

ST MARY MAGDALENE

Great Burstead with Ramsden Crays

www.greatburstead-church.co.uk
www.facebook.com/stmarymagdalenegb
www.twitter.com/gtburstead
Diocesan: <https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/>

WELCOME

It is good to welcome you to our church today. We hope that you enjoy the experience of worshipping with us.

If you are new to our service and find it difficult to follow, please ask the person next to you, who will be delighted to help. If you have questions about our worship, please ask Fr Michael the Vicar, Karen White, our Associate Priest, or Nigel or Fola, our Churchwardens after the service.

SUNDAY 18th May (Fifth Sunday of Easter)

8:00 am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion
9:30 am Sung Eucharist – Common Worship
3:00 pm Baptism

UPCOMING WEEK'S SERVICES AND EVENT

Wed	10:00 am	No CW Said Eucharist
Thu	9:30 am	Morning Prayer
Thu	5:30 pm	Evening Prayer
Fri	11:30 am	Funeral
Sat	9:30 am	Morning Prayer
	6:00 pm	Evening Prayer

SUNDAY 25th May (Sixth Sunday of Easter)

Sun	8:00 am	Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion
	9:30 am	Sung Eucharist – Common Worship
	3:00 pm	Baptism

Friday - Vicar's Day of Rest

NOTICE AND SOCIAL EVENTS BOARD

Please do look at the notice board and the posters at the back of our Church and in the porch for events happening around the deanery and diocese and our local community which you may wish to attend for yourself, or as a representative on behalf of our parish.

Electoral Roll and APCM

The new Electoral Roll for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) has now been finalised and a list of the names is now on display in church. If you have applied, please check that your name appears correctly. Those who still wish to apply may do so after the APCM.

The APCM will be held in church at 7.30pm on Tuesday 27th May. Anyone who wishes to be elected to one of our two Churchwarden positions may complete a Nomination Form. Similarly, if you wish to be considered for election to our Parochial Church Council (PCC) again, please complete a Nomination Form. Both forms are available in church, so please ask. As part of our APCM, written reports of our Church and Parish activities will be available to view. However, I am able to share these with you electronically in advance, by means of an

Tel: 01277 632060 / 07399446721 E-Mail: revd.michael@btinternet.com
Note for pew sheet: Pewsheet@greatburstead-church.co.uk

emailed attachment to this Pew Sheet. You are welcome to print any or all of the documents and bring them with you when you attend the meeting. As usual there will be some paper copies available at the meeting for those unable to receive the information electronically.

- Peter Furness – PCC Secretary

SMB Ploughman's Lunch 22 May 2025

Come to our Ploughman's Lunch including drinks at Christ Church, Perry Street. Billericay CM12 0NX on Thursday 22 May 2025 from 12pm to 1:30pm. Suggested donation £5. See poster for more details.

Men's and Women's Lunch

Please join us for Lunch at the Blue Boar in Billericay High Street on Friday 30th May 2025 at 12 noon. All are very welcome.

- Mary and Mark. 01277 750201

Message from the Area Dean

You are also warmly invited to join the Living God future now event, presented by HeartEdge and with performances from The Choral Scholars of St Martins-in-the Fields.

Join us for one or both days, as we explore new approaches to mission. There will be a wide range of ideas covered, so we hope you will find something inspiring to take home.

Friday 27th June will be hosted by St Andrew's Church, Wickford and will begin at 9:45am. Author Sam Wells and other inspiring guest speakers will share their insights and explore The 4Cs, (Commerce, Compassion, Culture, Congregation). There will be opportunities to share ideas, connect with your colleagues and be actively involved in our Being With workshops. We'll also discuss music in mission and enjoy live musical performances.

Saturday 28th June will be hosted at St Mary's Church, Runwell and in contrast this will be a Quiet Day. We'll begin the morning at 9:00 am with a contemplative prayer walk through Wickford Memorial Park. This will be followed by input from Catherine Duce, of The Nazareth Community at St Martin-in-the-Fields, drawing on their seven spiritual disciplines, in particular the significance of silent prayer and service in listening to the Spirit at work in our lives. We all have something to bring to the church and this inspiring event will help us recognise this value. Leave with your imagination sparked and your heart singing!

This is a Diocesan event supported with SDF funding. Refreshments will be provided but please let us know if you have any dietary requirements, allergies or additional needs.

Find out more about the event and register for it here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/living-gods-future-now-an-event-by-heartedge-tickets-1319715016139?aff=oddtcreator>

Thanks very much,

- Jonathan

Fete - Request for Support

This is a joint event with South Green Village Council, some activities will be funded this year and all profit will go towards the church. Some of the familiar church stalls will be there. This is expected to be a larger event this year with more activities for children or the young at heart.

