special events can involve everybody within the parish. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, our monthly pattern of worship contained variety: one All-Age Worship, two Communion services and one or two Services of the Word. This year, the monthly pattern has been three Services of the Word and one Communion. On fifth Sundays we join with Marks Tey for a combined service. We occasionally offer a Junior Church alternative on a Sunday but our main provision for small children is “Messy Church” six to eight times a year. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We have also been particularly mindful of the guidance and encouragement provided by the previous Bishop of Chelmsford's Transforming Presence publication. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

## The Accounts for 2023

In 2023 the total assets of Aldham Church increased by £4,805.35 to £20,777.86. This includes £10,802.52 in legacy funds and around £1,000 worth of oil.

### General Fund

The General Fund (unrestricted) ended the year with a balance of £19,155.88, over £9000 up from the end of 2022. The total receipts into the general fund were around £1500 up on 2022. Planned giving and collections have decreased this year but income from the gift day, other one off donations and church activities increased. Once again there was a big increase in the cost of oil, electricity and water but overall expenditure from the General Fund was nearly £3500 lower than 2021 because we did not pay our Parish Share in full.

### Fabric Fund (Restricted)

We have allowed the Fabric Fund to move to a negative balance over recent years. This means the Fabric Fund is effectively borrowing money from the General Fund. All of our significant Fabric expenditure in 2023 was borne out of necessity, such as the money spent on repairs to the heating system. The fund carries forward a deficit balance of £8,184.54. We are able to recover the VAT on some of the Fabric expenditure.

Fabric Fund Year End Balances						
2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
£1,666	£678	£693	(£613)	(£880)	(£5,764)	(£8,185)

As the church is a grade II\* listed building, we are able to recover the VAT on much of the fabric repair work that has to be done.

### Legacy Funds (Designated)

There was no expenditure from the Tom Holme Legacy Fund in 2023 and so the balance remains at £10,469.35. The PCC decided to spend some of the John Crane Legacy cost on the cost of the new door lock and keys. There is £333.17 remaining in the John Crane Legacy Fund.

## Financial Review

### Treasurer's Post

Richard Gough continued in the role of treasurer during 2023 with assistance and support from Iain MacCallum.

### Financial Policy

**GENERAL FUND.** The cost of ministry and worship are generally met by the direct giving of the membership of the church. By church membership, we mean regular worshippers and the church Electoral Roll. We post all fees to the general fund, and we welcome donations and legacies (claiming Gift Aid where we can).

**FABRIC AND CHURCHYARD.** From time to time, we invite the village as a whole to contribute towards repairs or improvements to the fabric, and to maintenance of the churchyard. We also seek grants to cover major fabric repairs. We undertake fund-raising for fabric and churchyard.

In recent years "The Friend's of Aldham Church" (FOAC) has also contributed significantly to the Fabric Fund. FOAC's aims are to ensure that Aldham Church's building and churchyard shall be of increasing benefit to the wider community of Aldham and its neighbouring villages for present and future generations by aiding the PCC in improving, repairing, maintaining, renewing, restoring, preserving and developing Aldham Church, churchyard and associated buildings, and the fixtures and fittings in the Church, churchyard and associated buildings for the benefit of the public.

**MISSIONS AND CHARITIES.** We give 10% of the previous year's regular giving to external Christian missions and charities. In addition to this, fund-raising is undertaken by members for specific causes. The charities supported by this means are at the organisers' discretion, and the church is pleased to support such efforts for Christian organisations or organisations which have a Christian ethos.

### Accounting Policy

As our gross income is less than £250,000 we prepare our accounts on a receipts and payments basis. We choose to have an independent examiner (rather than a registered auditor) to examine the annual accounts.

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel, and developing knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this we maintain the fabric of the Church. Despite it being an old and traditional building it was configured in 2006 to make it as multi-use as possible with kitchen and toilet facilities. During 2015 a Friends of Aldham Church was formed to assist with fund raising for maintenance of the fabric.

### Broadband

The Covid pandemic has highlighted the value of being able to broadcast worship from the local church to the community and beyond using the internet. Advantages could be reaching those who *cannot* get to church services and streaming in teaching material; a disadvantage of streaming services would be that it tempts members who *could* get to church, to stay in bed, and thereby divide the church. We have decided not to stream our services. Nonetheless, the PCC decided to pursue a free installation offered by County Broadband. It is used regularly for Zoom prayer on Tuesday mornings. It is still available if mid-week Home Groups have to be in church.

