



ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR TO 31ST DECEMBER, 2023

The Parochial Church Council,
St. Bartholomew's Church,
Ducklington with Hardwick,
Oxfordshire.

Aims and Purposes:

St. Bartholomew's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Reverend Andrea Colbrook, in promoting the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church building of St. Bartholomew's, Church Street, Ducklington, to enable our ministry to the community.

Objectives and Activities:

The PCC is committed to encouraging and enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St. Bartholomew's. All members are encouraged to become actively involved both practically and financially in the work of the church. The aim is to enable all members to grow in faith and serve the community by supporting each other through worship, prayer and pastoral care. The PCC maintains an overview of worship and makes suggestions on how services can involve the different groups that live in and around our parish.

We have kept the church open for worship every day and have continued to share Communion through the practice of intincting of the bread in the wine. We also continue to offer home Communion if required and still have our services available online through the medium of Zoom.

When planning our activities for the year, 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 their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.

Structure, Governance and Management:

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is not registered with the Charity Commission but it is an excepted charity.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St. Bartholomew's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our Rector), Church Wardens, the Licenced Lay Ministers, the Lay Pastoral Assistant, Deanery Synod Representatives and members elected by those who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services and are members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

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 members receive initial training into the workings of the PCC.

The Standing Committee continues to meet every two months, just before the next PCC meeting.

Administrative Information:

Ex Officio Members:

Incumbent: The Reverend Andrea Colbrook

Licensed Lay Ministers: Dr. David Adams, Dr. Johan Schoeman,
Mr. Roy Tarbox (From July)

Lay Pastoral Assistant: Mrs. Faith Truran To APCM 2025

Church Wardens:

Mr. Martin Dines To APCM 2024

Mrs. Gill Long To APCM 2024

Elected Members:

Mrs. Angela Williams, Rep. on Deanery Synod To APCM 2026

Mrs. Jenny Pratley, Rep. on Deanery Synod To APCM 2026

Mrs. Maria Skoyles, Rep. on Deanery Synod	To APCM 2026
Miss Sue Fenn, PCC Secretary	To APCM 2025
Mrs Jane Dines, Treasurer	To APCM 2025
Mrs Sarah Varnom, Safeguarding Officer	To APCM 2025
Mrs. Tricia Hughes, ER Officer	To APCM 2024
Mrs. Darlene Britt	To APCM 2024
Mr. Edmund Strainge	To APCM 2024
Mrs. Jane Nichols	To APCM 2027
Mrs. Meg Roberts	To APCM 2024
Mrs. Ann Morris	To APCM 2026
Mrs. Amanda Bennett	To APCM 2026

Secretary's Report:

I have now completed my second full year as PCC Secretary and feel that I am coming to grips with the position, little by little! This has been made possible with the enormous amount of help given to me by our new Rector, Andrea.

Once again the PCC met for six scheduled meetings during the year with an average attendance of 92% and the Standing Committee met before each of these meetings to plan the agenda.

During 2023 the church held 7 baptisms, 3 weddings, 8 funerals, 1 memorial services, and 4 burial of ashes. During 2022 it was discovered that the new churchyard was actually owned by the Parish Council and since then there have been ongoing discussions between them and us at Ducklington Church as to how we go forward. At present all memorials are signed off by both the Chairman of the Parish Council and the Rector sticking to Church of England regulations. The outcome is still to be resolved and has been referred to the Diocese.

We have had a full year of regular services at Lent, Easter, Harvest and Christmas, which was a Lantern Festival. Other services this year included a

Pet service, a Hymns and Pimms service, a Service of Light and an All Soul's service.

We also held our Fritillary Sunday fundraising event, and at the village flower and produce show we teamed up with the local WI to run the tea and cake stall. We also held our Harvest supper in the Village Hall that was very well attended.

In October seven members of our congregation were confirmed by Bishop Gavin which was a wonderful service for them all.

£125.00+ was raised for Christian Aid during a week in May and the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust held their annual "Ride and "Stride" that raised £500.00 for our church from the three cyclists who took part. Collections were also made for Gaza/Israel and Libya/Morocco which raised £158.50.

In May our new King was crowned and the church was decorated by some of the congregation and school pupils with royal regalia for members of the community to come in and see during the village picnic that was held.

We continue to offer all our services on Zoom for those unable to come to church and also offer Home Communion to those requesting it.

**Sue Fenn,
PCC Secretary January, 2024**

Rectors Report:

This report provides a general overview of the mission and ministry, particular achievements, challenges and future plans of the parish.

Introduction

The mission of the church requires us to work collaboratively, responding together to God's call here in the parish of Ducklington with Hardwick. Our ministry has been shaped by Stephen Cottrell's book 'Hit the ground kneeling'. His emphasis on taking time to pray, reflect and think together, has been our model for ministry over this last year. Adopting Jesus' model of operating from a place of stillness and contemplation.

Every member ministry

Throughout this year I have deliberately taken time to grow every member ministry, aiming to develop individuals' strengths and gifts. I have adopted a pattern of meeting regularly with the churchwardens, safeguarding lead, License Lay Ministers, the pastoral team, and many other individuals from across the church, using in many cases a personal discipleship plan to enable individuals to develop their calling.

We welcomed Roy Tarbox as a Licenced Lay Minister to St Bartholomew's in July and are grateful for the contribution he and Jenny have made to our ministry. We are also very grateful for the faithful contribution of Rev'd Mary Carney, Rev'd Canon John Hughes, David Adams and Johan Schoeman for the contribution to the leading of our Sunday morning worship.

Our PCC takes time to pause and reflect at the beginning of each meeting, learning to watch and wait as we develop our ministries and our skills of working together. Our away morning provided the opportunity for a larger group to explore what has been going well in our church and where further investment is needed. We concluded our time together with each small group identifying the three areas they would like to see developed over the next 3 to 5 years. A strategic working group has since been formed to draw together these inputs with the objective of presenting a strategy and vision for the church to the congregation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their continued service to the ministry of the church over this last year. Thanking especially those who have served on the PCC and for those who are stepping down for a well-earned break.

