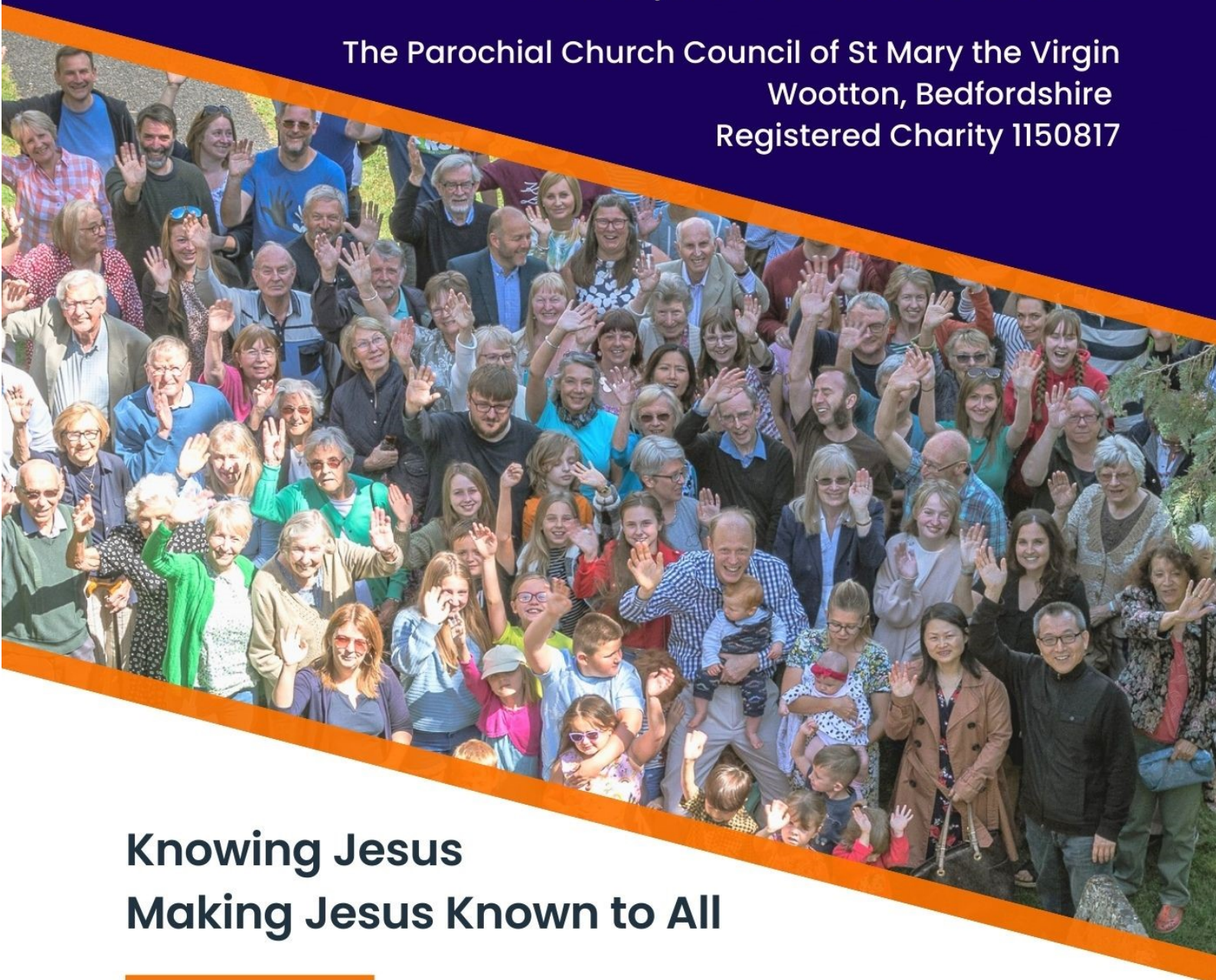


stmary's
wootton

Annual Report & Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 Dec 2023

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary the Virgin
Wootton, Bedfordshire
Registered Charity 1150817



**Knowing Jesus
Making Jesus Known to All**



www.stmaryswootton.org.uk



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The Vicarage, Church Rd, Wootton, Bedford, MK43 9HF

Towards 2024 *(adopted March 2020)*

St Mary's 2020-2024:



Our vision is unchanged: to be a church family of disciples of Jesus Christ, rooted in the Bible and prayer, committed to making disciples, to holiness of life and to every-member service; a family of loving welcome, passionate proclamation, glad service, global heart and sacrificial change.*

Our five year goal is simple: to double in size

Our priority is clear: to develop our life as a church towards this goal.