## Achievements and performance

Aldham is a small village (approximately 490 residents 18 years+; 220 dwellings). Despite being a few miles from the ever-expanding boundaries of Colchester and close to a mainline commuter station at Marks Tey its population is relatively static. It is estimated that almost three quarters of residents have lived in the village for more than 12 years. It is also an 'ageing' village with less than 10% being children under 15 but just under 50% being 58 years or over. Almost three quarters of households are either single or two persons. It has no school, no shop, no pub and it is geographically spread out. There has been considerable new housing along the A1124, but it is all in the parish of Eight Ash Green.

During 2014 the Village Hall was reopened for full use after a large renovation and rebuilding project. It is well used by both village and outside groups. The village has seven Almshouse units managed by a separate charity. Renovation of the Hines Almshouses was completed and they were ready for occupation in 2019.

This profile presents challenges to us as a church. In normal times we struggled to attract children to All Age Worship services. When we were locked out of the church, we dropped the All-Age Service, as we were down to a single child. We are now in contact with a handful of children at "Messy Church". We are praying for more children and a regular Junior Church in the Tower Room once more.

We continue to rely on a very willing but ageing congregation to help maintain the building and grounds, run events and engage in our outreach activities. We are pleased

to report that most of our activities are approaching pre-pandemic normal. For example, the candlelit carol service was back in church this year on a very icy evening, when over 100 people came to enjoy the readings, the carols, mulled wine and mince pies.

None of this could have been achieved without the many volunteers who give of their time and resources to ensure the church is ready for worship each Sunday, that our outreach activities could resume, and that our church remains the lively and vibrant community it is. We would like to thank all of the 50-60 people who regularly assist with all these activities.

## Messy Church

Messy Church started last year with just one child and parent, and is now established as a regular event. We put on a session every 6 weeks, new helpers are always welcome, no experience needed. It consists of a one and a half hour sessions, in which children and carers hear a bible story, take part in activities based around a theme, do art work and have a drink and a biscuit. The experiment seems to be working, but we'd like to see more children.

## Covid-19

Infection rates from Covid have fallen, but it seems it is something we will have to live with., as we sing and sit where we want to. A few church members have had Covid, not much worse than a cold, but they soon recovered

## Average attendances

We feel that now all services are in the building, attendance is slightly down on what we would expect. However the service register tells us that the average Sunday attendance is 22.5 compared to 24.4 in 2022 but that it was 29.9 in 2019. These figures are swelled by large numbers at baptisms.

We are predominantly a village congregation. Based on the 2023 Electoral Roll (51), 43 are Aldham residents, 3 were Aldham residents who now live outside the parish but return to worship in Aldham, and 4 are not Aldham residents. Thus the majority of worshippers *walk* to church. This may be one reason why the pandemic has not hit us as hard as some other churches.

## Occasional Services

In 2023 there were 3 Baptisms, 4 Weddings and 3 Funerals.

## A Benefice in Plurality

On 29 June 2022 Revd Ian Scott-Thompson was installed as priest-in-charge of the churches of Great Tey, Little Tey, Wakes Colne and Chappel, as well as remaining priest

Local timber treatment at pulpit lowest step, adjacent Choirstall end, pew ends, floor and edge at pews, as needed	£150
Repair worm damage at rear Aisle platform edge	£350
Provide brass "hospital pattern" pipe clips for rope at Stair	June 2022
Remove ivy at boundary wall and monuments	ongoing
Paint gate hinges	£30

### Work requiring attention within five years

De-rust and paint window ironwork	£900
Repaint rainwater goods, including inside gutters & hoppers	£3,500
Complete repointing to south boundary wall.	£200
Replace 2 or 3 missing flints at Chancel gable apex	done with repair
Carry out localised areas of pointing, re-bed displaced flints	£2,500
Fill badly open crevices at flintwork	£500