I wish to especially recognise the contribution of our Church Wardens, Martin Dines and Gill Long, for their acts of service to both church and community. As Gill's tenure comes to an end, it was particularly fitting that her contribution over many years was recognised by her admission to the Fellowship of St Birinus in October.

I would also like to specifically mention Sarah Varnom's contribution to creating a culture of safeguarding excellence within our church.

Training and study

During 2023 I completed the following training and study: New Incumbency training over 4 days; Lent lectures and Clergy Lent Retreat Day; Advent Retreat; Updated Leadership Safeguarding Training and attended Safeguarding lecture at Christchurch Cathedral; Diocese Dyslexia Forum; Rural Lecture; Preaching Workshop; Ministry Development Review; and Living in Love and Faith Study Day. I completed a course in 'Day Crafting' in my own time.

Children and Youth ministry

The relationship with Ducklington Primary School has continued to strengthen throughout the year. Our foundation governors are a key asset to the school and my thanks go to Alison, Angela and Jennifer. The children enjoyed regular Collective Worship assemblies. Thanks to our strong volunteer base, we hosted an 'Easter Experience Day' with the whole school coming into the church. This was such a success that the school have asked us to host the event again in 2024.

'Space Makers' contemplative reflection sessions were held with years 5 and 6. We provided special festival services at Easter, Harvest and Advent together with a leavers' service, end of term services, and a Carol and Nativity service. We have increased our work with the nursery through regular visits to read stories and hosting their Christingle service. Finally, we have had an opportunity to work with the reception class on three occasions, exploring church, baptisms and an Open the Book style presentation of the Christmas story. The growth in the relationship between church and school is wonderful to see.

We held two Messy Church events at Easter and Christmas both of which drew in children and their families from across the community. It was great fun and appreciated by all.

During the Autumn Term, Paula, Angela and I ran weekly confirmation classes for a group of seven young people, five of which were confirmed in October by Bishop Gavin.

Occasional offices

Occasional offices continue to be a real opportunity to engage our community and support families in their journey through life. In 2023 we had:

- 3 Weddings
- 8 Funerals, 4 Cremation Services and 4 Interment of Ashes
- Confirmations of 2 adults and 5 young people

In the coming year we would like to consider how best to develop this ministry.

Pastoral care

Together with our pastoral team I am committed to the importance of pastoral care. I recognise the wonderful hospitality we offer every Sunday through our welcome and refreshments, and also in the way that the whole congregation looks to the wellbeing of those around them, both within church and in the wider community. Moving forward I would like to consider how we can better support those who have been bereaved and those living with and caring for people with dementia.

Trustee

As Rector I continue to be a trustee of both (DHYC) Ducklington and Hardwick with Yelford Charity and (WSDet) Walter Strickland Ducklington Education Trust.

Communication

My Church Wardens and I have been able to contribute to the Monthly Church Diary and the Village Newsletter. My thanks go to Jane for managing and updating the church website and social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.

Discipleship

Alongside individual discipleship, we held a successful Ladies Away Day at Cokethorpe School in July. We have continued to have regular Home Groups along with Lent, Advent and Adult Confirmation study groups. In 2024, I intend to review spiritual development and discipleship with a focus on developing the men's group and offering Personal Discipleship Plans to those who wish to explore their calling, gifts and talents. I have held a ministry review with each of our Licenced Lay Ministers and created a ministerial agreement. Together we have identified ministry areas which are reviewed regularly.

Services and events

Throughout the year we have taken time to develop seasonal orders of services, which have been well received. These are in their final stage of review. We have also introduced additional services at Easter and a number of themed services to engage the wider community such as our Pet Service, Hymns and Pimms and celebrating Education Sunday. Our vision is to be a **'Church Without Walls'** where the church and community come together and find a place of belonging and inclusion, enabling us to be the spiritual heart of our community.

Specific examples of this include:

The Fritillary Service; The Coronation Services and Celebration Village Picnic; The Harvest services including coming together for the apple pressing; Remembrance; All Saints and All Souls Service; our first Christmas Lantern Festival weekend; and Carols around the Christmas Tree with the support of the Parish Council.

We want to continue to be a Church that is known for its welcome, openness, warmth and generosity. These characteristics of our church are wonderfully demonstrated by Warm Welcome Space and our work with those seeking asylum in the local hotel.

Challenges and points for development

Key areas for development in the coming year will be identified through the review of the strategy group following the church away day. These are likely to include:

- Developing our working with children and young people.
- Improving discipleship and personal spiritual development.
- Considering a proposal from the Fabric Committee in response to the Disability Audit and visit from the Disability Advisor.
- Increasing our ministry through church weddings despite the general decline in this ministry across the UK.
- Establishing a working agreement for the governance of the cemetery that is acceptable to the PCC, Parish Council and Diocese.

Finally, it is with deep appreciation that I would like to thank everyone in St Bartholomew's, for the contributions you have made to enhance, develop and enable the ongoing mission and ministry of our church.

**Rev'd Andrea Colbrook,
January, 2024**

Deanery Synod Report:

Several meetings have been held throughout the year. It was good to welcome Maria Skoyles onto the Deanery Synod. It was noted that in 2024/2025 parishes should plan for a 5% increase in their parish share due to inflation. It was also noted that it is a myth that the Central Church funds the Diocese.

There is a time during the meetings when synod representatives talk about the good news which are happening around the parishes. It was mentioned that the warm/welcome space which is held in Ducklington village hall was proving very popular.

There are now about 200 adults and children resident at the Witney Hotel. It was noted that the local churches and individuals were supporting the asylum seekers. Also, nine children have been attending an after school club at Ducklington Primary School.

It was good to welcome the Deanery Synod members to St. Bartholomew's on November, 23rd. The three areas which were highlighted as part of MAP were working with youth, schools, children and families, supporting those who are experiencing poverty and loneliness and working together to care for our environment.

The next Deanery Synod meeting is on March 5th, 2024.