Our strategy is threefold:

- to develop our facilities for growth
- to establish PCC-led teams to support ministries for growth
- to launch at least one new congregation
all in dependence on the Lord in prayer

Values Statement (what matters to us)

We believe that we are reconciled to God the Father through faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, and therefore we value:

The Bible as the written word of God and our supreme authority in following Jesus in the whole of life.

Prayer as the prime expression of faith in Jesus and of our dependence on God's loving grace and sovereign power in all things.

Church as a family of wholehearted worshippers and disciples of Jesus Christ committed to mutual encouragement, care, and accountability.

Evangelism as the proclamation of the good news of God's salvation in Christ for all people

Service as a family of God's people caring for people in Wootton and Stewartby and beyond with the love of Christ.

Identity Statement



We are...

Christ's church: the church is the bride and body of Jesus Christ; it is through him alone, revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, that we know God; it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we worship and serve Christ; and it is Christ's future return which is our hope and motivation for life.

A local church: a full and authentic expression of the universal church, called into being and sustained by God's word. We have a specific responsibility to proclaim and demonstrate the love of God in Christ among the people of the parish of Wootton. We are also called to involvement with the world-wide mission of the whole church.

An Anglican church: while we welcome Christians of all backgrounds, our permanent and most visible connection is with the Church of England. We accept and uphold its founding documents (The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal) as authentic expressions of orthodox Christian belief. We are committed to supporting and encouraging biblical faith and practice in the Anglican Communion, both within and beyond the diocese of St Albans.

An evangelical church: we recognise the convictions of historic evangelicalism as crystallising and expressing the kernel of orthodox Christianity, including: the supreme authority of Scripture; the universal nature of human sin; the grace of God, seen above all in the substitutionary atoning death of Jesus Christ; and the gift of justification and new life in Christ, received and enjoyed only through repentance and faith. We value the examples, among others, of the sixteenth-century reformers, the eighteenth-century evangelists, and the nineteenth-century social reformers. We are committed to gospel partnership with evangelical mission agencies, as well as with our patron, the Martyrs' Memorial and Church of England Trust, and the Church Pastoral Aid Society.

* Vision Statement (what we aim to become)



One body of wholehearted worshipping disciples, ever more deeply rooted in the Bible & prayer, growing together in holiness and every-member ministry to become a family of:

- **loving welcome**, caring for one another with the love of Jesus Christ nurturing, teaching and training one another for lives of holiness and love
- **passionate proclamation**, committed to reaching the people of Wootton, Stewartby and beyond, with the vital good news of Jesus Christ for a lost world
- **glad service**, dedicated to being salt and light for Jesus Christ in the world
- **global heart**, BOTH prayerfully and practically engaged in the worldwide mission of the church, AND training and sending men and women into gospel ministry within and beyond the parish
- **sacrificial change**, giving generously of ourselves, our money, and our talents to realise this vision



Aims and Purposes

St Marys Church Wootton exists to glorify Almighty God through the proclamation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to all people, and through the pastoral care of all who call on his name. This is our mission, which we summarise as 'Knowing Jesus and making Jesus known to all', and which is our privilege and joy.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, Canon Peter Ackroyd, in promoting this mission - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical - in the ecclesiastical parish of Wootton, which comprises the two civil parishes of Wootton and Stewartby.

Objectives and Activities

The primary objective of the Parochial Church Council is the promotion of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrine of the Church of England. To this end the PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship in the parish church, to providing opportunities for adults and young people to hear the gospel and grow in discipleship, to caring pastorally and practically for people in need, and to supporting Christian mission within and beyond the parish, indeed globally. The PCC regularly reviews the effectiveness of the church's ministry in the light of its own Mission Action Plan, and the three themes of the Living God's Love vision of the Diocese of St Albans: Going Deeper into God, Transforming Communities, and Making New Disciples. In planning and overseeing the mission of the church, the incumbent and PCC consider the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

The PCC Vision Statement continues to be:

St Mary's will be one body of wholehearted worshipping disciples, ever more deeply rooted in the Bible and prayer, growing together in holiness and every-member ministry to become a family of:

- **loving welcome**, caring for one another with the love of Jesus Christ
- **passionate proclamation**, committed to reaching the people of Wootton, Stewartby and beyond, with the vital good news of Jesus Christ for a lost world.
- **glad service**, dedicated to being salt and light for Jesus Christ in the world
- **global heart** both prayerfully and practically engaged in the worldwide mission of the church and training and sending men and women into gospel ministry within and beyond the parish
- **sacrificial change** giving generously of ourselves, our money, and our talents to realise this vision.

During 2023 the PCC continued to pursue two strategic priorities: Deeper Discipleship, and Generous Space. Deeper Discipleship relates to the need to foster confidence in the gospel and in gospel-driven life and service. Generous Space recognises that the facilities in the church building are ill-suited in many ways to the achievement of the church's mission and vision: during the year, and following consultation with the congregation, the council clarified the church's future needs and commissioned a feasibility study into how they could be met.

