

The Parish of Harpenden, St John

MEETING PAPERS

FOR THE

MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS

AND THE

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

To be held in the Church Hall

On Sunday 11th May 2025

After the 9.30 a.m. service

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

To be held in the Church Hall on Sunday 11 May 2025 following the 9.30 a.m. service

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners held on 12 May 2024
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Election of Churchwardens



ST JOHN'S CHURCH HARPENDEN

Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners

Held on Sunday 12 May 2024

in the church hall

Present: 39: Revd Tim Vickers (Chair). Revd Ritah Namakula (Curate), Heather Nye (Churchwarden), Mary Jean Pritchard (Secretary), Jane Donati, Andrew Ballard, Stuart Burnett, Alison Bygrave, Susan Kerr. Christine Kenyon, Mary Hoare, Alastair Meldrum, Lauryn Awbrey, Derek Curran, Elizabeth Curran, Julia Smith, Carol Cooke, DI Borthwick, Helen Davies, Marjorie Mansfield, Liz Neville, Nick Luckett, Dawn Mason, Gudrun Ledwith, Michael Hughes, Anne Edwards, Sophie Crowley, Elizabeth Gordon-Brown, Warren Greaves, Jim McGown, Bryan Coventry, Elizabeth Coventry, James Hillman, Henrietta Hillman, Liz Macdonald, John Jones, David Nye, Martin Myers, Michael Readman, Tony Woods

1. Apologies for absence

Brenda Cottle, Jenny Cope, Sue Walker, Matt Barter, Liz Sergeant.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Adoption of the minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners held on Sunday 26 March 2023 was proposed by Warren Greaves, seconded by Christine Kenyon and carried unanimously.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Election of churchwardens

No nominations had been received so no churchwardens were elected.

The meeting closed at 11.10am

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

To be held in the Church Hall on Sunday 11 May 2025 following the Meeting of Parishioners

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the APCM held on 12 May 2024
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Annual reports
 - Safeguarding report
 - Electoral roll report
 - Deanery Synod report
 - Report of activities
 - Trustees' report
- 5 Update on our vision values and Mission Action Plan
- 6 Finance update
- 7 Appointment of independent examiner
- 8 Election of lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council
- 9 Vicar's reflection
- 10 Any other business

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday 12 May 2024 in the church hall.

Present: There were 39 members present, the same as for the Meeting of Parishioners.

1. Apologies for absence

Same as for the Meeting of Parishioners.

2. Minutes of the last APCM

Adoption of the minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 26 March 2023 was proposed by Heather Nye, seconded by Anne Edwards and carried unanimously.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Trustees' report

The Trustees' report had been uploaded to the website and available to read in advance of the meeting.

In the absence of a Treasurer, David Nye spoke to the financial statements. On page 10 the accounts showed that expenditure from general funds was more than income; much of the expenditure had been to repair the hall roof, an essential expense for which we had received some money from the Harpenden Trust. The PCC sets aside reserves to meet unexpected expenditure and our policy is to hold reserves equivalent to two months of general running costs; David pointed out that at 31 December this had fallen to 1.1 months and therefore we need to be aware of the need to build up those reserves.

David also explained how the designated funds were set up, referring specifically to the legacy fund, which should be used for expenditure on specific issues and not for day-to-day costs – ie, to pay the bills. He reported that Betty Mitchinson had left the church £20,000. The funds were designated by the PCC and therefore the PCC could change its policy and redesignate the funds.

In answer to a question from Michael Readman, David explained that the Linwood Road property was valued at historic cost rather than current market value.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by John Jones, seconded by Bryan Coventry and passed unanimously.

Heather explained that since Jon Pitman had stepped back from the treasurer role because of work and family commitments, a number of people had stepped up to fill the gap and she paid particular thanks to David for all he had done.

5. Appointment of independent examiner

Miller & Co would be asked to be our independent examiner for the coming year. This was proposed by David, seconded by Alison and passed unanimously.

6. Safeguarding report

The safeguarding report had been uploaded to the website and available to read in advance of the meeting.

Thanks were recorded to Jane Donati, who had carried out the role of safeguarding officer for nine years, and to Liz Macdonald who had stepped up to take on the role.

7. Electoral roll report

The electoral roll report had been uploaded to the website and available to read in advance of the meeting. The new roll has 175 entries, a net reduction of 7 since last year.

Neil Middleton was thanked for all his work as electoral roll officer and also for everything he does to maintain the website, send out the newsletter, etc.

Approval of the report was proposed by Martin Myers, seconded by Di Borthwick and passed unanimously.

8. Deanery Synod report

David Nye, one of our Deanery Synod representatives, had prepared a report that had been uploaded to the website and available to read in advance of the meeting. There were no questions on this.

9. Churchwarden's report

The churchwarden's report had been uploaded to the website and available to read in advance of the meeting. There were no questions on this.

10. Project Phoenix update

Carol Cooke, a member of the Project Phoenix Steering Committee, gave an update on the project. She started by emphasising that this would not be a fundraising plea, but an update of where things were with the project. She said that the steering group was a committed and hardworking group, which had a plan to bring the project to fruition. However, this couldn't happen without the support of the congregation. A number of ambassadors had been appointed, who would be going to speak to everyone about the project and how they could help. She thanked everyone for their support to date and concluded by saying she was confident there would be a new building in five years' time.