**Angela Williams,
Deanery Synod Representative January, 2024**

CHURCH WARDENS REPORT:

The past year has been very busy for the churchwardens as we have seen our church's presence within the community grow, and our ministry and worship develop and embrace new initiatives. Our congregation continues to grow.

Martin and I have been honoured to be your churchwardens for 2023 and to fulfil our role supporting Andrea in all she does. We give thanks to everyone who has given their time throughout the year to support the work of St. Bartholomew's by helping to maintain the running of our church, church events, community endeavours and the church services. Our church is a warm welcoming place for everyone. The comments in our visitor's book are worth reading and truly endorse this.

The use of Zoom and PowerPoint has opened up our church services for those unable to attend regularly or even just occasionally. The availability of showing slides has enriched our services by giving the opportunity to show multi-media applications. The music and sound system have been developed over the year giving more opportunities to share in the service and has enhanced our outside services such as the Remembrance Service and Carols around the Christmas tree.

We had the pleasure of the hospitality of Cokethorpe School for our Ladies Away Day and our Church Away morning. A strategy group has been established following the Church Away morning to work through the responses and to form a plan for our church's future.

I'm sure all of us have appreciated the wildflower garden growing around the left-hand side of the church and many of us enjoyed a day in late summer cutting it all back in readiness for spring growing.

In June, on the anniversary of our dear friend Roger's death, a memorial bench was installed in the churchyard near the south porch.

We have, once again, enjoyed a visible presence within our community this year with Fritillary Sunday, the King's coronation celebrations, the Flower and Produce show, the Apple Pressing day, Messy church, Pet Service, the Lantern festival and singing carols around the Christmas tree.

Our links with the Primary school have strengthened this year and we have welcomed them into church for many services and visits.

Our PCC members, including our Synod Representatives and governors, have represented the congregation throughout the year, and we thank them for their commitment and for their contribution to the discussions and decision-making.

I will be handing over my churchwarden's role at this year's APCM following eight years' service. It has been an honour to serve and support St. Bartholomew's through two interregnums and to work with three Rectors and four churchwarden colleagues.

**Gill Long,
Church Warden January, 2024**

LLM Report:

Dave, Roy and Johan thank Andrea, our Rector, for the opportunity over the past year to meet on a monthly basis. Our meetings include reflective time on a piece of scripture or issue of Christian importance. We also discuss where necessary, issues arising from the last PCC meeting and matters relating to the practice of ministry over the intervening weeks. A further issue discussed, related to succession of those in the congregation who could over time, step down from their Church roles; this includes the LLM roles.

Andrea actively involves LLM's in arranging the rota of opportunities for preaching, leading and assisting. We are grateful and thankful that our individual gifts as LLM's are recognised by Andrea and our fellows. This together with the support from our retired clergy enables a variety of approaches and perspectives enriching our worship.

Dave's preaching, and the experience he brings to our Rector-LLM meetings is invaluable. Roy's preparation of the Church's Lent and Advent Groups is appreciated and applauded by congregation members. His preaching and leading in Sunday services are roundly appreciated. Apart from assisting and leading services, Johan is actively involved in assisting Gill in operations related

to Warm Welcome, chaplaincy at Witney Community Hospital and being mentored by Andrea in bereavement and funeral ministry.

The ministry team (Rector and LLM's) at St. Bartholomew's are very aware that God has called us as individuals to contribute to the life of the Church, but also in exploring opportunities to widen our remit outside the walls of St. Bartholomew's. As LLM's we look forward to discerning God's call for us in 2024/25

**Johan Schoeman,
LLM January, 2024**

Fabric and Church Building:

The general maintenance of St. Bartholomew's has been ongoing throughout the year with repairs to woodwork, lighting and plumbing being the major items. I would like to extend thanks to the team for all the hard work and care that goes into the upkeep of the building; and particularly to June Allen for the years of service she has given to the committee.

We have several projects which we have been investigating including better disabled access, kitchen upgrade and audio visual enhancements.

2024 is our quinquennial inspection when the condition of the building and its fabric is professionally assessed and recommendations made, so during 2023 we have not committed ourselves to large financial outlay in case any major works are required after the inspection. Hopefully, we will be in the happy situation in 2024 to progress on our project work.

**Martin Dines,
Church Warden January, 2024**

Pastoral Team Care Report:

Our Pastoral team at St. Bartholomew's consists of a group of caring people who help us manage many aspects of our lives. This includes visiting the unwell, elderly or housebound; providing support for those in difficult circumstances or the bereaved; helping with hospital visits and to arrange

transport where appropriate, and sending cards to mark life events such as baptisms, marriage and death. The team is a huge asset to the church and everyone works very hard to help those who are in need.

**Faith Truran,
Pastoral Assistant January, 2024**

House Group Report:

The House Group meets for fellowship and to learn more about our Christian faith together. We have gathered every fortnight, usually in various homes which makes for a more informal atmosphere, but have gathered weekly for Lent and Advent studies. Meeting this way has enabled us to gain deeper friendships and also a deeper understanding of some aspects of our Christian faith.

During the summer months we studied the Eucharist which has proved to be both informative and stimulating. Anyone is welcome to join our group.

If you are interested in enriching your Christian life and getting to know some of our church members on a deeper level then please come along. Do contact me on 07791-877817 or email faith@truranfamily.co.uk

**Faith Truran,
House group coordinator January, 2024**

PCC Safeguarding Report:

The PCC monitors and reports on any safeguarding issues at every PCC meeting. Our safeguarding policy is reviewed and updated annually in May. There have been no safeguarding referrals made within the parish this year.