Jim Hignett continued to serve as licensed Reader, including significant ministry at Stewartby United Church. The council considers that with current levels of financial giving, the continued employment of a part-time youth and children's worker should take precedence over offering to train a curate. The staff team consisted of the vicar (Peter Ackroyd), part-time administrator (Diane Murray), and part-time youth and children's worker (Emma Hearn). The council also employs the staff of St Marys Preschool.

To facilitate the ministry of the church the PCC makes a priority of maintaining the fabric of both the church building and the church hall, which is on a separate site. Maintenance of the churchyards, which are closed, is the responsibility of Wootton Parish Council.

Achievements and performance

Worship and Prayer

Public worship was offered at 10am in the church building every Sunday morning, and at the monthly Sunday evening prayer meeting (which occasionally met online). Towards the end of the year, Sunday morning congregations averaged around seventy-five adults and fifteen children under sixteen.

The Sunday morning service continued to be livestreamed on the church's YouTube channel; a dial-up phone service for the weekly sermon was discontinued when it ceased to be used.

Ministry at St Mary's is founded on expository preaching of the Bible. Sermons preached during the year included series covering Mark cc9-10 (Jesus the Servant?), the passion in Matthew, 1 Samuel cc15-20 (The Coming King), the first letter of Peter, John cc 1 & 6, and Romans cc1-5. During the course of the year we welcomed as visiting preachers former associate minister Revd Shaun Atkins, retired missionary and theological educator Revd Ray Porter, and Marcus Honeysett, director of Living Leadership. Other visitors during the year included mission partners Bishop Alf & Hilary Cooper (CMS, Chile).

The Lord's Supper was celebrated monthly, and a monthly Sunday evening Prayer Gathering continued to meet in church. One child was baptised during the year, and one service of thanksgiving took place. Four weddings were celebrated in church and the vicar or Reader officiated at eleven funeral services for present or former parish residents at St Marys, Stewartby United Church, or Bedford Crematorium.

Services at Christmas were particularly well-attended, with a welcome return of a choir at the popular Carols by Candlelight service.

The parish council Act of Remembrance on Sunday 12 November at the War Memorial in Church Road, was led by the vicar and preceded by an all-age service in church.

School events in church included regular Preschool services, and a Wootton Lower School Christmas assembly.

Families, children and young people

This year we have run 2 groups on a Sunday for children between the ages of 2 and 12 using Mustard Seeds and Faith in Kids material. We have 2 leaders in each group, all who are up to date with the Diocese Safeguarding requirements. The number in the team has increased and we hope to shortly return to having 3 age groups which will enable more age targeted teaching. Some new families have joined this year and we have contact with around 40 children who attend regularly on a Sunday.

We returned to Chellington for a residential trip alongside St Peter and Paul's church in Cranfield. We had 24 children and 7 leaders. This year we weren't able to have an external speaker so the talks were split amongst leaders and we based it around Heroes Academy material from Faith in Kids. We had lots of activities including a trip to a local country park and we hired some inflatables and giant games which were a great success.

We held a Holiday Club with approximately 100 children and a team of 50 volunteers. We adapted material produced by the Good Book Company based on the book, The Garden, Curtain and the Cross and we were called Eden Explorers. The material focussed on a bible overview from creation to the cross and resurrection. This year instead of having a family BBQ in the evening on the Friday we invited families to join us for Family Fun Time and bring a picnic to enjoy after they had picked their children up. This worked well and was well attended, we had activities for the children and relationships were built with families.

Some activities during 2023 include:

- Weekly Sunday Children's groups
- Weekly JAM sessions
- Open the Book assemblies at Wootton Lower School
- Equip Training Day attended by 3 YCM leaders
- Chellington residential trip
- Holiday Club
- J@M trip to Sorted (5 young people & 2 YCM leaders)
- Christingle Service
- Wootton Lower School Visit to Church & Zoom Assembly
- Nativity service with congregational involvement
- Family Carol Service



Discipleship, Pastoral Care and Training

The church council recognises that Christians grow in their discipleship as they engage with one another and with the Bible's teaching in a number of settings. The council accordingly aims to develop a range of 'pathways' accessible as widely as possible to support, teach and encourage this lifelong process of 'spiritual formation'.

In June around sixty church members attended a church away-day held in Harrold. The aim was to strengthen relationships with one another and study and consider, in greater depth than afforded by Sunday services, what it means to belong to a local church family. We were helped by a visiting speaker Jon Putt, of Grace Community Church, Kempston, while a group for young people was led by Sam Toseland from All Saints Riseley.

