

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

## Administrative information

St Margaret's and St Catherine's 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.

Listed here are members of the PCC who have served at any time from 1st January 2024 until the date this report was approved:

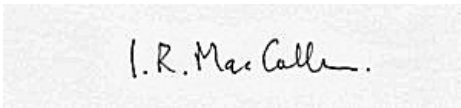
Ex officio members:

- Rector - to 27 October
- PCC vice-chair: Mr Iain MacCallum - from 28 October
- Reader and Deanery Synod Representative: Mr Iain MacCallum
- Churchwardens: Mrs Coral Wingate, Mr Iain MacCallum
- Deanery Synod Representative Mrs Jennifer MacCallum

Elected members:

- Mrs Anne Matthews: Secretary
- Mr Richard Gough: Treasurer
- Mr Kenneth Thompson: Fabric Manager
- Mrs Barbara Rush
- Mrs Wendy Doncaster: Electoral Roll Officer
- Mr Mark Wingate
- Mrs Linda Davies - to July 2024
- Mrs Mags Newton
- Mr Peter Vestey

Signed



on behalf of the PCC on 25 February 2025



## St Margaret's and St Catherine's



Annual Report  
2024

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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 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 normally 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 (lay chair in a vacancy), 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 (or lay chair) 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 churchyard 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

## **Legacy Funds (Designated)**

We transferred £5,000 from the Tom Holme Legacy Fund to the Fabric Fund in order to meet the parish share in full, and so the balance becomes £5,469.35. There is £333.17 remaining in the John Crane Legacy Fund.

## **QI 2021 Phase 2 Fund (Designated)**

A new fund has been created to track the fundraising and expenditure for the QI 2021 Phase 2 Fund. Initially it was given the closing balance of £4,200 from the East End Repair Fund.

## **Church Heating**

We attempt to heat the church with a 50-year-old oil-fired boiler and gravity-fed water circulation system. In 2023 and 2024 we spent £6,463 on repairs to the water circulation system and £4,595 on oil, a total of £11,058. While we tackle QI 2021 Phase2, we are still thinking about a more economical and ecologically better heating system. Overhead sectionalised heaters would be flexible for social and worship use; pew heaters less flexible. A three-phase supply would future-proof such a system. Further long-term savings could be had by fitting solar panels to the south face of the main nave roof and batteries in the vacated boiler room. It is hoped that generous grants may be obtained from the local land-fill company,

## **Reserves Policy**

We try to maintain a balance on non-restricted funds which equates to at least three months payments, which would be £8,044 in 2024. Our reserves at the end of 2024 are £18,627 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

# **2024 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St Margaret's and St Catherine's Aldham**

Incumbent: Vacancy

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.aldhamchurch.org.uk](http://www.aldhamchurch.org.uk)**

## Aims and purposes

Normally, Aldham Parochial Parish Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. In a vacancy the vice-chair has the powers vested in the chair. 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.

## Mrs Linda Davies

Linda, a long-time resident of Hines Close in Aldham, died in July after a short illness. She had been a member of the church for many years and of the PCC since 2021. She spent her late years looking after her husband Norman who died a few weeks after Linda.

## Revd Ian Scott-Thompson

After 14 years as Priest-in-Charge of Marks Tey and Aldham, and 3 years as Priest-in-Charge of Great and Little Tey, and Chapple and Wakes Colne, Ian Scott-Thompson retired to the Portsmouth area. His last service in Aldham was a communion on 20 October and a farewell lunch was held at Chappel Village Hall on Sunday, 27 October. We wish Ian and Jane a very happy retirement as they settle in to Fareham.

## 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

## 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.

## The Accounts for 2024

The end-of-year balance of the General Fund and the Fabric Fund combined is £11,435.83. We also have £5,628.52 of reserves in our legacy funds. We hold £1,562.85 in the 2021 quinquennial repair fund.

## General Fund (Unrestricted)

The General Fund ended the year with a balance of £18,928.20, about £200 down from the end of 2023. The total receipts into the General Fund were down by about £7,400 on 2023, because Planned Giving was down by about £2,000, and since we had already appealed to church and village for the Emergency Repairs, we had no Gift Day. Overall expenditure from the General Fund was nearly £2,000 higher than in 2023 mainly because the Parish Share had gone up from £15,668 to £18,318 in 2024.

