

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, DODDINGTON
AGENDA FOR ANNUAL PARISHIONERS MEETING &
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
WEDNESDAY 9 April 2025 7.00pm at DODDINGTON VILLAGE HALL
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AGENDA FOR ANNUAL PARISHIONERS MEETING

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of AGM 2024 (See Appendix 1)
4. Election of Churchwardens

AGENDA FOR ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING WEDNESDAY 9th April 2025

1. Presentation of the Electoral Roll and election of Electoral Roll Officer
2. Election of up to 6 representatives to the PCC
3. Adoption of Parish Safeguarding Policy (*displayed in church and available on request*)
4. **Churchwarden's Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church:**
 - (a) Significant changes to the fabric of the church began in September 2024. These are now almost complete. The project Beacon on the Hill has not only included restoration of parts of the building, but also involved people from the community and further afield, as well as pupils from Clee Hill Primary School and Ludlow College students, in producing some of the creative elements which will enhance the space, drawing visitors in to find out more about the heritage of the building, the community now and in the past, and the industrial and natural history of Titterstone Clee Hill on which it stands. This has all been made possible by grants from the 11 funders listed at the end of this section. Working from the entrances to the churchyard into the building, the changes you will see include:
 01. Along the accessible path you will see new interpretation boards – about nature in the churchyard and the view beyond. There will be 6 diamond-shaped stones carved with words from a poem created by local people who attended a project activity, along with designs, some by a student, and others by talented Tom Blockley, local graphic designer and photographer; these stones are designed to echo the diamonds in the windows and also draw visitors to find out more in the church.
 02. The steps and walls alongside them have been repaired and a new handrail has been installed.
 03. The porch concrete floor has been removed and new stones will be put in place – some of these are also carved with words and designs welcoming visitors to our community and church.
 04. On entering the building, if you knew it before the works, the first thing that may strike you is that there is level access across the whole area under the gallery and facing you – much work went into removing large boulders that were holding up what turned out to be a mostly rotten platform; new floorboards and mostly new dado panels have been sensitively installed and carefully treated and stained to look right in the space ... but there is so much to see in this area that your attention will probably be grabbed by other things first.
 05. The area immediately to the left as you enter has all kinds of items and finds on display from parts of a clay pipe found under the floorboards (I'd love to think it was a churchwarden's pipe!) to a replica of a 2000 year old spearhead found on the top of the hill, made by local blacksmith Darren Broome using the 2000 year-old method. A cut-through model showing the geology of the hill sits on the resited font, placed in the traditional spot – to the left of and just inside the church door - to link the entry to the church and the beginning of so many people's Christian journeys, with the formation of the hill, and the rock and coal layers which are the very reason so many workers came here to work, and so the reason that the church was built. Adrian Sutherland and Ian Jenkins both generously volunteered their time to digitise maps and use a special radar technology (called Lidar) to contribute to this model and much more. In this area there is also a bit of technology – a tablet – that allows visitors to access all kinds of information in addition to that on display.
 06. Looking straight ahead from the door you will see a seating area where you can relax and have a chat... which should really be over a cuppa shouldn't it? Well luckily that is available to anyone who visits, along with some tasty snacks, due to the vending machines – one for a proper cup of ground coffee, hot chocolate or tea, and the other selling snacks and drinks (including the teabags for a variety of teas) – all at reasonable prices, but enough to contribute to maintaining

the church into the future. We really hope to welcome all kinds of people and groups to use the building to get together, or hold week-long exhibitions and other events; we are not trying to replace what the Village Hall does so well, but to offer things that might not work so well there, but will work with St John's new facilities.

07. You might be wondering how all this will work in a cold church. Well on the walls will be panels, decorated with beautiful and interesting photos, which are actually heaters that warm you as you stand or sit near them. You may have heard the call to heat the body not the space to try to cut down our use of electricity and other fuels – these panels will do that, and we are also providing seat cushions which heat up when you sit on them, so hopefully the church will be a bit more comfortable than in the past.

08. Turning to the right as you walk in, you may think little has changed, and indeed the church will continue to be used as a worship space (with warm seats!). But the most costly of all the works that have been happening is the restoration of the remaining 6 cast-iron windows to match 4 that had been restored in 2012 and 2022, plus the stonework of the East window has had a talented stonemason working to repair damage caused by rusting horizontal bars, known as saddlebars, which have now been replaced with long-lasting stainless steel bars (although I challenge you to spot them because the work has been done so well). Much stonework on all the external windowsills has also been replaced or repaired, and again this has been done with care to match the existing stonework.