Midweek growth groups afforded members the opportunity to reflect further on Sunday sermons and apply lessons to daily discipleship. Five Growth Groups met during the year, weekly in the evening or daytime, to study the Bible, pray, and support one another. Leaders met termly to receive training and support, and to pray together. A group for some Lunch Club members met fortnightly. In the autumn, most groups used The Romans Course, new Bible Society video-based material to gain an overview of one of the most comprehensive New Testament letters.

The monthly Men's Breakfast continued to meet, and attracted up to fifteen men for mutual support and encouragement.

A number of church members attended the Bible by the Beach conference in Eastbourne during the first weekend in May.

In order to equip church members to support one another a Pastoral Care Course began to meet monthly in the autumn, led by Diane Murray using online material from Crosslands. The Pastoral Coordination Team formed during the COVID pandemic disbanded during the year, and the church council has authorised the formation of a new Pastoral Care Team to visit church members unable to attend church in person and support the pastoral care of church members.

Social events were held during the year enabling church members and their guests to build relationships and mutual support. In 2023 these included a church Sunday lunch in March, and a lunch in the vicarage garden in September which also enabled church members to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of Norma Smith, retired Reader and widow of former vicar Tony Smith (1965-75). In November a bonfire party was held for church families, and the year also included a number of social events for men and women kindly hosted by church families.

A bookstall was maintained in church. At Lent and Advent, church members and families were able to purchase and study daily devotional readings.

The PCC encourages church members, especially those with leadership responsibility, to attend relevant training events, in line with its Training Policy. During the year, staff and ministry leaders attended conferences run by Growing Young Disciples, Living Leadership, Tyndale House, Proclamation Trust and Biblical Counselling UK, as well as the Christian Resources Exhibition. Church members attended day events mainly in support of youth and children's ministry.

Mission and outreach

St Mary's mission is summarised on its publicity, website and noticeboards as 'Knowing Jesus; making Jesus known to all'. PCC continued to pursue this mission through a range of activities. At some of their meetings church council members used CPAS PCC Tonight material to consider how to develop a more effective faith-sharing culture.

In the autumn an alternative outreach and worship event, 'WILD Church' was trialled. Developed and led by Emma Hearn, this offered all ages - particularly families with young children - activities related to a theme (October: Creation; Christmas: the first coming of Christ) in an outdoor environment, based on 'forest school activities' (at the church hall or churchyard), culminating in a short act of worship. Arising initially from the desire to sustain connection with families attending the summer holiday club, these events began to attract a significant number of local families not otherwise attending church services regularly.

Enquiry courses for people exploring the Christian faith were offered throughout the year, using the Hope Explored and Christianity Explored courses.

The Lunch Club for the over 50's met monthly, preceded by a short 'thought for the day' and prayer led by team members.

Mission & Mission Partnerships

The PCC tithes its income from regular giving to support Christian mission beyond the parish, in line with its Global Mission Policy.

In 2023 the following mission agencies or partners received support from mission funds:

- Faith in Kids – resources and training for church youth and children's work
- IMPACT – Christian workers supporting local schools.
- Jude and YP Gayet - in church planting and youth ministry in Belgium.
- Bishop Alf and Hilary Cooper - supporting church planting and evangelical unity with CMS in Chile.
- Speak Life – UK evangelistic ministry (Director: Glen Scrivener)
- The Church Pastoral Aid Society
- Tearfund

PCC supported two former church members serving as volunteer Christian workers: Tom Ackroyd 2022-23 Relay Worker with UCCF, working with student Christian Unions in Newcastle and Sunderland; and Martin Teh 2023-24 ministry intern at ChristChurch Mayfair, London.

Throughout the year church members supported the work of Bedford Foodbank through a collection point in the church, and contributed to periodic 'red bucket' appeals for the relief of countries hit by natural disasters. Church members participated in the annual Operation Christmas Child (Samaritan's Purse) appeal, and at Christmas supported the SMART Prebend Centre CRIB appeal for the homeless in Bedford.

Church buildings

One of the responsibilities of the PCC is to maintain the church building, the church hall and grounds and a house which is currently rented to a member of the congregation.

2023 has seen the Generous Space Project move on and a Historical Significance survey has been carried out and initial plans have been drawn up by the architect. We are now in the process of putting together a Statement of Need and Significance. The repairs to the North Porch roof have been put on hold subject to the recommendations of the Generous Space Project.

Progress was made on issues identified in the Quinquennial Report. A Premises and Facilities Committee now oversees maintenance work at the church and the church hall. During 2023, the gutterings and fascia at the church hall were replaced and refurbished and the drainage issue was assessed. The patio area regularly floods, so work is needed to solve that issue as the Preschool are planning to erect a canopy over that area so that children can access the outside area all year round. This will be funded by the Preschool.