Names to Remember:

- Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and Verifier: Sarah Varnom
- Deputy PSO (to contact if the PSO is unavailable): Gill Long (Church Warden)
- Pastoral Leader: Faith Truran
- Junior Church: Paula Taylor

Training:

- All PCC members have a current DBS check and have completed the necessary online diocesan training.
- All members of the parish who support our junior church have a current DBS check.
- Junior church helpers have completed the necessary online diocesan training.
- Several additional church officers also attended diocesan training.
- Some members of the Pastoral Team have a current DBS check. If members do not, then they should always carry out a formal pastoral visit with a team member who does have the certificate.
Currently the practice with this team is under review and safeguarding is a key part of that discussion.
- Our music group leader has a current DBS check.
- Our bell tower captain has a current DBS check.
- All clergy, lay readers and church wardens have completed their leadership training. As PSO, I have successfully undertaken this training again as it needs to be renewed every three years.

Representing St. Bartholomew's Church:

- As the PSO, I regularly attend meetings for local PSO's. I am also a member of the Oxford Diocesan PSO Forum.
- We celebrated Safeguarding Sunday in our church in November, 2023, helping the congregation to think about the role we all play in church and the culture we should uphold.
- In November, 2023, the Rector and I attended a special Safeguarding service at Christchurch Cathedral in Oxford. We received excellent and thought-provoking training on "spiritual abuse" and enjoyed the service with other PSO's and clergy. All PSO's were commissioned by the Bishop of Oxford, Stephen Croft, and I was asked to read a lesson. It was a very special occasion, and I am so grateful that our rector supported me.

Information in Church and on our Website:

- A formal statement of adoption of the House of Bishops' "Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy statement".

- Contact details of the Rector, the PSO, Church Wardens and any other local leaders.
- Information about where to get help with child and adult safeguarding issues eg. Local authority contact details; key helplines such as “Child Line”.
- Access to the Parish Safeguarding Handbook.
- The PSO has access to the “thirtyone-eight” website which provides safeguarding training and guidance for parishes.

**Sarah Varnom,
Parish Safeguarding Officer January, 2024**

Children’s Work and School Involvement – Junior Church Report:

In 2023, our aim was “Getting to know Jesus” and we are delighted to report that five of our young adults were confirmed on 22nd October, 2023.

As usual we followed the week’s gospel with our craft activities, such as the making of Wisemen telescope for Epiphany, we revisited the Lenten symbols and their meaning, and we discussed the Resurrection of Lazarus. For Pentecost, we made a “Rap Song” (related to, if you had a Superpower, what would it be?) and we linked it to the Eurovision music events to emphasise how we all speak in different languages; people sang in different tongues – but recognising that Jesus loves us regardless. We designed symbols for the 7 sacraments of the church; Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion, Healing, Marriage, Ordination and Reconciliation. We continue to encourage the children to participate in the services by reading the gospel and joining the singing group.

Our Rap Song:

This is the power of Pentecost
The Holy Spirit gives us power
To tell other people of Jesus
To tell other people about Jesus

The highlight of the year was the Confirmation service for some of our young adults who attended weekly confirmation classes held by Andrea, our Rector

and co-ordinated by Angela. The children contributed, and were fully engaged with the process by asking relevant questions related to each topic as we went long – they were amazing!

And finally, the year ended with the Crib service dramatisation directed by Martin and Jane, where some of the children participated.

I believe this has been a fruitful year for our church, because Jesus gained more disciples. Please continue to pray for the Junior church so that we can grow in our church's service to children.

Paula Taylor,
Junior Church Co-ordinator January, 2024

Ducklington CE VC Primary School Foundation Governor Report:

There are three Foundation Governors on the Governing Body of Ducklington Primary School. This is unchanged since the last report. The school is looking for more governors, not Foundation governors, and anyone interested in becoming a governor should speak to any one of us for further information.

As Foundation Governors we attend Full Governing Body meetings twice each term and we each also sit on one or two committees which meet at least once a term. Governors also have a role of special responsibility and liaise with school staff who have the same areas of responsibility. For us, these areas are including Religious Education, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Art and English, Safeguarding and Appraisal. The three Foundation governors have all visited school on numerous occasions and have supported both the school and church in a range of activities involving school pupils. These included the Easter Experience, end of term and leavers' services, Christmas events and services. These activities are all contributing to the continually growing relationship between church and school, a relationship greatly appreciated by staff in the school.

As expected Ducklington Primary School was inspected by Ofsted last spring. The outcome was “good”. An inspection by Oxford Diocese will follow in due course.

**Alison Spencer-Schoeman,
On behalf of all three Foundation Governors,
Jenny Pratley, Angela Williams, Alison Spencer-Schoeman January, 2024**

VOLUNTEERS:

The work of St. Bartholomew’s continues apace with the help and commitment of the numerous volunteers contributing their time and talents to further the objectives of the church. They are too numerous to mention individually but include those who open and close the church each day, those on the flower and tea/coffee rotas, cleaners, musicians etc. The PCC is extremely grateful to them all and would like to thank them for their hard work which goes to make our church the lively and vibrant community that it is.

Thanks also to Martin Dines and Gill Long as Church Wardens, who support Andrea our Rector and our LLM’s. Martin and Jane Dines and Tricia Hughes for their technical management of our worship services through PowerPoint presentations and PowerPoint and on Zoom.

**Sue Fenn,
PCC Secretary January, 2024**

WARM SPACE:

‘Fun, Friendship and Food’.
Ducklington Warm Welcome Space.

The offer of fun, friendship and food was the initial thoughts of a few of us when we contemplated the call from the Church of England, to respond to the cost-of-living crisis by setting up places where communities could go to keep warm for a few hours during the winter months.

The Warm Space at Ducklington Village Hall was set up remarkably quickly, with the help of many volunteers offering their support, and has been running every Thursday since the beginning of November 2022.

Originally set up to help with the cost-of-living crisis, that may have affected our community, it provides a heated space with a free light lunch, cake and hot drinks. It has since developed into a Warm Welcome Space, the emphasis being on the warmth of the welcome more than just the temperature. With the help of many dedicated volunteers from the church and the village, and with some generous donations it now runs throughout the year.

We have found that most people enjoy coming for the company and the chat, though puzzle building, knitting and card games are also very popular pursuits. We have knitted blankets for the JR baby unit and have had jewellery making and crafting sessions. We have enjoyed a 1st year celebration party and a Christmas party with Bingo and a film afternoon. We now have a popular monthly seated exercise class, arranged by WODC. We have had Age UK and Rotary come to talk to the group.