09. Turning back to the back of the church, there is now a smaller vestry, but this is because some of the space has been taken to install an accessible toilet. While we now have running water for the first time, we don't of course have any form of sewage treatment, so it is a special Swedish-designed composting toilet – and if you know the reputation of the Swedes, you'll know that they wouldn't design anything unpleasant and they are well used to cold environments – I won't describe it here, but while the toilet looks a little different to a flushing one, the user's experience will be very similar and there won't be any nasty smells. There is a washbasin in the toilet room, and sinks in both the small servery area, and in the vestry for cleaning and flower arranging, all draining to a soakaway.

10. Finally, the gallery is now safe to use because a rail has been added to make the front the correct height for people's safety.

(b) We have been incredibly grateful to our architects, Harvey and David from Arnold Bartosch and to their office staff, and to our contractors Splitlath Ltd for all that they have done to make this happen on time and on budget – particularly to Marc (foreman) and John (owner) as well as all the subcontractors, and to Jim Grevatte who has worked tirelessly to make the project work as a whole.

(c) None of this would have been possible without funding from the following; some granted toward the contractor works, some to project activities and some to both:

01. National Lottery Heritage Fund (£223,520)

02. UK Shared Prosperity Fund – the Levelling Up fund – granted and administered by Shropshire Council (£137,150)

03. Listed Places of Worship (over £33,000 to date)

04. Garfield Weston Foundation (£20,000)

05. Benefact Trust (£5,200)

06. Church Pilgrimages Trust (£5,000)

07. Laslett's Charities (£5,000)

08. Shropshire Historic Churches Trust (£3,000)

09. Rowlands Trust (£2,500)

10. Connexus (£2,100)

11. Hopton Wafers Parish Council (£1,000)

A total of £448,480 external funding, to which we have added some of our own fundraising. Final figures will be available next year.

(d) The hedges planted in the churchyard by Council for the Protection of Rural England and Caring for God's Acre continue to grow and are looked after by Richard Skellern who also cuts the grass and has been doing other maintenance jobs around the churchyard; we are lucky to have this reliable and honest man working for us.

(e) the goods and ornaments of the church have had a bit of a holiday – some in Hereford Cathedral and some in use for services at the Village Hall or carefully packed away in the church, while the works have been underway at St John's. They have also increased in number given the addition of the heritage interpretation and facilities. The Terrier and Inventory which is our official record of the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church will be updated in time for the Archdeacon's Visitation in

the summer.

- (f) While we have had the contractors in working on the building, they and we have been keeping an eye on the church, but the quarterly maintenance check has taken a bit of a back seat – it will be updated to include the new facilities and restarted soon – if anyone would like to help with that, particularly someone with experience in buildings, please do let me know.
- (g) The lightning conductor was tested and found to be safe and suitable for this church and its setting.
- (h) We continue to insure the church via Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

I would like to thank PCC and everyone who has supported this church, practically and financially, and given me support in my role; Jim Grevatte has been a huge help in this unique year, and Ewan has been busier as Treasurer than ever before. *Celia Gibb, Churchwarden*