11. Election of representatives to the Parochial Church Council and Deanery Synod

Four members of PCC had come to the end of their term of office: Heather Nye, Martin Myers, Bryan Coventry and Nick Luckett. There will be a proposal at PCC to co-opt Nick Luckett for one further year as he is currently a member of Standing Committee and with no churchwardens for the coming year it would be beneficial to keep him on. The other members were thanked for their contributions.

Nominations to serve had been received from:

Stuart Burnett	Proposed by: Mary Jean Pritchard Seconded by: Heather Nye
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Mary Hoare	Proposed by: Mary Jean Pritchard Seconded by: Heather Nye
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Christine Kenyon	Proposed by Mary Jean Pritchard Seconded by Keeley Bates
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In addition, Mary Jean Pritchard, currently co-opted to the PCC, had been proposed by Heather Nye and seconded by Helen Davies.

These nominations were presented en bloc, proposed by Heather Nye, seconded by Susan Kerr and passed unanimously.

John Jones asked if there were further vacancies on PCC and Mary Jean replied that the number of places available related to the number on the electoral roll, which meant we could have 12 members of laity and currently have 8, so further nominations would be welcome.

Mary Jean also pointed out that under church rules the annual meeting decides whether one or more of the Readers licensed to the parish, whose names are on the electoral roll, should be members of the PCC. David Nye and Lauryn Awbrey are currently ex-officio members by virtue of their membership of the Deanery Synod, but as Anne Edwards was no longer on Deanery Synod she would need to be approved as a member of PCC. This was proposed by Tim, seconded by James Hillman and passed unanimously.

Alison Bygrave was happy to be elected as a Deanery Synod representative. She was proposed by Heather Nye, seconded by Stuart Burnett and passed unanimously.

12. Vicar's report

Tim began by acknowledging those who had left the church during 2023: Roger Carter and Anna Chambers and those who had arrived: Ritah Namakula and Amanda Knights. First and foremost, our purpose is to worship God and make him known in the community, so Tim is particularly grateful to those who share in the ministry of the church, the wonderful team of reader: to Lauryn, who brings her American energy to everything, her preaching, leading of Faith and Light and saying the things that everyone else is thinking! David's sure and steady hand, informative preaching and pastoral care is invaluable; Anne's sensitive and listening presence has provided Tim with a great deal of spiritual support.

Tim paid tribute to our team of servers, thanking Michael, who had been Head Server for nearly 25 years.

Heather had been a sole warden for the year, and Tim was particularly grateful for the support she had given him personally and for the calm and professional way she had carried out her duties; she had served the parish with great care. Tim presented Heather with gifts, and this was greeted with applause. Heather had been supported by Martin, who contributed so much, often unseen, by Jane, who had supported the team on Sunday mornings in addition to her parish safeguarding role, and by Bryan who also supported on Sundays and whose listening ear made him a valuable member of the team. We need to recruit more people to help out on Sunday mornings as duty wardens.

Tim also thanked Mary Jean for her work as PCC secretary, particularly in relation to the APCM. He acknowledged Jon Pitman's contribution as treasurer, Alison for work as parish giving officer, and David for holding everything on finances together. He thanked all members of the PCC – those stepping down, continuing to serve and newly appointed.

He mentioned Matt Barter, Liz Sergeant and the team working on the new parish centre; this is not an easy climate for a capital project, and we all have to get behind it if we are to be able to replace the parish hall.

Volunteers who contribute their time in many different ways are greatly appreciated, He highlighted a few people who deserve particular recognition: Christine Kenyon for her work with Little Acorns and the toddler service and Elizabeth Curran, who has led the Flower Guild for many years.

We are a flourishing church, growing and changing as we figure out what God wants us to be. Tim offered a reflection on the start of Chapter 12 in the Book of Hebrews:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

There have been struggles in the past year, but we have been putting down roots, persevering with the challenges and surrounded by the saints, who show us the way.

13. Review of 2023

A slideshow of statistics and photographs, which had been put together by Martin, was shared at the meeting and will be posted on the website.

14. Any other business

John Jones asked whether it would be possible for the Remembrance Sunday service to start earlier, to allow those who wished to attend the parade in town to get there. Tim pointed out that it had been earlier last year, but he would look at this again.

John also asked whether we could purchase more of the small hymn books. This could be actioned.

Lauryn then thanked Tim for all he does and for his report and said we look forward to flourishing together.

The meeting finished at 11.50pm.

Annual Reports

Safeguarding Report

Our parish is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and to supporting those who have been victims of abuse, as well as those who may present a risk to others. The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). The PCC has adopted all of the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies and Practice Guidance, as well as "Promoting a Safer Church" (child protection and vulnerable adults policy) and the Domestic Abuse Statement at their meeting on 13 June 2024. The latter two documents are displayed on the noticeboard in the church porch. All policies and procedures and risk assessments are contained in folders on the library shelves in church.