Our numbers vary each week but on average we have around 18 visitors over the day. Ages also vary each week, and all are welcome and catered for. We aim to be non-judgmental and inclusive to all.

Initially set up by people from the church, we were keen for Warm Welcome to be a community endeavour and not faith led. We are so pleased to have many volunteers from the village.

Our volunteers have all been through the safer recruitment process and understand our health and safety policy. We aim to have 5-6 volunteers on every Thursday. They make the refreshments, serve lunch and, most importantly, are a friendly face and love to chat. We are also blessed with donations of wonderful cakes.

Our funding has come from some generous donations from the church, Rotary, local charities, the Village Hall committee and some anonymous donors. We are so thankful to them all.

The success of Warm Welcome Space in Ducklington is truly down to all our wonderful volunteers, the generous financial donations and the friendly people who come along each Thursday.

**Gill Long,
Warm Welcome Co-ordinator January, 2024**

THE SINGING GROUP:

Our Singing Group has continued to meet fortnightly. We have enjoyed learning new songs and introducing a selection of music to the congregation. Taize Chants were sung regularly during Lent. The Carol Service was a joyous service when the handbells and soloists added to the traditional carols. We would welcome anyone to come and join us on Wednesday mornings for an hour. Thank you to Pauline, Harriet and Ruth for being on the keyboard rota with me.

Amanda Bennett,
Music Co-ordinator January, 2024

TOWER BELLS:

The Tower Bells have had another good year, ringing regularly for Sunday Worship, as well as for weddings. There have also been a number of visiting bands who have rung Quarter Peals and have enjoyed ringing our bells.

The bells and ropes are in good condition, with no major outstanding issues reported at the latest inspection, carried out by Whites of Appleton. Three bells tend to ring up “backwards”, and the 2 and 4 are slightly “odd struck”, but the visiting bands have not remarked on them as a problem.

Our band of ringers have rung reliably as needed, and we are making progress (slowly) towards ringing our own Quarter Peal of Bob Doublers. During the year we have welcomed back one ringer in their early stages of method ringing, and have another learner lined up for the next few months. We can currently have up to eleven ringers on practice nights with a wide range of skill levels which is a good healthy number for a six bell tower.

We held our AGM in November and officers were appointed as follows:-

Tower Captain/Ringing Master – Richard Ford
Deputy Ringing Master – Meg Roberts
Secretary – Hazel Howarth
Treasurer – Madeleine Bond
Steeple Keeper – Marysia Hermaszewska

Assistant Steeple Keeper – Jenny Pratley
Health and Safety Officer – Meg Roberts

We are looking forward to continuing with our duties and working to develop our skills and repertoire in the coming year.

Richard Ford, Tower Captain January, 2024

HANDBELLS:

Ducklington Handbell Ringers continue to practice once a week in the church and although our numbers are only six, we can call on a couple of ringers who have helped us out in the past. We hope to be ringing for years to come. Over the past year we have enjoyed ringing for Fritillary Sunday, Harvest Supper and for the Christmas Carol Service, as well as the “arrival” entertainment for the Brize Singers concert during our Lantern Festival at Christmas which seems to have been enjoyed by audiences and the congregation.

Sally Craig, who has been leading us for the last few years is moving out of the area at the beginning of 2024, and we wish her and her husband Ian all the very best when they move to their new home.

We would like to encourage others to join us, especially as we have four larger bells that haven't been rung for a long time. There is no need to be able to read music as we ring from numbers; you just need to be able to count in time up to four! We currently meet, in church, on Tuesdays from 5.30 to 6.30pm but would happily rearrange this time to suit new recruits if necessary.

Sue Fenn, January, 2024

CREATIONS GROUP:

Over the duration of this last year we engaged with parish wide activities and projects within the group. We started the year by running a jewellery session at Warm Welcome Space. The asylum seekers that joined us to make jewellery from recycled milk bottles thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We were then advised by an asylum seeking family who were attending church at the time that there were a number of expectant mothers in need at the hotel so

we started knitting for them. Other knitters at church very kindly added contributions. They were all very much appreciated, along with baby cardigans, hats and mitts. We then made and decorated crosses as part of the Easter experience resource.

In March, as a joint project with the new Dorcas Dress Project sewing hub at the hotel we started making knitted, sewn and crocheted flowers as a means of welcoming our new asylum seeker friends into village community life. Everyone was invited to help display the flowers in church, this turned into a bit of an unexpected party! The flowers were then re-potted and gifted to different residents in the hotel to brighten up their rooms.

We spent the summer making small stuffed hearts which are to be used as a demonstration of God's love and care for each family at the hotel, attached to each heart is a card sharing how to find out about activities being run that residents can access.

We paused our meetings during Advent so we could engage with the Light reflections, at which point we helped make squares for the Light themed community quilt to be raffled off as part of the lottery funded Making a Welcome Difference initiative. We've had a busy WhatsApp group where we've shared our own personal projects, chatted and when appropriate prayed for each other.

**Maria Skoyles,
January, 2024**

CHRYALLIS GROUP:

The group was suspended last year and therefore didn't meeting during 2023. A meeting will be held in 2024 to see if it can be resurrected.

**Dave Adams,
LLM January, 2024**

Friends of St .Bartholomew's:

I took over the editorship of the Friends magazine in the Spring of 2023. The first couple of editions contained articles mostly written by me, and the challenge for the next year is to widen the group of contributors. With this in mind I have one and possibly two offers for the upcoming issue and look forward to more. In particular, I shall try to sign up those who may not be frequent attenders at church and encourage people to write articles of interest to the village as a whole.

I shall also encourage new members to join for £12.00 per year to support the Fabric Fund. We have a wonderful church and we owe it to future generations to maintain it in good order.

David Cole, January, 2024

Electoral Roll:

At the last revision of the Church Electoral Roll for the APCM on 14th May, 2023 the number of people on it was 105. Since then 2 have come off (deceased) and 3 have come off as they have requested or left the parish. 6 have been added.