In the meantime we would welcome your support for:

- Volunteers - a few hours to help with set up, car parking (1 hour slots), on a stall, help with the Grand Draw on the day
- Bric a brac & new unwanted gifts - Pat co-ordinates this table, please chat to her if you have any questions, please bring to church and label it for Pat
- Cakes - we will be requesting these soon
- Grand Draw - tickets will be sold on the day, the SG Village Council is co-ordinating this.
- Church hamper - our traditional hamper will be stocked with donations from church members. A list of items will be available soon.

- Alison

QR code and online link for St Mary Magdalene, Great Burstead

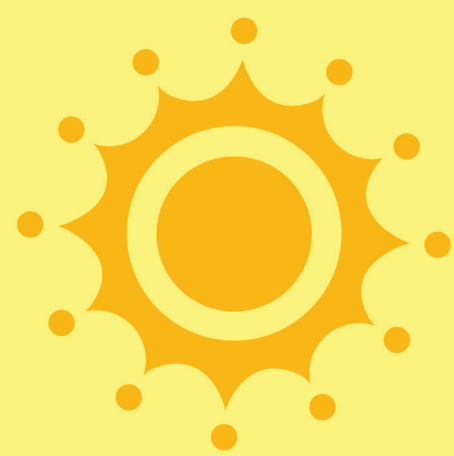
Our mission and ministry can now be supported by people by using the QR code and online donation page for our church. Please use either the QR code or follow this link:

<https://givealittle.co/c/6xC5vQ1W6MqmIPRjAvrFS0>

Thank you.



CONTACT INFORMATION: Fr. Michael Hall (Vicar) The Vicarage, 111 Church Street, Great, Burstead, CM11 2TR



SMB

schools ministry billericay

come to our

PLOUGHMAN'S

LUNCH *inc. drink*

at CHRIST CHURCH, PERRY ST.,
BILLERICAY CM12 0NX

Thursday 22 May 2025
12 noon – 1:30 pm

SUGGESTED
DONATION

£5

FOLLOWED BY
CAKE
SALE



Parish of GREAT BURSTEAD with RAMSDEN CRAYS

Tuesday 27th May 2025 at Great Burstead Church at 7.30pm

AGENDA

Opening prayers.

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.
2. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting held on 19th May 2024.(see page 2)
3. Election of Churchwardens
4. Closure of Annual Meeting of Parishioners

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

- 1 Welcome and apologies for absence
- 2 Notification of any items to be included under AOB.
- 3 Approval of Minutes of previous APCM held on 19th May 2024. (pages 3 + 3a)
- 4 Matters arising from above Minutes.
- 5 Appointment of Tellers (2)
- 6 Churchwarden's Report (page 4)
- 7 Annual Report of the PCC (pages 5, 5a + 6)
- 8 Electoral Roll Officer's Report
- 9 Election of Parochial Church Council (PCC) Members – 3 PCC members for 3 years. [The new PCC will meet briefly, immediately after the APCM]
- 10 Election of Deputy Representatives to Churches Together in Billericay.
- 11 Treasurer's Report and Accounts – separate document
- 12 Appointment of an Independent Examiner
- 13 Basildon Deanery Synod Report (page 7)
- 14 Reports of Church and Community Activities/Organisations (from page 8)
- 15 Any Other Business (i.e. any issues to be brought to the attention of the PCC)
- 16 Vicar's Report (page 16)

Closing Prayers

(All are welcome to print the attached reports of our Church & Parish activities and to bring these with you if you intend to come to the above Annual Meetings)

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (AMP)
held on Sunday 19th May 2024 at 10.55am.**

Present: Fr Michael Hall (Chair) and 26 other parishioners.

		Action
1	Welcome and opening prayer from Fr. Michael Hall.	
2	Apologies for absence Dean and Emma Glackin, Brenda Munns and Thom Simons.	
3	Approval of Minutes of previous meeting held on 21st May 2023. These Minutes had been previously circulated and were proposed as a true record by Joy Woods and seconded by Mary Edwards and agreed by those present.	
4	Election of Churchwardens Only two nominations had been received prior to the start of this meeting:- Fola Olukoya – Proposed by Mary Edwards / Seconded by Joy Woods. Nigel Blore – Proposed by Mary Edwards / Seconded by Joy Woods. There being no other nominations, Fola and Nigel were duly appointed as our Churchwardens for the forthcoming year. Fr. Michael congratulated both upon their appointment, but before closing the meeting, he paid tribute to the work achieved by our previous and sole Churchwarden, Mary Edwards, and thanked her for her remarkable effort in keeping the Parish afloat despite having to continue as Treasurer and having to cope with some health issues. All present responded with warm applause.	

Meeting closed at 11.02am.

**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)
held on Sunday 19th May 2024 at 11.05am.**

Present: Fr Michael Hall (chair) and 26 other parishioners.