An electrical Fixed Wire test has been carried out at both the church and the hall.

Ecumenical Relationships

The PCC aims to strengthen Christian witness and service in the community through membership of Wootton and Stewartby Churches, though during 2023 there was no joint activity.

The vicar attended regular prayer meetings for leaders of Bedford Churches in sympathy with the doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Alliance, of which St Mary's is a corporate member.

In 2022 the church council supported the formation of the Four Counties Gospel Partnership; in 2023 this held a launch event and began to offer training days for churches in Beds, Bucks, Herts and Northants.

St Mary's Preschool

The PCC (as Registered Person) operates the St Marys Preschool which serves local families five days a week during term time from the Church Hall. The Preschool is led by the Manager, Tracey Kerins. The Preschool roll in the autumn term totalled thirty-five children. During 2023 there were eight members of staff. Staff are regularly appraised, supported to complete all required training, and encouraged to undertake professional development and progress as Preschool practitioners.

Oversight of the Preschool is undertaken on behalf of a PCC by management group comprising the Preschool Manager and the deputy manager, and three members of PCC: Peter Ackroyd (Nominated Individual), Pauline Kendall and Nina Rodrigues. The management group reviews all Preschool policies annually. Members visit the Preschool during its operating hours to observe practice and support the staff, and complete relevant Educare training modules as recommended by Bedford Borough Council.

The vicar visits weekly to lead a bible story, prayer and song. At Christmas and Easter a Preschool Service is held in church for children staff and parents.

Holywell Church of England School, Cranfield

The PCC nominates a number of governors at Holywell School. Continuing Wootton PCC Foundation Governors were: Pauline Kendall (Chair of Governors), Martin Sanders, Fiona Frossell and Isabel Turner.

The Vicar regularly met with the Head, Mike Simpson, and in partnership with Cranfield Parish Church provided support for Key Stage assemblies.

Deanery Synod

St Marys was represented on Bedford Deanery Synod by its licensed clergy and three representatives of the laity. During the year the Synod met four times. The vicar and Pauline Kendall are among the Deanery's representatives on Diocesan Synod. Regular reports of the proceedings of Deanery Synod were made to PCC.

Structure, governance and management

The PCC met nine times in the year. Some of the work of the PCC is carried out through the following sub-committees: Standing, Finance, Youth Council, Preschool Management, Premises and Facilities Team, and the Generous Space Team. The Standing Committee met between PCC meetings, and is made up of the vicar, wardens, treasurer and secretary. The role of the Standing Committee is to prioritise items for the PCC meeting, discuss and make decisions on items of a confidential nature or look in more detail on matters that have been brought to the PCC. The Youth Council met four times.

Issues discussed during the year included: Prayers of Love and Faith and their consequences for St Marys and the wider Church of England; Review of our Mission Action Plan; arrangements for administering the Lords Supper; evangelism using material from CPAS PCC Tonight; Christmas ministry & outreach; ministry with children and young people; Eden Explorers summer holiday club; mission partnerships; Deeper Discipleship, including the 2023 Away Day and plans for another in 2024; Pastoral Visiting Team; the Four Counties Gospel Partnership; appointment of PCC officers & working groups following the APCM; church finances and property maintenance; 2024 PCC & Preschool budgets; Policies including Safeguarding and Health and Safety; Joining the Leadership Commitment Scheme; the Generous Space project; Eco Church.

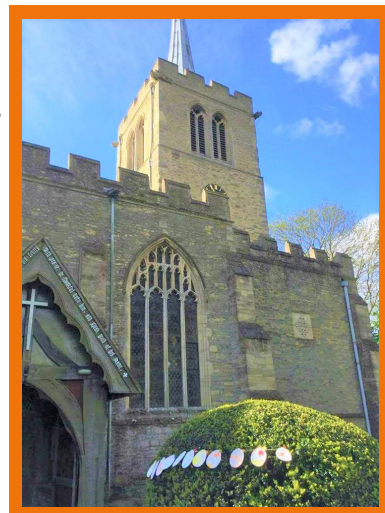
The safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults was a standing item on the agenda of every meeting.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is Kate Wilson. She was supported by Emma Hearn, Pauline Kendall (who is a Member of PCC) and Martin Sanders as deputy safeguarding officers. Training on safeguarding arranged by the Diocese has been attended by members of the PCC, as well as by leaders of young people's groups and others as required under the church's safeguarding policy and by the Church of England.

The PCC employs a part-time administrator, part-time Youth and Families Worker, the staff of the Preschool, and a church hall cleaner. Jim Hignett serves as a licensed Reader and attends regular diocesan events.

The PCC and staff work in partnership with teams of volunteer helpers, appointed by the PCC and the vicar.