This gives a total of 106 currently on the Church Electoral Roll.

Changes due to the 2024 revision have not yet been recorded.

**Tricia Hughes,
Electoral Roll Officer, January, 2024**

Website and Social Media:

Website – www.ducklingtonchurch.org.uk

It's been another busy year with the website, which is updated regularly, often daily. The aim is to convey specific helpful information not just about St. Bartholomew's but the diocese and community as a whole. It is also to help celebrate events that have taken place with a dedicated picture gallery page. There are specific pages for events and services due to take place showing timings and location information; forms that can be downloaded if

needed, safeguarding information and what to do if help is needed for baptism, weddings or funerals. Sermons are available to listen to, and contact details for members of the PCC and others who are responsible for specific roles.

A weekly email is also sent out, building on that already provided by Mary Thorne. You can sign up to receive that on the website.

Facebook – facebook.com – search St. Bartholomew’s Church, Ducklington

Our “audience” on Facebook continues to grow and we now have 244 followers. The aim, like the website, is to convey helpful information but also to engage more of the local community to show them the type of activity going on within St. Bartholomew’s. In addition, it’s an opportunity to keep in touch with those who no longer live in the area but who still wish to retain contact with us.

Instagram – <https://www.instagram.com/ducklingtonchurch/>

Our Instagram account was set up in 2023 and has proved to be very successful in engaging with the local community, like Facebook, but tends to be a younger demographic. There aren’t so many followers yet but it’s building!

Both the Facebook and Instagram channels are a great help in promoting the special seasons of Easter and Christmas, encouraging others to join us.

You Tube –

<https://www.youtube.com/@st.bartholomewsducklington6714/videos>

This channel is not currently being updated but it has several videos, mainly from the Covid era when our services were recorded and uploaded. It’s a good reminder of how things have changed over the last couple of years – for which we can only be grateful.

**Jane Dines,
Website Manager, January, 2024**

Financial Report:

It has been another busy year with a continuing return to more “normal” fundraising events that have been so well supported. My thanks to all those who have helped raise those funds to ensure that we can maintain, not only the building, but also a welcoming church with many and varied services. I must acknowledge that to provide this costs money, so, to reiterate, thank you to all who have contributed in so many ways be it regular standing orders, the Parish Giving Scheme, one-off donations, legacies or enjoying a lunch at Fritillary Sunday or cakes at the Village Flower Show.

I wanted to take this opportunity to also explain the different Funds we have building up and what they are for:-

General Fund – used to pay the general costs of the church including the Parish Share, insurances, electricity costs, service costs such as wafers, wine, booklets, small equipment and smaller, general, maintenance items.

Restricted Funds –

- **Fabric** – funds that have been specified for this fund are to be used only for the fabric of the building such as the roof, bell tower, major new works or repairs. Within this fund are also the funds raised/donated by the Friends of Ducklington Church.
- **Warm Space** – an initiative, using the Village Hall, to provide a warm, safe space with food and company for members of the whole community.
- **South Door Project** – a project set up, following a specific donation, to alter the south door for disabled access. Specialist advice is being sought via the Diocese.
- **Asylum Seekers Project** – set up in Spring 2023 to support staff and volunteers in local schools who run local workshops, after school clubs and other initiatives to support asylum seekers. To also run our own projects helping with teaching and craft resources. Specific donations were received both from the local authority and individuals.
- **Lottery Welcome Project** – a one year project to assist asylum seekers, to learn English and crafts, funded by a grant from the National Lottery for £7,980 received in September 2023. After 12 months any remaining monies over £1,000 must be returned unless approval is granted for an extension.

Income and Expenditure

Total receipts on unrestricted (General) funds were £68,660, an increase of **5.42%** on the previous year. Fundraising income appears lower than 2022 but that is because the receipts from Frittillary Sunday were allocated to the Fabric Fund as used to be the case.

The planned giving to unrestricted funds through banker's orders and the Parish Giving Scheme increased by **34%**. Plate and non-recurring giving/donations also increased with more donors starting to use the Sum-Up terminals at both doors so that people can more easily donate using a debit or credit card. Income from that was just under £895 gross: a healthy increase.

Expenditure on the General Fund increased on 2022 by just over **5%**. Again, higher church running costs; especially electricity costs which increased by **95%** (albeit the billing system was very behind) but the contract will be re-negotiated in 2024. Our Parish Share *fell* by just under **1%** but will increase in 2024 and we must factor in the likelihood that this will increase substantially over the next few years. I am pleased to report that the Deanery Parish Share was met, with St. Bartholomew's contributing £33,974.

Total receipts on restricted funds were £20,822 an increase from 2022 of **152%**; these funds mainly comprise the restricted Fabric Fund but also the Warm Space Project, South Door, Asylum Seekers and Lottery Welcome Projects. We have continued to receive very generous donations for Warm Space of just over £3,500 from the congregation, the Ducklington Village Christmas Fayre, grants from the Ducklington with Hardwick Charity and Rotary Club. This generosity ensured that the WW space was open every Thursday during the year save for the local election day.

We received a legacy donation at the beginning of the year to be used for the South Door project and we hope this will proceed further in 2024.

Restricted Fund expenditure, overall, fell during the year mainly as no major fabric projects were carried out. This will no doubt change in 2024 as some planned projects will hopefully get underway.

We also must factor in potential spending with a quinquennial inspection due in 2024.

The position at year end

Net movement on **unrestricted funds** was an increase of **£14,245 and £16,171 in restricted funds**. During the year, the total fund balances, including cash in hand, increased from £45,714 to **£76,130** of which £39,712 is unrestricted.

Fiscal Policies

Following inspection of the accounts in 2022 and 2023, an agreed policy for clear and visible fiscal policy has been agreed in conjunction with our independent examiner, Steve Bold.