		Action
1	Welcome – Those present were welcomed to this meeting by Fr. Michael. Apologies for absence were received from Dean and Emma Glackin, Brenda Munns and Thom Simons.	
2	Notification of any items to be included under AOB – none	
3	Approval of Minutes for previous APCM held on 21st May 2023. These were proposed by Mary Latham and seconded by Jeanne Wiggins and accepted by those in attendance.	
4	Matters arising from the Minutes of the previous APCM - none	
5	Appointment of Tellers – Mary Edwards and Jeanne Wiggins volunteered in case of need.	
6	Churchwarden's report – This was circulated prior to the meeting. There were no questions and Mary was thanked for her report.	
7	Annual Report of the PCC – Again, this report was circulated prior to the meeting and there were no queries or requests for clarification from the floor. Peter Furness was thanked for his work in compiling the report.	
8	Electoral Roll Officer's report – Fola Olukoya advised the numerical changes in the Roll since last year and resulting from the revision of the Roll that was recently completed. Overall, there were 4 names deleted and 2 added, making a new total of 66 names. Of these, 31(47%) were resident in the Parish and 35 (53%) were non-resident. Fola was thanked for his report..	
9	Election of Parochial Church Council (PCC) members. This meeting's agenda anticipated 4 vacancies, but Fr. Michael pointed out that as Fola was already an elected member of the PCC and that by becoming Churchwarden he would now have ex-officio status, we now had 5 vacancies to fill. The following written nominations were received:- Dean Glackin – proposed by Mary Edwards / Seconded by Joy Woods. Emma Glackin – proposed by Mary Edwards / Seconded by Joy Woods. Brenda Munns – proposed by Carol Simons / Seconded by Thom Simons. Carol Simons – proposed by Brenda Munns / Seconded by Thom Simons. Thom Simons – proposed by Martyn Heald / Seconded by Kathy Heald. There were no other nominations from the floor and the above 5 named were accepted to fill the five vacancies.	
10	Election of Churches Together in Billericay Deputy Representatives. Both Margaret Flack and Mary Lazarus offered to continue to represent our interests as and when needed and they were accepted by all present.	
11	Treasurer's Report and Accounts Mary Edwards reported with regret that she had not yet managed to complete the accounts, but that these should be finalised shortly when they will then be submitted for examination. Therefore this meeting will be adjourned and re-constituted at a later date for the presentation of the accounts and the Treasurer's report.	
	-----continued-----	
12	Appointment of Independent Examiner As our Independent Examiner has not yet been contacted, this item will also be included when this meeting is reconvened.	
13	Basildon Deanery Synod Report This was circulated before the meeting and its content noted. There were no	

	questions and Peter Furness was thanked for his report.	
14	Reports of Church and community activities were all circulated prior to the meeting and there were no comments.	
15	AOB – no items were submitted.	
16	Vicar's report – Fr Michael referred to his written report that had been circulated prior to the meeting and wished to emphasise his thanks to all who had contributed to the work of our Church and for their prayers and support to him during the last year. He pointed out that his working routines would be very different during the next year with the additional need to give pastoral leadership to the members and parishioners of St. Nicholas, Laindon. (Mary Edwards informed the meeting that the suspension of the Parish by the Diocese will now be lifted and that this would result in Fr. Michael's title being changed from 'Priest in Charge' to 'Vicar')	
	Fr. Michael adjourned the meeting with a prayer at 11.15am.	

Churchwardens' Report 2024

The organ was finally operational by Easter.

Following a request by the Archdeacon of Southend for plurality with St Nicholas Laindon, whose rector had left, Fr Michael was licensed as Vicar of Great Burstead and Rector of Laindon in October.

At the same time Revd Karen White was licensed as Associate Priest in both parishes, working on a part-time basis, and will regularly take Sunday services, funerals, and other appropriate services.

Mary Edwards retired as Churchwarden and was replaced by Fola Olukoya and Nigel Blore who were installed at a Deanery Service in church by the outgoing Archdeacon of Southend, Ven. Mike Power.

The Church Hall was renovated in the Autumn after a competitive tender exercise.

There were 2 Christingle services on Christmas Eve, both extremely well attended, and where, together with the proceeds from the Mothers' Union Carol Service, £600 was collected for the Children's Society.

The Carol Service and Midnight Mass both had good congregations.

There were summer and autumn fund raising events, and a Sky Dive was carried out by the owner of the pre and post school club which meets in the Church Hall, in aid of the Tower and Spire repair appeal.

There was also a well-attended concert by talented local musicians.

During the year, we took possession of a digital machine to allow donations from Church members and visitors. There is also a facility to allow payments to be made by scanning a QR code on the Pewsheets and website.

The cracks in the north-east buttress of the church were filled just before Christmas and we await the long term effects, hoping that the work has resolved the problem.

It is hoped that the weathervane can be restored to the spire and that the other necessary repairs following the 2022 storm, can be carried out in the spring or summer of 2025.

The church grounds were again kept in immaculate order, and the Glebe Field under control, by Derek Oakley, Paul Butterworth and others, to whom we owe our deep gratitude.