Fabric Fund Year End Balances						
2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
£678	£693	(£613)	(£880)	(£5,764)	(£8,185)	(£7,492)

## 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 2024 was borne out of necessity, such as the money spent on repairs to the heating system (£3,043.20). The fund carries forward a deficit balance of £7,492.37.

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.

Mission & Charity Giving - 2024	
CYO	850
Tearfund	275
New Life Church, Nepal	600
Essex Clergy Charity	84
Friends of Essex Churches	60
Bible Society	161
CPAS	84
Colchester Foodbank	280
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 2,394</b>

## 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.

everybody within the parish. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, our monthly pattern of worship contained variety: one All-Age Worship, two Communions and one or two Services of the Word. Since 2023, 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:

- 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 essentially a Victorian 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 has been used 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 with approximately 520 residents, about 80 under 21, in 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 60 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 regret that we have not yet approached pre-pandemic attendances at worship. However, the Candlelit Carol Service this year on a cold evening attracted over 100 people including 17 under the age of 16 who came to enjoy the readings, the carols, a solo item, 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 can continue, and that our church remains the lively and vibrant community it is. We would like to thank all of the 40 - 45 people who regularly assist with all these activities.

**Messy Church**

Messy Church has continued throughout the year with a session every six weeks or so. We have a core group of three families, including four children. Each one and a half hour session consists of a Bible story which is read, enacted or shown on a short video. We then offer activities based around the theme; art work, written exercises, board games and crafts. Biscuits and drinks are provided. Our families enjoy our sessions 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. Some who are deemed extremely vulnerable do not take the chalice at communion.

**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

**Fabric and Churchyard**

The East End Gable Repairs were completed and the fund closed. The closing balance (£4,200) was used to open the QI 2021 Repairs Phase 2 Fund.

**Quinquennial Inspection (2021) Repairs Phase 2**

Our architect, Nicholas Jacob, was asked to draw up a specification and estimated cost for a project to complete the work as yet undone in the 2021 QI. It consists of

- Overhaul of tiled roofs and cast-iron rainwater goods.
- Timber treatment inside nave hatch and south porch outer frame.
- Re-decoration of 5 metal framed opening lights.
- Masonry repairs to inner face of south porch.

Contractor Lodge & Sons have been chosen to do the work. Their quote plus our architect’s fees comes to £44,939 inc VAT. We had £4,200 in the QI 2021 Fund and hope to get grants for £32,000 and to reclaim £7,290 of VAT which totals £43,510. The LPW grant scheme has been extended to 31 March 2026.

**Other fabric work done in 2024**

East End Gable Repair.	£14,620	
Closing Balance	£4,200	available for QI 2021
QI 2021 Architect’s Fee No.1	£3,420	
Annual Drains and Gutters	£226.80	
Skip Hire	£175.00	
Lightning Conductor test	£138.52	
Roof Alarm	£825.00	
Fire extinguisher service	£142.50	
Boiler service	£90.00	

**Financial Review**

**Treasurer’s Post**

Richard Gough continued in the role of treasurer during 2024 with assistance and support from Iain MacCallum.

The first event of the year held in April was a well received concert in the church given by two choral groups – the Icen Chor and Resonate. Well over 100 people attended and the event generated a profit of £965.

The next major event of the year was the Aldham Open Gardens which took place over a weekend in June. Despite somewhat variable weather the event was nevertheless a big success with 276 visitors and the event generated a profit of £3500. FOAC were very grateful to the Village Hall committee who provided refreshments in the hall and other local sponsors.

A coffee morning was held in Hines Close in September and this raised £360 towards the cost of flowers for the Flower Festival which was held in the church over two days in October. The festival was well attended and the church looked resplendent. FOAC were extremely grateful to the flower arrangers and to a number of local sponsors who contributed £500 for the event and the overall result was a profit of £1425.

The final event of the year was a Quiz Night held in the village hall and a profit of £270 was produced.

So in total the events held during the year raised the grand sum of **£6160**.