5. PCC report:

PCC met 9 times in 2024

- (a) The Beacon on the Hill project began in earnest in January with the creation of a Steering Group (Rev'd Ashley Buck, Treasurer Ewan Gibb and Churchwarden Celia Gibb); this group took on the interviewing for Heritage Engagement Coordinator (appointed: Jim Grevatte) and the architects and contract administrator (appointed: Arnold Bartosch Ltd). Jim then joined the Steering Group and has put his heart and soul into the project and even his family have got involved as volunteers – we can't thank him enough, but we'll do our best when the project finishes! The next to be appointed was Sid Peacock as our Songwriter in Residence and it took until September for contractors, Splitlath Ltd to be appointed – but they started within days. We have not had a moment's regret on any of the appointments.
- (b) Project activities began early in the year, and drew in people from both the local community and further afield; in amongst these new ventures, we also held some of our more regular events, but took those opportunities to entertain and inform the attendees with films and music from and updates about the project. Clee Hill Primary Academy, Ludlow College, Cleobury Mortimer Men's Shed, Cleobury Community Hub were all involved in activities. A full report and evaluation of the project will be produced later this year.
- (c) Due to the income in 2024 being more than £100,000 (almost all from grants), the PCC was required to register as a charity with the Charity Commission – reg number 1208550. The process was made relatively easy since Parish Resources provide the wording necessary to complete the application. All churches are going to be required to register soon, whatever their income, so it is good to have done this now. Once this was done, it became possible to apply for non-profit status with Google and Microsoft, giving access to free software and cloud services, which has helped with management of the project.
- (d) Through Parish Buying, and as required by National Lottery Heritage Fund, we purchased Finance Coordinator, an online accounting package allowing the Treasurer to log transactions digitally, and create reports as and when required, and, most helpfully, at the year end.
- (e) Through the project, a new logo and ID was created for the church, based on the lettering and colours on our Sunday School banner and incorporating a design based on the windows. This was then used as the basis for the design of our new website www.stjohnsdoddington.org. The website has been live for several months now and is regularly updated with news, events and services. It is well worth a visit to see the clever digital tours and fly-throughs of the church, allowing anyone to see the whole of the building including a virtual trip to the top of the tower and incredible views of the bells – all from the comfort of your armchair! Please keep checking back for more.
- (f) It was decided to begin work on a new altar frontal to represent and celebrate the place of the church as the Beacon on the Hill. Iris Todd is generously using her talents and skills to produce a beautiful felt and embroidered panel which will be the focus of this.
- (g) A clock repair fund was set up starting with donations gratefully received from Sheila Barker's funeral. The clock, bells and organ still await repair – how to raise enough funds for these will be considered once Beacon on the Hill project is complete.
- (h) Caring for God's Acre volunteer group continued to visit to scythe the grass in June and do tidying jobs in the autumn; they also advise on the best way to maintain the churchyard for both visitors and wildlife.
- (i) From September, services were held in Doddington Village Hall – while we missed being in the church, we appreciated the intimacy of sitting in a semicircle to worship.
- (j) The flower team provided and arranged British and local flowers as much as possible throughout the year, including daffodils for Easter kindly provided by Charlotte Byng and family.

- (k) Ashley visited Doddington Lodge regularly with Celia to provide a short service of communion and sing some hymns – this is always warmly appreciated.
 - (l) The Harvest sale of produce and supper raised funds for Help for Heroes.
 - (m) We took part in Shropshire Historic Churches' Trust (SHCT) Ride and Stride sponsored fundraiser, and invited people to join a walk led by Rev Mark Daborn linking our church with Hopton Wafers and Cleeton St Mary – a good number of people joined for at least part of the walk, and a small number did the whole walk. As always, the sponsorship raised by was shared between SHCT and St John's and we are grateful to all who contributed. Bishop Richard and David Hardham (Ride & Stride organiser) visited St John's briefly on the Bishop's motorbike ride and witnessed the packing up of the church ready for the contractors to move in.
 - (n) The Act of Remembrance took place at the War Memorial in the churchyard.
 - (o) The Christmas Fair was disrupted by a power cut due to Storm Darragh, and postponed by one week.
 - (p) We were all very sad to hear of the death of Gordon White in late December – he and his wife Joan had done a huge amount for St John's since they moved to Doddington Heights until prevented by ill health; Gordon was on the PCC and Treasurer for some years; he also used his practical skills around the church and supported Joan while she was Churchwarden. He will be greatly missed.
 - (q) We continued to contribute articles to the Cleobury Clarion as well as Clee Hill Viewpoint – Jim Grevatte has written most of these since the project started. Ian Jenkins (mentioned above) heard about the project through the Viewpoint, and has generously donated his time and skills to produce all kinds of photos, films and new ways of viewing the church and landscape, as can be seen on the website – more will be available in the church soon via the new tablet.
 - (r) The Parish Share payment to the Diocese continued to be paid, and, after an 8% increase over 2023's payment in 2024 we chose to increase it by 2% for 2025.
6. **Deanery Synod Report:** *Ashley*
 7. **Finance Report:** *Ewan*
 - (a) Presentation of the 2024 Audited Accounts and appointment of independent examiner
 - (b) Budget for 2025 to be presented at first PCC meeting
 8. **Rector's Remarks:** *Ashley*
 9. **Time for questions and ideas**

APPENDIX 1

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, DODDINGTON **MINUTES OF A.G.M. WEDNESDAY 10th APRIL 2024**

PRESENT: Rev Ashley Buck, Mr and Mrs Ewan Gibb, Mrs Viv Kerry,
Mrs Virginia Robinns, Mrs Sonia Pearsall, Mr Pete Flecher
Mrs Elizabeth Mead

APOLOGIES: Mrs Carol Evans, Mrs Doris Smardon,
The Meeting, held at Doddington Village Hall, opened with a prayer,
The Minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting, already circulated, have been duly read and accepted as a true copy by all. Proposed by Mrs Kerry, seconded by Mrs Robinns.