## Other fabric work done in 2023

Date	Item	Cost to PCC
January	Annual Boiler Service	85.00
February	Boiler Filter Repair	85.00
	Vestry Strong Box Repaired	300.00
	Annual Gutter Clean	226.80
	Survey of Central Heating Leak	97.37
April	Churchyard Tree Surgery	720.00
	Lightning Protection Tested	131.10
	Roof Hatch Repair	382.80
	Organ Service	96.00
	Replacement Overhead Lamps	417.72
	Repair to Central Heating Pipework	1,930.00
May	Purchase Harrier Grass Cutter	150.00
	Replacement to Timber Upright	1,016.00
July	Annual Receiving Cr. Subscription	237.60
	Sound System New Batteries	28.97
	Intruder Alarm New Modem	106.20
	Intruder Alarm Annual Maintenance	477.60
August	Annual Fire Extinguisher Service	358.53
November	Door Lock Repair and New Keys	1,579.80
	Temporary Plastic Netting at Flint Fall	254.40
December	Heras Fencing around Flint Fall	741.60
	Call Out for High Level Pipe Leak	102.35
	Annual Boiler Service	105.00
	High Level C/H Pipe Repair	2,953.20

We also hope to hold another Flower Festival in the church in the autumn – details of this event are still to be finalised.

Any other events we organise during the year will be advertised.

Friends of Aldham Church would like to thank all those who supported the events in whatever way during the past year. The money raised, as I am sure you are aware, is solely for the upkeep of the fabric of the church building which I think we would all agree is one of the main features of our village. It would be extremely sad if this building at the centre of the village fell into disrepair. If you would like to help in this very worthwhile cause and become a Friend of Aldham Church please contact me and I will send details of membership.

*Andy Brown FOAC Chair*

## Fabric and Churchyard

### Quinquennial (2016) Repairs

All the work specified in the 2016 Quinquennial report has been completed.

### Quinquennial (2021) Repairs

#### Summary of Architect's list of work to be done. Not all has been done so far

The church has been well maintained and is generally in very good order but there will, of course, always be a number of day to day items of maintenance in a building of this nature.

For the assistance of the PCC the items requiring attention have been listed in an approximate order of priority with an indication of cost which is for guidance only and will change as time goes by.

<u>Urgent works requiring immediate attention</u>	£
Replace broken tiles to roofs (done)	£50
Check no water ingress at roof hatch -	April 2023
Check valley gutter for any further squirrel damage at drips -	£--

#### Work requiring attention within twelve months

Local timber treatment as required at hatch enclosure	£50
Treat Nave SW cornice (check also leaking pipe adjacent)	May 2023
Check for worm at other cornice, in particular at Chancel	£--

-in-charge of Aldham and Marks Tey. These 4 new churches generally meet as one for worship at 10.00 am, circulating round the 4 buildings.

## Pastoral care

Aldham is a small village with a strong sense of community. The Church has no official Pastoral Committee as such but every member of the congregation keeps a look-out for anyone needing a visit or particular help.

## Worship and prayer

In January 2022 the bishop of Colchester declared that Aldham and Marks Tey would become part of a benefice in plurality with Great Tey, Little Tey, Wakes Colne and Chappel, in the Hinkford Deanery. At the time of the bishop's decision Aldham and Marks Tey had one lay reader and 5 licensed preachers. Since then 3 preachers have died and one has moved away leaving the pulpits sometimes difficult to fill. The Rector shares himself across the new benefice. Every 3 to 4 months at a meeting with Marks Tey leaders, we sort out the leading and preaching at all our services. Four members of Aldham Church have started to lead the services, and a number of retired clergy have been found to fill preaching slots. Revd Robin Spittle, recently retired from the Diocese of Bury St Edmunds lives in Colchester. He has gladly taken a monthly slot at Aldham to our mutual delight.

The monthly pattern of services is now three Services of the Word, and one Communion. For Communion we use individual glasses and wafers, so we can all consume at the same time. Everyone is comfortable taking the wine this way.

At Harvest Thanksgiving on 1 October, we brought gifts of non-perishables for the **Open Door** drop-in centre that was still functioning in the forecourt of the Baptist Church in Eld Lane.

The Carols by Candlelight service attracted over 100 adults and 7 children.