Nigel Blore & Fola Olukoya - Churchwardens

January 2025

Annual Report of the Great Burstead with Ramsden Crays PCC **for the year ending 31st December 2024**

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent Vicar, Fr. Michael Hall, in providing for this parish the whole mission of the Church – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. We have been grateful for all that Fr. Michael has achieved for us and we have also valued the willing assistance of Fr. Peter Clark, a retired priest, when his health has allowed him to participate. As from 1st October we were able to welcome Revd. Karen White when she was officially appointed to help in the arrangements for the new shared ministry with St. Nicholas', Laindon.

The PCC also has maintenance responsibilities for the church and church hall at Great Burstead, as well as the burial ground at Ramsden Crays where interments continue. However, the churchyard at Great Burstead is operated on a 'closed' basis and its upkeep and maintenance is ultimately the responsibility of the local council, although we continue to value a small team of volunteers to help attend to immediate needs and a tribute to their work appears in the concurrent report issued by our Churchwardens.

Safeguarding – the need to protect everyone's well-being, especially for children and vulnerable adults, and helping all to live free from harm, abuse and neglect – rightly continues to receive a high profile of awareness. Our policy and its implementation are considered at every PCC meeting. Dean Glackin, who was appointed as our Safeguarding Officer from 2023, has good knowledge of the rules and regulations through significant experience in his secular employment. He became a member of our PCC in 2024 and we are pleased to have his level of expertise readily available at our meetings.

The post-pandemic procedures and routines that became established in 2023 were largely followed in 2024. Most of our committee meetings were held using the zoom technology for a more efficient use of time and to save on unnecessary travel. However, all PCC meetings continued to be held in church and in person. For the past years of 2022 and 2023 I have had to report on a significant decline in numbers attending our normal Sunday services, but I am pleased to say that numbers stabilised in 2024 and showed a marginal increase over 2023. Attendance at services held to celebrate Christmas and Easter demonstrated continuing good support.

In June we held a 'Food and Flower' weekend which was a departure from the traditional fete that has been held in past years. Food was the focus in the Church Hall whilst flower displays adorned and enhanced the beauty of our church. Once again we thank Alison Ingleby for her organising skills and for all who took part and helped to make the occasion a social and financial success. A full report by Alison appears alongside our other reports that are attached.

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As foreshadowed in my report last year, the plans by Diocese to impose a shared ministry of our parish of Great Burstead (GB) with that of St. Nicholas, Laindon, (L) upon Fr. Michael were formally implemented on 1st October with Fr. Michael being licensed as Vicar of GB and Rector of L. Also licensed was Revd. Karen White as an Associate Priest to both parishes and we very much welcome her as an addition to the clergy team. It is intended that both parishes will continue to be administered independently of each other i.e. separate PCCs, Officers, Accounts, etc., although there will be some overlap in holding joint courses and services on special occasions in our liturgical calendar. The shared oversight has also resulted in shared costs of stipendiary ministry and our contributions toward the Parish Share have now been reduced by circa £2k per month.

We remain grateful to our Treasurer, Mary Edwards, for continuing to manage our financial transactions despite her ill health and many other commitments. As mentioned above, our outgoings have eased considerably due to the reduction in our Parish Share, but energy costs remain high and it is of concern that our Planned Giving income continues to fall.

The PCC

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio, elected, or co-opted, in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The PCC usually meets 6 times a year and a list of its members for this year appears below:-

Ex-officio Members -

Revd. Michael Hall - Vicar and Chair of the PCC.

Revd. Karen White – Associate Priest (from 01.10.24)

Nigel Blore – Vice-chair of PCC, Churchwarden (from 19.05.24) and member of Dean. Synod.

Fola Olukoya – Churchwarden (from 19.05.24) and Electoral Roll Officer.

Mary Edwards – Churchwarden (up to 19.05.24) PCC Treasurer and member of Dioc. Synod.

Peter Furness – PCC Secretary and member of Deanery Synod.

Elected Members during the year -

Caroline Blore

Dean Glackin (from 19.05.24) and Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Emma Glackin (from 19.05.24)

Carole Heywood

Colin Heywood

Mary Lazarus

Brenda Munns (from 19.05.24)

Kelly Shearer (up to 19.05.24)

Carol Simons (from 19.05.24)

Thom Simons (from 19.05.24) and Church Hall Manager.

Committees

The PCC is supported by a number of sub-committees, which meet as required between full meetings of the PCC.

Standing Committee

This is the only committee required by law. It has power to transact business on behalf of the PCC and is subject to any specific directions given by the council. It is composed of the Incumbent, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary and appointed members from the PCC, but with a maximum of 7 in all.

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Church Hall Committee

Attends to all matters relating to the Hall including lettings, maintenance and repairs and financial records.

Communications Committee

Reviews all Church communications – verbally, in print and on social media platforms.

Social and Events Committee

Plans, organises and advertises Church social occasions and events.