The PCC and Administrator comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regarding the privacy of church member's information.



Electoral Roll

A revision of the Electoral Roll took place in April 2023. Following the revision the roll numbered 135. At the end of the year, the total was 133.

Partnership with Stewartby United Church

Ministry at Stewartby United Church, a local ecumenical project, is provided under the terms of a Sharing Agreement in which the Church of England and the Methodist Church are the remaining active partners. Licensed ministers and congregation members from St Mary's continued to support Stewartby, leading the monthly Sunday morning service, speaking at the monthly T@3 service, serving on the church council and participating in other events. From January 2023 the monthly Sunday service was held on the afternoon of the first Sunday of the month, with T@3 continuing on the third Sunday.

Financial Review

Total receipts of unrestricted and designated giving and income amounted to £137,187 whilst restricted giving totalled £14,681, giving our church a total income of £151,868, which included £20,203 from Gift Aid eligible donations. As a result, our total income declined by £7,881 versus the previous year, although this decline was largely due to a one-off donation of £12,000 received into the Youth & Children's Ministry at the start of the previous year and was in line with our budgeted expectation.

Our total expenditure for the year was £159,946, this included our Parish Share contribution of £76,562 which was met in full. Our overall expenditure rose by £12,917 on the previous year, however this is largely due to one off costs in Major Works totalling £9,477 related to repairs to the fabric of the Vestry and a Heritage significance report commissioned by the PCC in support of the Generous Space project. Other costs related to Assistant Staff, Church Maintenance and Church Hall also rose on the previous year to account for the remaining increase.

Overall, the level of giving, excluding that given for specific projects, remained broadly flat on the year, however given the cost-of-living impact upon the congregation at this time this is encouraging.

For 2023 our church set a budget of £148,449 for income and expenditure and by the end of the year we were left with a deficit of £8,078, however excluding the one-off and unbudgeted Major Works costs this then improved to a modest budget surplus of £1,399 for the year. It is worth noting that interest payments for Q4 of 2023, weren't included within the accounts this year, as we have in previous years, due to delays related to account changes within CCLA, these interest payments will now be included within the 2024 accounts.

Our overall unrestricted funds, the funds we're able to utilise in our day-to-day operation and mission activities, fell on the year from £20,216 to £18,773, a reduction of £1,443 mainly due to our expenditure of unrestricted funds exceeding income. Whilst this is not an immediate cause of concern, it is noted that following on from reductions in 2021 and again in 2022 our continued ability to meet our obligations in full in coming years remains at risk.

Reserves Policy

Throughout the year we maintained our reserve fund at £10,000, this allows us to meet our obligation in terms of staff salaries and church running costs for a period of two months. Our cash reserves, excluding endowments, remain strong with a total of £259,918 on deposit at the end of the year, with £241,145 of this being funds restricted to specific expenditure. During the year we continued to operate two current accounts with our Metro Bank account as the main account while we maintain the NatWest Bank account to ensure no account has funds exceeding £85,000, the limit set under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. In terms of a deposit account, we continue to invest in the CBF Church of England Funds through CCLA.

Safeguarding

St Mary's is committed to safeguarding all whom God has placed in its care. The PCC has complied with its duty to have 'due regard' to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance.

Ultimately, the PCC has overall responsibility to ensure all safeguarding requirements are fulfilled. The safeguarding and related policies are reviewed annually by the PCC as is the effectiveness of the church's safeguarding practice. Safeguarding is a standing item on all PCC agendas and the Parish Safeguarding Officer reports any matters arising. The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, a framework that aims to support Parishes to have due regard to the House of Bishops' safeguarding policy, is being used with good effect and this is regularly reviewed by the PCC and Safeguarding Team.

The PCC have appointed a Safeguarding Team, Kate Wilson (Parish Safeguarding Officer and Lead recruiter), Emma Hearn, Pauline Kendall and Martin Sanders to ensure a good safeguarding culture is maintained at St Marys. The lead recruiter for the parish ensures all volunteers are safely recruited to their roles and they complete the relevant safeguarding training for their role. All volunteers, including PCC members and group leaders have attended the relevant training for their role. A central record of DBS checks and training is held by the lead recruiter. Contact details for the safeguarding team are prominently placed around church and details of how to contact the team can be found on the parish website (St Marys safeguarding team). Within our fortnightly bulletin, there is also a statement which highlights St Mary's commitment to safeguarding and provides web links to the safeguarding policies and the safeguarding team.

St Marys observes the third Sunday of November as Safeguarding Sunday and opportunities are taken throughout the year to mention safeguarding and issues of abuse during other services. Safeguarding matters and good practice are regularly highlighted at all church activities and meetings.