ELECTION OF CHURCH WARDEN

Mrs Celia Gibb confirmed her agreement to continue with the role of Church Warden. Proposed by Mrs Robinns, seconded by Mrs Pearsall. All in favour.

1. ELECTORAL ROLL

Presentation of the Electoral Roll: There are 22 on the roll. Two new members: Mrs Elizabeth Mead and Mr Reg Chapman. Election of Electoral Roll Officer: Mrs Pearsall will continue. Proposed by Mr Gibb, seconded by Mrs Kerry.

2. ELECTION OF DEANERY SYNOD REPRESENTATIVE

Mr Gibb to continue as Representative. Also Rev Buck from the Clergy. Proposed by Mrs Robinns, seconded by Mrs Pearsall.

3. ELECTION OF P C C MEMBERS

All existing members reinstated en bloc, with the addition of new member Mrs Elizabeth Mead. Proposed by Mrs Gibb, seconded by Mrs Robinns.

4. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

A copy of Safeguarding Policy can be found in Doddington Church. Adopted. (*displayed in church and available on request*)

5. Churchwarden's Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church:

- (a) The major news is of course that we have funding and permissions to begin our project, Beacon

on the Hill, which will repair and improve the church – this has begun and changes will be seen in 2024. However we didn't stand still in 2023 and various improvements to the fabric and graveyard have happened, all with permissions in place; these were made possible by a grant from Shropshire Historic Churches Trust of £16,000 along with our own funds raised with the help of the community :

- i. Mortar repairs to the church and south boundary wall.
 - ii. Installation of a French drain along the north and east perimeter of the church.
 - iii. Repairs to the steps
 - iv. Repairs to plaster and repainting of porch walls.
 - v. Installation of 2 porch noticeboards
 - vi. Addition of a draught-proofing strip on the main door to prevent leaves blowing in
- (b) Having sought quotes for repairs to several wobbly headstones we discovered in the spring that all but one had been repaired and some that had been laid down in the past for safety's sake had been restored - we are most grateful to the anonymous person who did this.
 - (c) The stone bench at the north east end of the churchyard built by Caring for God's Acre (CfGA) in 2011 had been damaged and fallen apart – the CfGA volunteers kindly rebuilt this for us.
 - (d) the goods and ornaments of the church remain in good condition and there are a few additions:
 - i. a new freestanding table has generously been provided in the porch – it was upcycled for the purpose by Viv & David Kerry.
 - ii. a red carpet discovered in the tower is now providing a cheery welcome to the church.
 - iii. a chair has been kindly donated following the wedding of Kathie & Mark Rowbotham in September
 - (e) A maintenance check is carried out quarterly and annually to check on and inform decisions about the fabric. Unfortunately the rainwater diverter installed on the downpipe to fill the water butts has been found to be not working, so this remains to be repaired.
 - (f) CfGA provided us with a churchyard maintenance plan along the lines we have been following for several years; this is displayed in the porch and we are grateful to Richard Skellern who continues to maintain the churchyard in accordance with this plan; his fees are covered by the graveyard fund.
 - (g) We continue to insure the church via Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.
 - (h) I would like to thank PCC and everyone who has supported this church, practically and financially, and given me support in my role. *Celia Gibb, Churchwarden*
2. **PCC report:**
- (a) PCC met 7 times in 2023
 - (b) The Beacon on the Hill project was developed during 2023 with the help of a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £10,000 (Developing our Heritage) received in 2022 which enabled us to employ Jim Grevatte to build a Business Plan. He did this, and more, enthusiastically and we ended up also with an Interpretation Plan and Activity Plan, along with evidence of interest in the heritage of the church and area following pilot activities held in spring 2023. This body of plans and evidence allowed us to seek grants, and by December 2023 we had grants, or pledges of grants, from 8 funders totalling £331,324, with the expectation of reimbursement of VAT through the Listed Places of Worship scheme, allowing us to begin the £351,000 Beacon on the Hill project at the start of 2024
 - (c) Events continued to be held for the community throughout the year – in Spring these were mostly related to the Developing our Heritage project, and also included Pancakes, a Wild Day in the churchyard, Strawberry Teas, a Jumble Sale, Harvest service, auction & tea, Musical Tea, Christmas Fair and Carol Service with Cleobury Concert Band.
 - (d) The flower team provided and arranged British and local flowers as much as possible throughout the year, including many different varieties of daffodils for Easter kindly donated by Charlotte Byng and family and a suitable display for King Charles III coronation. They also used crochet and knitting to produce large hangings to put on the path handrails for the coronation and Remembrance Sunday. The time and care taken is hugely appreciated.
 - (e) Ashley visited Doddington Lodge regularly with members of St John's to provide a short service of communion and sing some hymns – this is always warmly appreciated.
 - (f) In January the vestry was tidied and woodworm treatment applied
 - (g) In March a beam across the window in the Vestry which had begun to crumble was removed. It had been inspected by a Structural Engineer and deemed to be serving no purpose.
 - (h) Repairs to the Rood Screen were completed by David Kerry as part of the Cleobury Mortimer Men's Shed – this repair has been remarked upon many times since as, along with the 2 repaired windows, having made a big difference to the look of the church – it looks more