Church Fete Committee

This committee is now disbanded for lack of a permanent chair-person to lead on fundraising events.

Current activity now merged with Social & Events Committee above.

Ground Maintenance Team

This is a small team working all year round to maintain the beauty of, and care for our church grounds and glebe land.

Finance Group

Usually meets in November annually, chaired by the Treasurer and recommends the amounts of fees and honoraria to be paid by the PCC for the following year. Also recommends to the PCC any donations to be made direct from Church funds to Missions and Charities for the current year. This group includes the Vicar, Churchwardens and appointed members from the PCC.

The love of Christ is our motivation for all that we set out to achieve and we encourage others to join us in the practical outworking of the many and small routine tasks that support our work of making Christ known to all who live and work in our parish, as well as to our many visitors who attend our regular and occasional services. Our work is essentially a shared task and a warm welcome awaits all who wish to volunteer to lend a hand. All offers of assistance will always be appreciated and gratefully received.

Peter Furness
PCC Secretary.
January 2025.

BASILDON DEANERY REPORT for 2024

Revd. Jonathan Evens (JE), Rector of Wickford Team Ministry, continues to be our Area Dean and our meetings were either chaired by him or Christine Coe, our Deanery Lay Chair. Other officers of note are the Secretary - Marion Marshall and the Treasurer – our own Mary Edwards. One of the Assistant Area Deans is our own Fr. Michael Hall. Elected representatives from our parish during last year were Nigel Blore and Peter Furness. (Mary Edwards also attends as an ex-officio member due to her being elected to Diocesan Synod)

Apart from the normal business at each meeting which regularly involves a financial commentary on contributions to the Parish Share and the exchanging of news and experiences from all the parishes, each meeting usually has at least one main theme which is usually supported by an invited speaker. There are normally four meetings each year.

The meeting on 6th February was devoted to administrative updates and was held at Christ Church, Billericay, when JE gave an update on the construction of a Deanery website to bring all information regarding Deanery Parishes together. JE confirmed that this year a grant of £5,000 had been given by Diocese from their Mission Opportunities Fund (MOF) for the employment of consultants to advise on Mission direction and effectiveness within individual parishes.

The meeting on 16th May was held at St. Martin's, Basildon, at which Michaela Southworth, Chief Executive Officer for Chelmsford Diocese gave a presentation about the contribution made by churches to Parish Share and how vital it was for the current level of giving to be maintained and increased wherever possible. Diocese is currently absorbing significant deficits in their budgeting, but she emphasised that this cannot be regarded as a sustainable way forward in the future. Another speaker at the meeting was Sarah Rogers, who was one of the designated consultants brought in to examine possible improvements in Mission for individual parishes and which was an initiative introduced at the Synod's last meeting (see above). A number of consultants are now available for parishes to approach and to receive the benefit of their advice.

The next meeting was held on 24th September at St. Chad's, Vange at which Martin Eudon and Alan Moss from the Gregory Centre gave an entertaining joint presentation on Leadership and Missional Development. It was an insight into the psychological aspects of Mission and making observations upon how the standard format in Missionary approach can be enlivened and made smarter through a better understanding of how certain outcomes can be achieved through careful planning of input.

The final meeting of the year was held on 21st November at St. John's, Billericay and at which the guest speaker was Beccy Hills who is one of two Parish Giving Advisors based at Diocese. Her presentation included the many ways in which giving can be made and received and included the success of the Parish Giving method and also included benefits from the more recent introduction of cashless transactions via cards and mobile phones. The meeting also bade farewell to Revd. Steve Lissenden who is shortly to move from the Wickford Team Ministry to being Rector of Hullbridge, Rawereth and Rettenden, as well as Priest-in-Charge of Hockley.

Peter Furness – An elected Parish Representative.

Food & Flower Event – weekend 15 & 16 June 2024

A new event to replace the traditional fete was organised over a weekend in June.

In the church hall, on the Saturday, food was on offer including a generous portion of Ploughman's Lunch and vegan/vegetarian alternatives. A long table of cakes was beautifully displayed with the usual refreshments. The Grand Draw was organised again and well supported.

The church was decorated during the previous week ready for the opening on the Saturday. Several creative displays were placed around the church, such as on window ledges, chandeliers, ancient baptism font, choir pews, around the pillars and on tables. Real flowers were woven into displays and many were donated from friend's gardens.

Church members volunteered their time to build the displays and particular contributions came from South Green WI, South Green Brownies, South Green Infant School and Human Kind Cafe. There were short performances of show tunes from a volunteer's young friend, Sheridan, in both the church and hall that went down well.

The church was open on the Sunday by volunteers and over 30 people visited, looked around, many sat, had refreshments and cake and chatted together. There were many complimentary comments that included about the beautiful church and how they enjoyed the displays.

Overall, the income from the weekend was approximately £3000.