The annual Shoe Box project went ahead. Lindsay Gough made up or collected 43 shoeboxes for **Operation Christmas Child**. We supported **Beacon House** with an on-going collection of useful goods at the back of the church. The proceeds of the church Christmas Card (£100) went to the FoodBank. The Blue Box collection for the **Children's Society** raised £228.

Throughout the restrictions, the mid-week home group has carried on. At the kind invitation of Barbara Rush, we have watched YouTube recordings of several teaching DVDs from the Keswick Convention including expositions of the first epistle of John.

The second home group, restarted in 2022, continues to meet monthly in the morning to study various biblical topics as the Spirit moves them.

## The PCC

The PCC met 5 times during the year

Apart from regular items, other items discussed included

The new lock for the church door

Repair work required for the damage to the East End gable

Mission outreach - continuation of Messy Church, Book Exchange, monthly tea parties, Tuesday mornings Open Church, possibility of a men's breakfast.

Alternatives for future Church heating

New service sheets for Morning Worship to provide alternatives making it easier for potential leaders.

## Mission and Outreach

Helping those in need and bringing others to Christ is a demonstration of our faith.

The PCC has continued its policy of supporting Christian organisations or organisations which support the Christian ethic. We do this in two ways:

- 10% of our regular giving is donated to external Christian causes. A full list is given in the financial statements. They include the local Christian Youth Outreach (CYO) in Colchester reaching out to young people in local schools and international work, such as the New Life Church in Kathmandu. Together with St Andrews, Marks Tey we have supported the growth of this Christian church, often in very difficult circumstances, since 2003. We rejoiced with them in October 2022 when their fine new church building was formally opened by a government minister! The New Life Church and its church plants now considerably outsize Aldham and Marks Tey!
- Fund-raising and donation of food, etc. are undertaken for specific causes. During 2023 these included Open Door, Foodbank and Beacon House which specialises in assisting homeless people to get back into society. For many years we have supported the Samaritan's Purse shoebox scheme, sending gifts to deprived children at Christmas time.

Three important social initiatives have continued as the Covid crisis has eased: the popular monthly Saturday morning Book Exchange, coffee and cake; open church each Tuesday morning for coffee, a chat and a time of fellowship; and the monthly sit-down Afternoon Tea.

Many who come to these events are not yet regular church members, but some have gone on to make Sunday church a regular event. We think of this as low-key outreach. The footfall, over all services and events in pre-pandemic 2019 was about 4,650, or 9 times the population of Aldham! It will take a few years to regain that footfall.

The church is well-represented on the Village Hall Management Committee. We are always looking for ways to co-operate with the Village Hall whether for social or fund-raising purposes.

The monthly newsletter continues in regular production. The paper issue is delivered free of charge to every house in the parish, carrying church and village news. Forty copies are e-mailed monthly to friends around the world.

Our website carries details of worship, mission, who's who, recent newsletters and links to other sites. We continue to provide a church column in Grapevine, the quarterly village magazine.

## Friends of Aldham Church

### 2023 Annual Report

On the 21<sup>st</sup> May FOAC collaborated with the Village Hall to hold the annual Plant Sale event. This proved to be very successful and FOAC's share of the profits was £302.

On 27<sup>th</sup> May FOAC organised a Music evening in the Village Hall and despite a slightly disappointing attendance we still raised £128 on the night.

Our next major event was the Summer Garden Party held at Tile House on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. We were lucky with the weather, we had a good attendance and a total income to FOAC funds of £677 was generated.

The Quiz night held in October was held in conjunction with the Village Hall was very well attended and raised a further £130. This proved to be a fun event and will definitely be repeated in 2024.

As a result of fund raising events held by FOAC over £4000 was donated to Aldham church during the year for essential building repairs. As at the end of the year FOAC funds stand at £5422 and it is likely that £5000 will be required towards the repair of the east end of the church wall damaged in a recent storm.

Membership of FOAC is currently 20 life members and 28 annual members.

### 2024 Programme of events

Our first planned event will be a performance by the Icenis Choir to be held in the church on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April. The choir gave a performance several years ago. It proved very popular and was greatly enjoyed by those who attended. In mid June FOAC, in conjunction with the Village Hall, will run the Aldham Open Gardens event over a weekend. A meeting for anyone who would like to participate in this event will be held in the Village Hall – further details can be found in this issue of the Grapevine.