- The Rector, Treasurer and Wardens individually have the authority to authorise expenditure of up to £500.
- Expenditure in excess of £500 should be authorised by two signatories.
- Expenditure should not be approved where there is a conflict of interest, for example if the claimant and person authorising are related.
- Expenditure should not be approved without a receipt.
- All cash income should be counted by two independent signatories. This includes services within church but also all fundraising events.

My thanks to Steve for his help. It is much appreciated.

Accounts Production

From 2024, the accounts production will move to software-based processes to ensure easier reporting, particularly for restricted funds. It will also link, more effectively, with the reporting requirements of the Diocesan Board of Finance and will therefore save time in the long term.

Reserves Policy

Our Reserves Policy was agreed by PCC and implemented in 2023. It was agreed to move sufficient funds to the General and Fabric Fund accounts invested with CCLA, as they pay a higher rate of interest. The General Fund to cover a minimum of 3 months' mandatory costs (insurances, utilities and Parish Share) and the Fabric Fund to ensure we build up funds to cover any urgent work such as a roof repair.

The year ahead

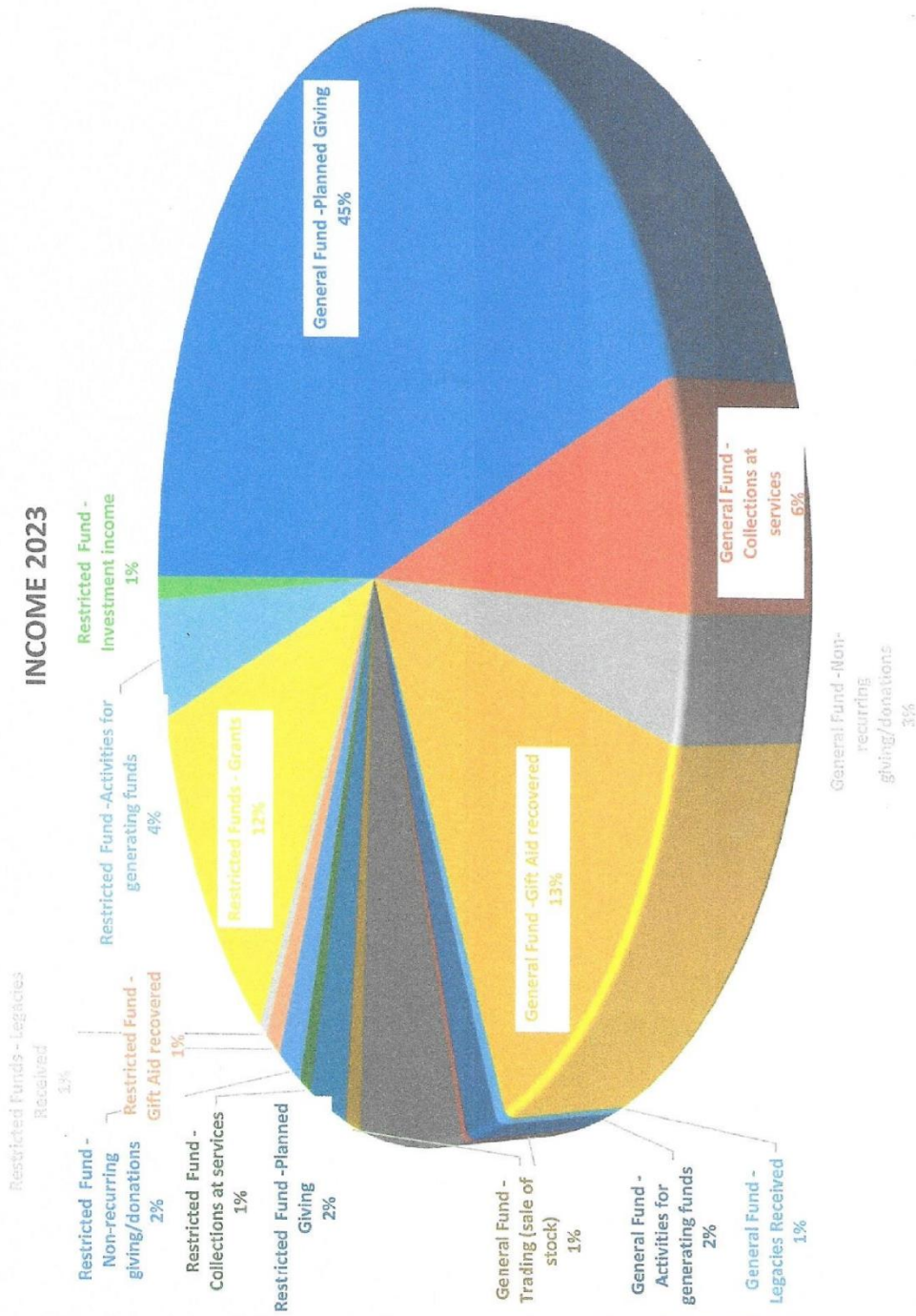
I'd like to take this opportunity to "plug" the Parish Giving Scheme. This scheme really helps churches' cash flow as all giving is paid over in one transaction each month together with the Gift Aid, rather than having to wait annually for this. You can choose any amount that you would like to give but also inflation link or change the amount at any time. If you would like more information on this, leaflets are on the tables in church or do please talk to me about it.

And finally.....