Alison Ingleby

Church Cleaning Report

The pattern of weekly cleaning continued throughout 2024. There are currently 12 people on the rota who work in pairs, but additional volunteers are always welcome to join the team!

I would like to thank everyone who has helped with the church cleaning during the year.

Jo Hall
Church Cleaning Coordinator

Readers and Intercessors

Readers

Listed below are those who were available and able to read scriptural passages for our Sunday services during 2024

8.00am	9.30am
Kathy Heald	Dorothy Barber
Martyn Heald	Caroline Blore
Colin Heywood	Nigel Blore
Anne Rudkins	Margaret Flack
	Jo Hall
	Carole Heywood
	Colin Heywood
	Mary Latham
	Jim Mills
	John Ward
	Jeanne Wiggins
	Joy Woods

Intercessors

Listed below are those who volunteered in leading prayers for our 9.30am services during 2024

Margaret Flack
Jo Hall
Carole Heywood
Joy Woods

I wish to thank all those who have continued their commitment to read and/or to lead in prayer for our corporate worship, including the members of the Mothers' Union on the first Sunday monthly. The monthly contribution to readings and prayers by Carole and Colin is also greatly appreciated and we welcome Carol Simons as an addition to our team as from 2025, as well as Joy Woods who will be able to contribute more regularly in future. We were very sorry to have to lose Dorothy Barber from our team and also Jim Mills, both during 2024. We are always willing to welcome new readers and especially any who feel able to lead in prayer to provide for a richer variety in the composition and delivery of prayers. If anyone would like to read or to lead in prayer, he or she will be warmly welcomed and advice and guidance will always be readily available if needed. Anyone wishing to help in this way should speak with either Fr. Michael or me.

***Peter Furness
March 2025***

Communications Committee

The committee convened approximately four times during the previous year. All meetings were conducted via Zoom, allowing members to participate remotely.

During the sessions, the committee focused on several key areas related to the church's outreach and communication strategies. The main topics included:

- Church's website
- Social media presence
- Pew sheet
- Posters
- Newsletters
- Parish finder page

I want to thank all the committee members for their contributions and efforts throughout the year. Their dedication was crucial in addressing the various aspects of the church's communication.

As the committee looks ahead, there is an awareness that adjustments may be necessary to enhance collaboration with Laindon parish. This consideration indicates a willingness to adapt and improve this committee's effectiveness in serving the community.

Fr Michael

Church Flowers

In March 2024 our flower team doubled in number as thankfully Brenda Munns agreed to join me to arrange the flowers within the church! Between the two of us we have produced arrangements for all the major Church festivals throughout the year.

In June 2024 the church held a flower festival which involved quite a significant amount of work for us. We were extremely grateful to the congregation for their help in putting the festival together. We did hope to have more fresh flowers for this festival, but relied heavily on donations from members' gardens and also the money donated by the congregation in memory of loved ones. With the money we were able to buy fresh and faux flowers and we were also able to make an arrangement to remember loved ones for the All Souls' service.

I wish to give a big thank you to the Mothers' Union who each year enhance the church flowers by the decoration of the windowsills for our Harvest Festival celebration.

Carol Simons

March 2025.

Churchyard Maintenance Team 2024

During 2024, the Churchyard Maintenance Team (Paul Butterworth, Roy Rudland, Colleen Spooner – occasionally assisted by husband Eddie - and myself) worked hard to keep the Church and Hall grounds well-tended. Unfortunately, Roy had to move temporarily to Croydon during the latter part of the year and his help was greatly missed. We are very much looking forward to his return to Billericay in 2025 when he hopes to rejoin the Team. Margaret Flack has been regularly looking after the small garden by the car park – with a small group of helpers, doing their bit from time to time.

Members of the Team usually attend once or twice a week to work on the grounds, (although Colleen visits several times a week in order to pick up debris and also keep the drains and gulleys around the Church clear). The Garden Machinery also has to work hard, but we are managing to keep it going, although the ride on mower needs some more extensive treatment at its next service as the reverse drive is almost non-existent. We keep the Churchwarden and PCC advised of any problems or potential concerns. In this respect, the Churchwardens/PCC arranged for the brambles at the rear of the Garden Shed (housing the machinery) to be cut back as they were forcing their way into the shed itself, and the felt on the shed roof has also now been renewed – so hopefully, we will have no more rain coming in!

The wooden ramp to the Garden Shed finally rotted and had to be removed. With some ingenuity, we made up a temporary ramp, using pallets and planks and some rubber “kerb wedges” and this arrangement has worked surprisingly well. However, Paul has kindly offered to build a new concrete ramp for us and we are hoping that this can be done during 2025.

We are still managing to keep the grass in the top half of the Glebe Field reasonably short so that it is available for use when required. We are not able to cut the lower half of the Field as the machinery cannot cope, but the lower part of the Field did produce some lovely wild flowers and it seems to be a haven for some wildlife.