complete and cared-for.

- (i) A first aid course was completed by Celia Gibb and Pete Fletcher in March
- (j) In April Archdeacon Fiona visited to undertake her Triennial Inspection – although this would normally take place every 3 years it had been many years since any had been carried out.
- (k) She gave some advice and raised a few points:
 - i. The Terrier had not been signed for some years
 - ii. The Registers were not being signed in the correct ink (new pen now purchased and in use)
 - iii. We hold some old Registers which should have been archived, but she agreed that we could keep them until we have used them for research in the Beacon on the Hill project, and then send them to the archives but otherwise she was pleased to see the church well looked after and wished us well with our plans
- (l) Quotations were received for repairing the bells and clock and we already hold a quote for repairing the organ. Having already built our project, the addition of these would have moved us into a different bracket for the National Lottery Heritage Fund, so we agreed to put these repairs on hold and hope to look at raising funds in the not too distant future.
- (m) A Coronation Service was held on 7 May by Rev Sue Barrett
- (n) In May we received a report on the soil samples requested by researchers from Cardiff University as part of a national project (50 churches took part), and taken in
- (p) December/January – given they were taken from areas of the churchyard without graves and therefore from soil undisturbed for at least 175 years and probably much more, it was hard work to dig them up! However the report concluded that St John's is the only churchyard in the study with acid grassland and had the most earthworms; it is therefore important that we continue to manage it for wildlife.
- (q) (m)We purchased a Henry vacuum with extra long hose, making cleaning of the church easier.
 - i. In July we were awarded a Bronze Eco Church award – part of an international scheme run by A Rocha
 - ii. Those from PCC who hadn't yet done Safeguarding training undertook this – all passed
 - iii. We said goodbye to Rev Joe Simons, curate, who had great belief in our ambitious plans as part of our mission, and brought his experience to help us drive that forward.
 - iv. In August the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) visited the church to look at the proposed repairs and improvements in the light of our renewed Faculty application – a very similar plan had receive Faculty approval in 2018, but this had lapsed and a new Chancellor is now in post, so a new application was requested and submitted. DAC were very supportive and recommended the plans to the Chancellor.
 - v. The first floor of the tower was tidied by a working party, and the lamp holder that used to sit on top of the gateposts was found – it is in a poor condition (rust).
 - vi. Twelve Swift boxes were installed in the second floor of the tower in the west window, along with a caller system to hopefully alert swift screaming parties to their existence. This will be turned on in April 2024. We are grateful to CfGA's Beautiful Burial Grounds project for funding this and carrying it out.
 - vii. The gutters and downpipes along with some windows were cleaned in September
 - viii. We took part in Shropshire Historic Churches' Ride and Stride sponsored fundraiser, visiting several churches to the east including Stottesdon where works on a large project had recently finished.
 - ix. A wedding with a difference was held at St John's in September – a delightful couple who had been married and separated in the past remarried in what was initially intended to be a quiet ceremony but which was attended by over 50 people and a Shetland pony as the bridesmaid! This was the first wedding held at the church since 2015.
 - x. In October the Trustees of Lasletts Charities visited the church to hear about the project, having already pledged funding; they were impressed with what we are doing and grateful for the tea and cakes provided.
 - xi. In November, CfGA's volunteers visited and repaired the stone bench as well as creating a new compost heap from donated pallets.
 - xii. We continued to contribute articles to the Cleobury Clarion as well as Clee Hill Viewpoint.
 - xiii. The church is included in the Shropshire Churches Tourism Group brochure which is widely distributed throughout the county and beyond; the latest edition is out now and available in church.
 - xiv. The Parish Share payment to the Diocese was made with a 5% increase over 2022's payment.