St. Mary the Virgin Parochial Church Council Independent Examiner's Report of accounts for January to December 2023

**Independent Examiner's report to the Parochial Church Council
of St Mary the Virgin, Wootton, Bedford**
Charity Commission no. 1150817

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended **31 December 2023**, which are set out on pages 1 to 4 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ('the Regulations') and **s.145 of the Charities Act 2011** ('the Act').

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and **s.144(2)** of the Act does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under **s.145(5)(b)** of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- i. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - ☐ to keep accounting records in accordance with section **130** of the Act; and
 - ☐ to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or
- ii. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed Lynden Richardson Independent Examiner – L. Richardson

Date 18/03/2024

Signed on behalf of PCC [Signature] Incumbent – P.M. Ackroyd

Date 18/3/2024

Balance Sheet to 31st December 2023

	As at 31/12/2023	As at 31/12/2022
Endowment assets		
1509: Wootton Armstrong Fund	1,672.79	1,527.80
1510: Wootton Church Cottages	26,900.31	24,568.62
Total Fixed assets	28,573.10	26,096.42
Current assets		
1501: NatWest Current	82,076.04	82,356.69
1503: CBF Capital Fund	119,432.68	116,417.29
1504: CBF Studley Road	1.79	1.73
1508: Cash Book	—	—
1511: Metro Current	58,731.01	69,759.14
Total Current assets	260,241.52	268,534.85
Liabilities		
1650: Loans for Stonework	—	—
6699: Agency collections	322.90	538.17
Total Liabilities	322.90	538.17
Net Asset surplus (deficit)	288,491.72	294,093.10
Reserves		
Excess / (deficit) to date	(8,078.06)	12,690.70
Z01: Starting balances	294,093.10	284,866.77
Z02: Other gains/(losses)	2,476.68	(3,464.37)
Total Reserves	288,491.72	294,093.10

Represented by Funds		
Unrestricted	18,773.61	20,215.95
Restricted	241,145.01	247,780.73
Endowment	28,573.10	26,096.42
Total	288,491.72	294,093.10

Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Incoming resources					
Donations, Legacies and similar incoming resources	115,220.50	4,160.00	—	119,380.50	129,036.18
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects	21,967.15	—	—	21,967.15	22,319.58
Activities for generating funds	—	—	—	—	—
Investment income	—	4,493.98	—	4,493.98	2,294.60
Other incoming resources	—	6,027.00	—	6,027.00	6,100.00
Total income	137,187.65	14,680.98	—	151,868.63	159,750.36
Resources used					
Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects	8,200.00	—	—	8,200.00	8,550.93
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects	120,284.50	21,447.42	—	141,731.92	129,165.27
Support costs	7,207.54	0.22	—	7,207.76	6,696.24
Expenditure on managing-administering the charity	2,807.01	—	—	2,807.01	2,647.22
Total expenditure	138,499.05	21,447.64	—	159,946.69	147,059.66
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	2,476.68	2,476.68	(3,464.37)
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(1,311.40)	(6,766.66)	2,476.68	(5,601.38)	9,226.33
Transfers					
Gross transfers between funds - in	2,605.34	1,118.94	—	3,724.28	2,739.49
Gross transfers between funds - out	(2,736.28)	(988.00)	—	(3,724.28)	(2,739.49)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	(1,442.34)	(6,635.72)	2,476.68	(5,601.38)	9,226.33
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	20,215.95	247,780.73	26,096.42	294,093.10	284,866.77
Total funds carried forward	18,773.61	241,145.01	28,573.10	288,491.72	294,093.10

Analysis of income and expenditure
01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

Incoming resources	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	
					This year	Last year
Donations, Legacies and similar incoming resources						
101 - Gift Aided	72,089.00	—	—	—	72,089.00	69,428.00
102 - Tax recovered	19,903.01	—	300.00	—	20,203.01	21,291.06
103 - Other giving	8,335.00	—	—	—	8,335.00	10,003.44
104 - Loose Collections	5,622.54	—	—	—	5,622.54	2,265.16
105 - Gift days- Sundry giving	5,071.76	—	—	—	5,071.76	6,943.26
201 - Given for specific projects	636.53	3,562.66	3,860.00	—	8,059.19	19,105.26
Donations, Legacies and similar incoming resources Totals	111,657.84	3,562.66	4,160.00	—	119,380.50	129,036.18
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects						
302 - Rent for church buildings	18,587.95	—	—	—	18,587.95	18,546.01
401 - Monies for books	325.20	—	—	—	325.20	790.57
404 - PCC fees Weddings/ Funerals	3,054.00	—	—	—	3,054.00	2,983.00
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects Totals	21,967.15	—	—	—	21,967.15	22,319.58
Investment income						
301 - Interest	—	—	4,493.98	—	4,493.98	2,294.60
Investment income Totals	—	—	4,493.98	—	4,493.98	2,294.60
Other incoming resources						
106 - Wootton Charities	—	—	2,000.00	—	2,000.00	2,000.00
405 - Assigned fees	—	—	4,027.00	—	4,027.00	4,100.00
Other incoming resources Totals	—	—	6,027.00	—	6,027.00	6,100.00
Incoming resources Grand totals	133,624.99	3,562.66	14,680.98	—	151,868.63	159,750.36