Unfortunately, one of the two Mayflower Memorial apple trees planted in the southern section of the Churchyard, eventually died, despite efforts by the Billericay Tree Wardens and the Team to protect it. Consideration is being given to a replacement.

The leaves are taking a long time for us to clear once Autumn has started. They fall over a longer period and, this year, without Roy, there has been a lot of extra work for us to do. We will still be collecting leaves during the early months of 2025. With the Winter storms and strong winds, we have also been regularly collecting branches (big and small) and twigs from across the Churchyard, as well as numerous pine cones from the Spruce near to the car park. I know that we are all getting older (I certainly am and I have the aches and pains to prove it) and leaf clearing is not now so easy for most of us, but many hands make light work, so please help next Autumn/Winter if you can. The machinery just can't cope with multiple layers of fallen leaves and if we don't pick them up, the grass underneath will die. Just collect and take away a couple of bags of leaves occasionally and it will be a big help. Thanks.

Derek Oakley
Churchyard Maintenance Team

Social and Events Committee Report

We began the year with a social gathering at the vicarage on 20th January to celebrate Fr Michael's 10th anniversary of starting his ministry at Great Burstead. Other social events held at the vicarage during the year were a well-attended barbecue in the vicarage garden at the end of August. Once again, we were blessed with fine weather and it was great that so many church members from St Nicholas, Laindon were able to join us. Then to see out the year and welcome in the new, we held a New Year's Eve party with a bring-and-share buffet. On the night, fun was had with a contest of 'Play Your Cards Right', fizz to toast the New Year and a rendition of auld lang syne as we watched the London fireworks display on the TV.

In June, the Rumatica Rockulele band entertained us with a concert in the church. Our thanks go to Margaret Flack for organising this. In October, a quiz night was held in the church hall and we thank Susan and Claire Morley for putting this together. Then in early November, an Autumn Fayre and coffee morning was held in the church. All these events had the added benefit of raising funds for the church.

Our main fund raising and community event was the Food and Flower Event held over a weekend in June, which has been covered in more detail in a separate report. A big thank you goes to Alison Ingleby for coordinating this.

If anyone has suggestions for future events, please let me or another member of the committee know.

Jo Hall

Member of the Social and Events Committee

Licenced Lay Assistants at Communion

The following members of the team were available or able to assist at our communion services in 2024 and we were very grateful for their availability during the year.

Margaret Flack
Peter Furness
Jo Hall

Anne Rudkins
Joy Woods

We are very grateful to Anne for her continuing and willing support, with some assistance from others, at our 8.00am services. We are also grateful to Margaret, our Sacristan, for her regular duty and help at our 9.30am services where she often has to manage on her own.

We are now very short of available helpers at both of our communion services and one or two additional volunteers will be most appreciated. If you feel that you may like to assist us in this ministry, please see Fr. Michael.

Peter Furness
March 2025.

Church Hall Annual Report 2024

The Manager, Thom Simons, has reported that the relationship with the current tenants, 'The Young Ones', is working well. They are generally pleased with the facility and are happy with the support they are receiving, as was evidenced by the Sky Dive in aid of the Tower and Spire repairs. A revised hiring contract was signed during the year, and is now in effect.

An external refurbishment, carried out after a competitive tender process, was completed, and the final invoice has been paid, apart from a small retention to cater for any snagging issues. The cost was fully covered by surplus funds accumulated from rental income over past years.

The Hall is more than "paying its way" on a monthly basis, thanks to the weekday tenancy by 'The Young Ones', mainly for time before and after school hours.

It is not let out for any other non-Church activities, although the tenants recognise that the Church is contractually entitled to use it at any reasonable time. The Church itself currently only uses it rarely, principally before the Palm Sunday service, at the Summer Event, and for any evening events, such as the Quiz Night held in the Autumn of 2024.

A committee has been re-established, and it is intended that meetings will be held twice annually, or whenever an urgent issue arises.

I should like to express my thanks to Thom Simons for his diligent stewardship of the Church Hall, as its Manager.

Nigel Blore
Chairman, Church Hall Committee

Sacristan's Report

I would like to thank Anne Rudkins and Peter Furness who serve at 8am Services and Jo Hall and Peter Furness who serve with me at 9.30 Services. Thank you also to Peter for serving at Wednesday Services. We were very sorry to lose Jim Mills when we changed from 10am.

Thank you to Mary Edwards who orders supplies and helps change the altar frontals and sets up for Services. We are a very small team and would welcome others to join us.

Margaret Flack
Sacristan.

Great Burstead Mothers' Union

In January 2024, I was commissioned as the new Branch Leader of the Great Burstead Mothers' Union branch at a service led by Fr Michael. We were delighted that our Diocesan Vice President, Merrill Knight, could join us and we presented gifts to Margaret Flack and thanked her for serving as Branch Leader for 9 years.