7. Deanery Synod Report:

Only 2 Meetings have taken place during 2023. Rev Joe Simons has started his new job. The

Archdeacon talked about her role and vision of future. Charlie Houston, Neen Sollars talked about Church Investments.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr Gibb has prepared and circulated 2023 annual accounts, which have been audited by Mrs Maureen Field. Total amount held £37,960.82 (interest only paid on Investment held on our behalf by CCLA £10,534.07)

9. RECTOR'S REPORT

Rev Buck will forward a copy of his Report, similar to Cleobury Mortimer's Report but with addition of reference to the Beacon on the Hill Project and King Charles Coronation when he was away on three month sabbatical. *See Appendix 2*

10. QUESTIONS

Mrs Gibb asked if solar panels could be looked into, either on Church Roof or on grass bank. Any surplus to be fed back to grid.

2030 is the target for Zero Carbon.

First Aid Course to be completed by Mrs Gibb and Mrs Robinns next Tuesday. Mr Fletcher has completed two courses but not recently updated.

The Meeting closed at approximately 8.15pm followed by PCC Meeting.

APPENDIX 2

Rector's Report. Easter 2024

The life of Cleobury Benefice continues to change and evolve against a background of sometime dark developments in the world, and evidence of failure of focus in the central Church of England. Immediately after Easter I was profoundly grateful to enjoy a three month period of study leave which took me to Wales on a number of occasions, to France also for extended periods of time, to London and Oxford. We also had a lovely holiday with the extended family in Crete. I am very grateful for the privilege of this time apart which I hope has refreshed and renewed the ministry I exercise amongst you and granted me important time for thought and reflection. Many thanks to all those whose hard work made it possible.

During this period the ever capable and helpful Sam Dolphin rejoined our team as Administrator in the Benefice Office, where she plays a key role in all that we do. Joe Simons finished his time of curacy with us where he has been so deeply appreciated and went off to take up a hybrid parish and diocesan post, with his pastoral ministry centred on the Brown Clee Benefice. In June Sarah Lupton was ordained deacon and her ministry across the parishes has been warmly welcomed with her particular blend of intelligence, warmth and humour. At the turn of the year Cleobury welcomed Helena Evans to lead the choir, complimenting the good work Chris Kippin has been doing with our music. The effects are immediately apparent. Chris was also crucial to the continuing rollout of the Tower Project. In the last few weeks we were also delighted to welcome back our dear friends Mark and Alex Daborn, as they decided to focus their retirement ministry in the Benefice. The team continues to grow and strengthen. We are exploring more areas of ministry especially ones of civic and pastoral engagement and work with our schools.

Cleobury Community Hub, born from St Mary's Youth Project, has continued to grow in mission and service and we will soon be establishing new patterns of cooperation with it as its Bishop's Mission Order comes into effect. This is a very exciting development, and I give thanks for Mark and Bev's vision, and for the hard work of Mark Melluish from the Diocese to bring this into being.

We live a life of prayer, discipleship and care amongst the background I feel of a central church centred in London which struggles to articulate its vision. The international scene is as dark as I can remember it. But in Cleobury we do what we can to share the light of Christ, and I feel with increasing success. My huge thanks go out to churchwardens, readers, clergy and many others who make this enterprise in love possible.

Ashley Buck, Rector.

Addendum

On reflection I feel that there are two extra things that should be reported on in this year. The first is the securing of funds for the splendid Beacon on the Hill Project in Doddington. This gives the Church community on the Clee Hill a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the community and its enthusiasm for spreading the Gospel. Huge credit should go to all those who have made this possible.

Secondly, because I was on study leave in June of 2023, I was not present in Cleobury for the Coronation of Charles III. This obviously was a very important historical event in the life of our nation and our Parishes which was marked by much joyful activity which should go down on the record. *WAB*