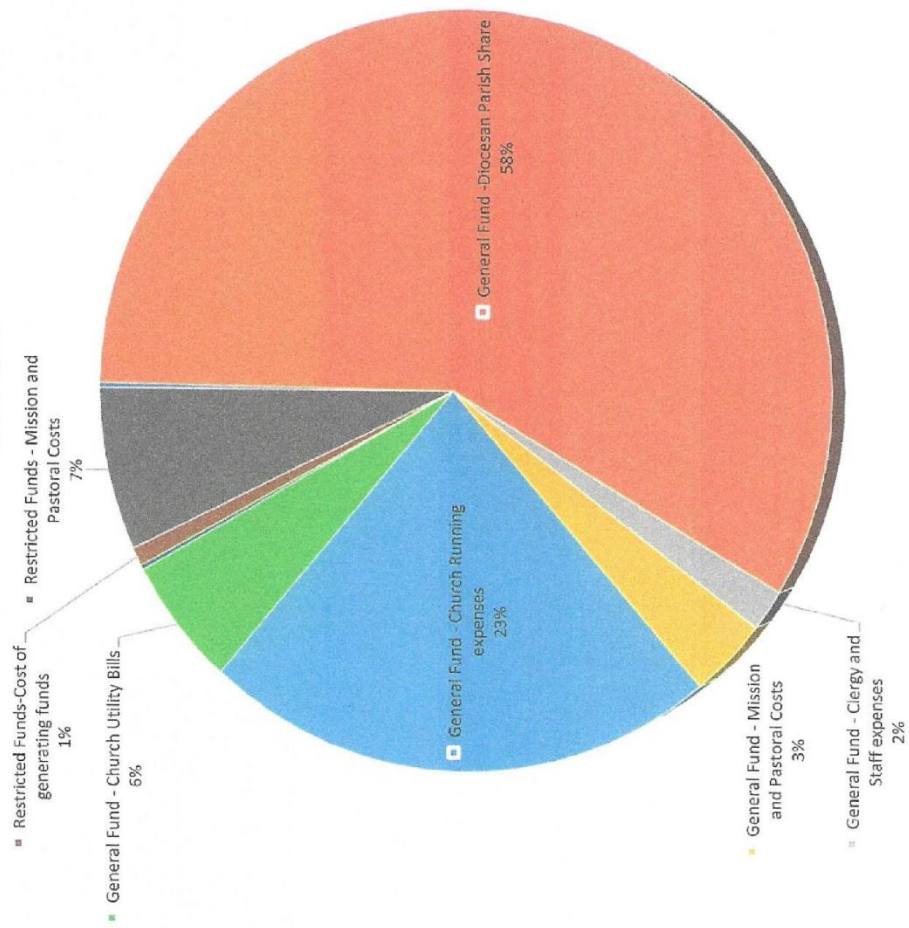
Thank you so much to all those who help me in my role by counting the money after each service and event. I do appreciate your help!

**Jane Dines,
Treasurer, January, 2024**

INCOME 2023



Costs 2023



Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31st December 2023


	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Fund £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £	
INCOME						
Voluntary receipts from donors:						
Planned Giving	40,957		2,155	42,512	37,825	<i>Standing orders, PGS, Friends' subs</i>
Collections at services	5,065		675	5,739	4,990	<i>Plate and donations from the congregation</i>
Non-recurring giving/donations	2,815		1,406	4,221	6,083	<i>Bucket collections, wall safe, one-off gifts</i>
Gift Aid recovered	11,794		920	12,714	8,593	<i>PGS, Standing orders, Friends' and GASDS</i>
Legacies Received	500		500	1,000		
Grants (recurring and one-off)			10,850	10,850		
	60,531	-	16,505	77,036	51,992	
Items generating funds:						
Fundraising (gross)	1,545		3,615	5,160	5,071	<i>Fundraising + sponsored events</i>
Investment income	269		702	971	152	<i>Bank interest</i>
Receipts from weddings and funerals	5,506			5,506	14,072	<i>Weddings, funerals, inscriptions etc</i>
Trading (sale of stock)	808			808	694	
	8,129	-	4,316	12,445	21,390	
TOTAL INCOME:	68,660	-	20,822	89,482	73,381	<i>NOTE: "Agency" income not showing</i>
PAYMENTS						
Costs of generating funds:						
Fundraising costs	637		475	1,112	6,438	<i>Fundraising costs</i>
	637	-	475	1,112	6,438	
Church activities:						
Mission giving and donations	118			118	814	<i>Bucket collections and one-off donations to charities</i>
Diocesan Parish Share	33,974			33,974	34,234	<i>Parish Share</i>
Clergy & Staff Expenses	1,020			1,020	1,112	<i>Rector's expenses and staff honoraria</i>
	35,111	-	-	35,111	36,160	
Church expenses:						
Pastoral costs	1,985		4,163	6,148		
Church running expenses	13,292		13	13,305	11,169	<i>Admin, insurance, safeguarding, building repairs etc</i>
Church Utility Bills	3,274			3,274	1,679	
Costs of trading (stock)	116			116		
	18,666	-	4,176	22,842	12,848	
Major Capital Expenditure:						
Major repairs to the building					5,132	
New building work					2,129	
	-	-	-	-	7,261	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE:	54,415	-	4,651	59,066	62,706	<i>NOTE: "Agency" expenditure not showing</i>
Excess of Receipts over Payments	14,245		16,171	30,416	10,676	
Cash and bank accounts 1st Jan 2023	25,467		20,247	45,714	35,038	
Cash and bank accounts 31st Dec 2023	39,712		36,418	76,130	45,714	
<i>Movement Check</i>	14,245	-	16,171	30,416	10,676	
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES						
Current Assets						
Cash Funds	128		-	128	3	
Bank current accounts	24,353		20,487	44,839	31,903	
CBF deposit fund	15,232		15,441	30,673	19,311	
Handbells account			490	490	498	
Total Assets	39,712	-	36,418	76,130	45,714	
Current Liabilities						
Agency Collections	429			429		<i>Monies due to be paid to ODBF etc</i>
Total Liabilities	429	-	-	429	-	
Net Asset surplus/(deficit)	39,283	-	36,418	75,701	45,714	
Represented by Funds						
General Fund	39,283			39,283		
Fabric Fund			22,181	22,181		
South Door Fund			4,589	4,589		
Warm Welcome Space			1,139	1,139		
Asylum Seekers' Fund			828	828		
Making a Difference Fund			7,681	7,681		
	39,283	-	36,418	75,701		

Jane Dines

Jane Dines, Treasurer
treasurer@huddingtonchurch.org.uk

Approved by the PCC on 18th January 2024

They were independently examined by Dr Stephen Bold in January 2024
 "I have completed my examination and can confirm no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination."


 Signed Date
 Dr Stephen Bold 20/01/24
 M.B.E., FREng.