We started the year with 13 members and meet once a month on a Thursday afternoon. At our meetings during the year, we enjoyed the following activities: - Nihal Paul gave a talk about his upbringing in India and how he connected to the church; we made craft flowers to decorate the church for the Flower Event; held our AGM; enjoyed a Strawberry Tea in Mary Nightingale's garden and a Summer of Hope Garden Party in the vicarage garden; held a Harvest service collecting produce for the Billericay food bank; Sheena Cope guided us on making handmade Christmas cards and at our Carols and Readings service we were entertained by Doreen Potter. All of our meetings start with prayer, have a fund raising raffle and end with tea and cake.

Several members attended the Deanery MU service held at Emmanuel church in October, where we paraded our branch banner and passed on the Deanery MU banner (which had been on display at Great Burstead church for some time) to the Billericay branch.

During 2024, we made donations to the following Mothers' Union appeals: - Gifts of Dignity on Mothering Sunday (£102), Summer of Hope (£310), the Christmas appeal (£100), English for Women (£30) and AFIA (£20). In addition, £128.31 was raised for The Children's Society at the Carols and Readings.

I would like to thank the committee for their support. In particular, Margaret Flack our Treasurer, Carol Simons our Secretary, Sheena Cope for organising the raffles, Mary Nightingale for sending out birthday cards and hosting the Strawberry Tea and Mary Lazarus for organising our social lunches that take place between meetings.

New members are always welcome and, if you'd like to find out more, please speak to one of our members or come along to a meeting.

Jo Hall
Branch Leader

Churches Together in Billericay (CTB)

In 2023 two midweek evening Love Billericay Services have been held as well as the monthly prayer meetings at the Chantry Centre.

CTB also had a marquee at the Soapbox Derby, organised the Remembrance Day Service in the High Street and provided choirs and refreshments at St. Mary's at the Christmas Market. 700 hot drinks were served and £670 was donated.

The Billericay Foodbank moved to Radford Crescent and partnered with Hamelin Trust. They support over 100 households a week and encourage them to come to the Foodbank to collect their supplies. There are over 75 volunteers and they receive regular donations from churches, schools, youth organisations, supermarkets and individuals.

Schools Ministry in Billericay (SMB) has continued to work across all school years with Bible storytelling and teaching, running lunchtime clubs in 2 Secondary and 4 Primary schools and supporting staff and students pastorally. In March 900 Primary school pupils attended the Life Expo at the Baptist church.

The Street Pastors continue to man the Hub in the High Street and patrol the streets on Friday evenings. They are supported by the prayer team who meet on Zoom those evenings and pray at the Hub once a month. Football pastors attend men's and women's team games at Billericay Football Club. Listening, caring and cheering people on is their aim.

Forging Men has had monthly events including speakers, curry nights and pub nights. They raised £560 for the Foodbank at the pubs carol singing and helped organise Carols in the Park.

The Christmas Day Lunch was a great success for 75 people, thanks to the 2 organisers and many volunteers. Guests were given presents and took food home for the next day. It cost £973 but £3,007 was donated, including £1,000 from Waitrose.

Margaret Flack and Mary Lazarus

Vicar's Report for the 2025 Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

Great Burstead with Ramsden Crays

In 2024, significant changes occurred within the parish. After serving as Priest in Charge for approximately ten years, I transitioned to the role of Vicar due to the Plurality with Laindon. Additionally, Reverend Karen White joined us as our Associate Priest, enhancing our ministry team.

To better serve both parishes, we modified our Sunday worship schedule. The services were changed from 8:00 am and 10:00 am to 8:00 am and 9:30 am. This adjustment allowed for a main Sunday service with a Priest officiating at Holy Communion for most services. Furthermore, our Wednesday service time was shifted from 9:30 am to 10:00 am, accommodating those who found the Sunday morning change challenging.

2024 saw a notable increase in baptisms compared to previous years, likely influenced by the pandemic. This trend is viewed positively, indicating a continued desire among families to have their children baptized. Although the number of weddings decreased, the ceremonies that did take place were joyful celebrations.

Ministering between two parishes presented challenges; however, I maintained my regular pattern of pastoral visits, providing care for the sick and elderly and supporting parishioners. We must work collaboratively within our plurality to ensure its success.

I encourage all parishioners considering greater involvement in parish life to take the initiative and engage. I am available for discussions regarding how you can contribute to our community.

I would like to express my gratitude to Nigel and Fola for their invaluable work as Churchwardens. Their support has been crucial, and the ministry of the church would not have thrived without their contributions. Additionally, I extend my thanks to all PCC members, volunteers, and staff for their dedication and hard work. Lastly, I appreciate the congregation of Great Burstead for their unwavering support and commitment to our parish.

As we move into the next year, I am optimistic about facing any challenges that may arise. I believe that not only will we meet these challenges, but we may also thrive as a community rather than merely survive.

It remains a great privilege to be your parish priest, and it is now a great honour to be your Vicar.

Fr Michael