Resources used


Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects						
1001 - Overseas Mission	4,200.00	150.00	—	—	4,350.00	4,470.00
1003 - Home Mission	2,750.00	1,100.00	—	—	3,850.00	4,080.93
Grants payable in furtherance of charity's objects Totals	6,950.00	1,250.00	—	—	8,200.00	8,550.93
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects						
2001 - Diocesan Quota	76,562.00	—	—	—	76,562.00	65,863.00
2002 - Working Expenses of Incumbent	3,254.34	—	—	—	3,254.34	3,353.88
2004 - Assistant Staff	19,722.19	127.52	6,623.74	—	26,473.45	24,397.87
2005 - Church Running expense	5,995.37	—	—	—	5,995.37	6,791.79
2006 - Church Maintenance	1,006.83	—	27.99	—	1,034.82	2,040.96
2007 - Upkeep of Services	2,632.75	—	—	—	2,632.75	1,920.22
2008 - Upkeep of Churchyard	—	—	—	—	—	141.05
2009 - Costs relating to books	425.41	—	—	—	425.41	732.59

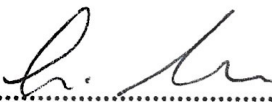
	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	
					This year	Last year
2010 - Church hall	9,993.04	—	2,000.00	—	11,993.04	8,749.94
2012 - Major Works	—	—	9,477.69	—	9,477.69	—
2016 - Honoraria, Assigned fees	—	—	3,318.00	—	3,318.00	3,654.00
6000 - Studley Road	565.05	—	—	—	565.05	440.41
6001 - Curate Housing	—	—	—	—	—	11,079.56
Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects Totals	120,156.98	127.52	21,447.42	—	141,731.92	129,165.27
Support costs						
2017 - Support Costs	2,675.44	4,532.10	0.22	—	7,207.76	6,696.24
Support costs Totals	2,675.44	4,532.10	0.22	—	7,207.76	6,696.24
Expenditure on managing-administering the charity						
4000 - Administration	2,807.01	—	—	—	2,807.01	2,647.22
Expenditure on managing-administering the charity Totals	2,807.01	—	—	—	2,807.01	2,647.22
Resources used Grand totals	132,589.43	5,909.62	21,447.64	—	159,946.69	147,059.66

St. Mary's Pre-School
January to December 2023

EXPENDITURE January - December 2023	
Salaries January - December 2023	97796.69
Pension	4149.05
Employers National Insurance/TAX	9825.85
Church Hall Rent	6887.95
PLA Membership Fee + Ofsted	115.91
Equipment and supplies	5911.61
Milkbar	1090.48
Photo developing	431.88
Staff Training	312.00
Petty Cash	0.00
DBS	70.00
Trip	1526.51
Refund	94.50
Cash in Hand - 31 December 2023	14.05
Balance in Bank - 31 December 2023	29879.81
TOTAL	158106.29
INCOME January - December 2023	
Cash in Hand - 1 January 2023	14.05
Balance at Bank - 1 January 2023	16689.61
Received from Fees	21806.50
Received from Early Years Funding LEA + SEN	118852.15
Donations	13.98
Trip	730.00
TOTAL	158106.29

Manager/Treasurer:  Date: 8/10/2024
TRACEY KERINS

Deputy Manager:  Date: 8/10/2024
LINA ROSATO

Auditor:  Date: 30.01.2024
LESLEY REES



Administrative Information

St Mary's church is situated in Wootton village, Bedfordshire.
It is part of the Diocese of St Albans within the Church of England.
The correspondence address is :
The Vicarage, Church Road, Wootton, Bedford MK43 9HF.

The Registered charity number 1150817

office@stmaryswootton.org.uk

PCC members who served during the year were:
Revd Peter Ackroyd (chair), Allyson Cable (churchwarden), Tim Dillistone (churchwarden; Deanery Synod), David Baylis (Treasurer), Hazel Sanders (PCC secretary) Jim Hignett (Reader; Deanery Synod), Pauline Kendall (Diocesan Synod), Matt Hearn (Deanery Synod), Kate Wilson, Abi Holyoak, Charles Ashbrook, Ant Hall, Matt Hearn, Nicola Johnson, Jon Joy, Nina Rodrigues, Claire Brice.

Independent Examiner: Lynden Richardson