

Welcome to 2024 Church Warden Report.

JANUARY - Usual taking down off the Christmas decorations and a good clean with Wink doing all the high cobwebs. We still need more cleaning teams only 2 at the moment. Rev Eric retired through ill health. A joint benefice service was held at Arthuret church, we enjoyed a light lunch and presented Eric with various retirement gifts from every church. May your surgery be successful, and our prayers are with you. You will be greatly missed.

FEBRUARY - We moved into interregnum. Edward Johnsen along with retired vicar Rev Alan Guire stepped in along with our ministry team that Eric had put together in his short time here.

The gutters were all cleaned for free by Walter and William Aitchison, our local community coming together to help.

Richard Pratt (acting archdeacon) and Edward Johnsen called a meeting to discuss bringing two other churches along with our three churches into one mission community and push it forward. An individual standing group, one from each church was arranged that night. To relay what was happening.

Building a profile was also discussed.

MARCH - Safeguarding Dashboard started by the diocese. Paul Smith and Elizabeth Beattie taking it forward.

Mothers day teas and raffle - sit in and take away, very successful Raised £2241. But the event was very fraught and not a good working atmosphere. A meeting with all the workers was arranged a couple of weeks later and a few measures put in place. Hopefully 2025 will be better.

Our parish share had been missed somehow , so we had a special meeting to set it . It was set at £9,000, for the year . £1,000 a month April to December.

Ash Wednesday was very well attended, many from Kirkandrews attending.

Easter Day also well attended, Everyone who attended received a small easter egg.

APRIL - New pad for bins provided by Netherby Hall. Much easier to put out now.

Nicholforest old church churchyard was soaking wet as was the ground around the cellar, the pump was running continuously. I raised job with Highways again after much confrontation and help from Tim in his role as Councillor when I was getting fobbed off. They eventually came and found the problem. Broken storm drain and blocked ditches on highway. Since being repaired church yard is much drier.

MAY -Lamb service led by Rev Angela from Lanercost. Very well attended. 72 people. Tea and cakes afterwards. Redgatehead provided the lambs again, thank you for that. Grass cutting started end May, agreed to start earlier in month, as too hard to cut. Fiona Snaith is our Grass and Hedge cutter. Thanks for a job well done.

New gutters supplied by Dalston Gutters. Put up Gutters. A good job done. Hopefully wall beside alter will dry up.

JUNE - Blackbird nested in cellar, She reared four young, Wink bought a new cellar submersible pump as other one was faulty (cheaper to renew than repair). Wink cleaned out cellar leaves. Church porch cleaned - 6 monthly event,

Debbie resigned as church warden. A very sad day for me. We communicated very well together as team players and discussed everything together at church or on the phone concerning our church duties and responsibilities. We both took time off work to do church

warden courses, safeguarding courses, funerals, weddings, went to any courses that would benefit our church as well as, in our spare time visiting . She is greatly missed by me. Safeguarding Dashboard started. Paul Smith and Elizabeth Beattie taking it forward, progressing slowly. PCC need to do the courses as soon as possible. Liz sworn in as Warden 26/6/24
Silent auction and light savouries supper with a free drink raised over £3,000. A good turnout £10 a ticket
Kirkandrews choral evensong and Bishop Rob. We cancelled our evensong to go. Lovely night

JULY - Margaret Robb resigned off pcc .

Rowan accepted deputy warden.

Windmills grant application applied for by Liz. Refused on grounds that not stated on form who owns church wall. Re-admitted for Feb 25.

Church helped with community Fun in the Field event. Not many pcc members attended.

Hard work for little return. Would need a re-think if asked again.

Anna Robinson resigned as treasurer. Helen Storey took the job on.

AUGUST - Profile progressing. Section 11 meeting at Arthuret with the five churches not ready to go yet.

Memorial garden opened and signs erected. Melvyn blessed the garden and Prosecco with scones provided by the parish council. Grant received from Nicholforest Parish Council for £300 to publish 100 books on our Church history to raise funds for the church. Liz, Paul and Carole Anne worked on new information leaflets/booklets about our Church, including a Welcome Leaflet.

SEPTEMBER - NO BCP communion service. Rev Alan slipped moving his caravan. Paul stepped in to take service. Thanks Paul

Charlie resigned as deanery rep after 30 years. Thank you for your dedicated service Charlie.

Paul Smith was elected along with already elected Elizabeth Beattie.

Work party organised for outside, paths cut back shrubs trees etc., Needs be a yearly thing. Hot soup and rolls served for lunch.

Outside path lights not working. With dark nights these need replaced or repaired asap.

Quote £850.

Wink spent the weekend getting the lights separated. They were tightly seized together and new parts made, fitted new bulbs painted and cleaned the glasses on them. New screws supplied and fitted. He will clean and maintain these yearly so they don't seize up again. No charge to church.

Margaret Robb returned to pcc

Thankyou Fiona for the next notes October to December.

OCTOBER - Rowan resigned as deputy warden, Fiona stepped in to help while Liz is recovering. Liz had surgery. Harvest festival church beautifully decorated.

Harvest supper well attended, auctioneer Paul Gardener.

NOVEMBER- Remembrance Sunday well attended. Helen, Carole Anne and Tim co- opted onto the pcc

DECEMBER- Section 11 meeting in Arthuret church with the 5 churches. Arthuret, Kirkandrews, Nicholforest Blackford and Rockcliffe. Profile was agreed and teams were set up from every church to finalise the profile.
Church decorated for Christmas, special church services are St Nicholas day, carol Service, Christingle, and midnight mass.

All in all 2024 has been a stressful year, my surgeries and going into interregnum the biggest. Also with Wardens and pcc members resigning including our Treasurer and Secretary but on the bright side we have paid our Parish share and managed to put up new guttering. We have kept the churchyard tidy and paid our bills.

Fundraising has been successful but we need other different ideas for events. Many church jobs need done . - A cremation place for burial of ashes first. A Place has been decided at a previous PCC meeting. We just need funds to re point the wall and mark the plot out. Church walls around the altar and organ etc are needing plastered. Grants are available for this BUT CHURCH NEEDS OPEN 100 DAYS A YEAR. This was done in December (after a Risk Assessment was carried out and Insurance checked). Wink opened and closed Church, it was unmanned help yourself to tea/coffee/biscuits. (This seemed to work well and we had good feedback).

Carol Nairn resigned as church secretary, and she is also resigning from the church PCC at the annual meeting. Thank you for all your hard work over the years. It is very much appreciated. We are very lucky to get a new secretary almost right away. Carole Anne, new to church law but keen to learn. We wish her many years with Nicholforest church.

Carole Anne and myself have got the ANCY website up and running, And getting many hits. Our Facebook page has over 100 members. Carole Anne puts on a daily bible reading every day. We also add readings, prayers and quotations.

We are grateful to have a loyal and skilled team of flower arrangers providing beautiful arrangements in church throughout the year and at Christmas. We have the Flower Rota arranged for most of 2025 though have a few vacancies still to fill.

We have had good feedback for our Christmas Services and all were very well attended. Our Christingle Service (led by Jane Rutherford, assisted by Paul) was very well supported and £273.77 was raised for the Children's Society.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Nicholforest Church throughout the year. It never goes unnoticed.

Long may our beautiful small rural church continue to grow as we strive to hand it over to the next generation. May God bless us all.

Elizabeth Beattie