Membership of FOAC is currently 22 life members and 26 annual members but we could really do with more.

Friends of Aldham Church would like to thank all those who supported the events in whatever way during the past year. The money raised 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. The church provides an important meeting place not only for services but other regular local community events. 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.

## 2025 Programme of events

A meeting will be held in early January to arrange further fund raising events for the forthcoming year. Suggestions to date include a summer Garden Party, a Coffee Morning, a Quiz Night and another Choir Concert later in the year.

All the events we organise during the year will be advertised locally and in *The Grapevine*.

in 2024 was 17 compared to 19 in 2023 whereas it was 29.9 in 2019. If we include baptisms, weddings, funerals and the Carol Service the average attendance for 2024 was 23.6.

We are predominantly a village congregation. Based on the 2024 Electoral Roll (45), 34 are Aldham residents, 3 *were* Aldham residents who now live outside the parish but return to worship in Aldham, and 8 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 2024 there were one Baptism, one Wedding and four Funerals.

## Benefice in Plurality

On 29 June 2022 Revd Ian Scott-Thompson was installed as Priest-in-Charge of the churches of Great and Little Tey, Wakes Colne and Chappel, as well as remaining Priest-in-Charge of Aldham and Marks Tey. These four churches generally meet as one for worship at 10.00 am, circulating round the four buildings.

## Pastoral care

Aldham is a village with a strong sense of community. The Church has no Pastoral Committee as such but a Pastoral Assistant works alongside church members to ensure that those in need receive a visit. The monthly Afternoon Tea Party, the Book Exchange and weekly Open Church coffee mornings enable further contacts to be made and nurtured.

## 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 and Little Tey, Wakes Colne and Chappel, in the Hinckford 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. Until he retired in October, the Rector shared himself across the new benefice. Every 3 to 4 months at a meeting with Marks Tey leaders, we sorted 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. Revd John Chandler has offered to preside at Communion once a month at both Aldham and Marks Tey.

The monthly pattern of services is now three Services of the Word, and one Communion. Until October, for Communion we used individual glasses and wafers, so

we could all consume at the same time. Everyone was comfortable taking the wine this way. But in October, the Bishop of Chelmsford decreed that only the chalice could be used for the wine, and now some ultra vulnerable members of the church do not take the wine.

At Harvest Thanksgiving on 6 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 including 17 youngsters.

The annual Shoe Box project went ahead. Lindsay Gough made up or collected 50 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 scheme (£125) 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 presentations from the Keswick Convention including expositions of the first epistle of John. In the autumn we studied a series of talks on the Psalms, also from Keswick.

The second home group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 12 Church Grove at 11.00am kindly hosted by Felicity and Mike Chapman. We study various biblical topics. If anyone would like to learn more about the bible they are most welcome to join us.

## The PCC

The PCC met 6 times during the year which included one extraordinary meeting to discuss a contract award for repair to the East Chancel outside wall. The PCC discussed the usual regular items and also arrangements for the repair work needed to the East Chancel outside wall, the Church Heating regarding changing to an electric system of heating, Aldham Church's Parish Profile and the choice of our representatives.

## 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 2024 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.

A Men's Breakfast was held in May in co-operation with Marks Tey. About 17 men turned up at the Cricketers, Eight Ash Green to dine and to hear Mr Mark Tomassi, barrister, talking about some of the difficulties he has to deal with in the courts. A second Men's breakfast has been arranged for 29 March 2025, at which the speaker will be the Bishop of Colchester. Invitations will also go out to the four "Tey" churches.

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 but from the end of 2024 it has been bi-monthly. It is delivered free of charge to every house in the parish, carrying church and village news. Forty copies of each issue are e-mailed to friends around the world.

We went to a professional for a new website ([www.aldhamchurch.org.uk](http://www.aldhamchurch.org.uk)) which still carries details of worship, mission, who's who and links to other sites. We continue to provide a church column in *Grapevine*, the quarterly village magazine.

## Friends of Aldham Church

### 2024 Annual Report

Andy Brown, chair of FAOC writes:

2024 has proved to be another very good fund raising year for the Friends of Aldham Church.