We have a Parish Safeguarding Officer in place. Those who work with children and vulnerable adults in the Parish are recruited in accordance with the Practice Guidance Safer Recruitment July 2021. DBS checks are renewed every 3 years and all those who have been safely recruited have undertaken the relevant training in the last 3 years. The ministry team all have relevant training and nearly all of the PCC have undertaken the appropriate training within the last 3 years.

Contact details for those wishing to obtain advice, raise any concerns or make referrals to the statutory authorities are contained in the Promoting a Safer Church posters in the Church Porch and entrance to the Church Hall. Safeguarding information is displayed in the Church Porch and on the church website.

There have been a number of safeguarding concerns reported during 2024/25. These matters have been dealt with according to the relevant safeguarding policies and guidance by the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the Vicar and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Liz Macdonald

Parish Safeguarding Officer

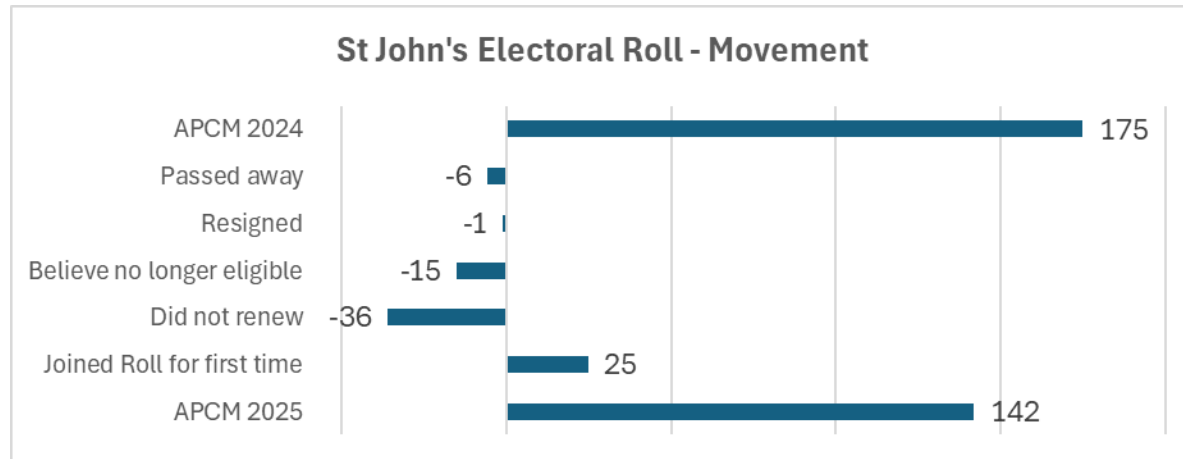
May 2025

Electoral Roll Report

Report for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of 11th May 2025

For 2025, Church of England Rules required us to undertake a full refresh of the Electoral Roll; so existing members of the Roll are removed unless they apply again.

Our new Roll has 142 entries. This is a reduction of 33 from 2024. Movement is as follows:



The split between “Did not renew” and “Believe no longer eligible” is a judgement; the combined total is reliably derived.

In considering the reduction it is important to recognise that the total of “Did not renew” and “Believe no longer eligible” represents, to a noticeable degree, a cumulative impact over 6 years. For instance, someone who lives in the Parish, registered during the last big renewal in 2019, and stopped coming to St John’s in 2021 remains on the Roll (unless they resign). Where we are aware, non-attenders outside the Parish are removed.

The revised Roll (names, an in/out of Parish indicator and new or not only) will be displayed in Church from today.

Of the 142 entries:

- 96 are residents in the (ecclesiastical) Parish and 46 outside the Parish – a ratio of 2.1 to 1.0
- 94 are female and 48 are male – a ratio of 2.0 to 1.0

A full renewal of the Roll is a significant activity; I would like to thank the Ministry Team and Amanda in the Parish Office for their help.

Neil Middleton
Electoral Roll Officer
22nd April 2025

Applications to join the Electoral Roll can be made at any time, but between now and the APCM cannot be added to it until after the end of the APCM. The easiest way to apply is usually via our Google Form – use the QR code for access; or blank forms are available in the Church Porch and from stjohnsharpenden.org.uk/electoralroll



Deanery Synod Report

In clergy news, 2024 saw news of Bishop Alan's pending retirement. It may take as much as 2 years to find his replacement. Wheathampstead Deanery wishes him all the best for his retirement.

Revd Dennis Stamps, our Rural Dean for a number of years, retired from St Nicholas, Harpenden, and left the Deanery to take up a part-time post nearer to his family in the Shill Valley and Broadshire Benefice in rural west Oxfordshire. We were sorry to see him go, but happy that he will be starting a new venture that will see him spending more time with his wife and family. The deanery welcomed Revd Mark Rodel to He was licensed as an Associate Minister there in September 2024 and officiated at occasional services around the Parish on Sundays. He is Deputy Director of Mission and Ministry within the Diocese.

We were privileged to see Revd Jo Burke from Flamstead made our new Rural Dea, by Archdeacon Charles, at a special ceremony during our July synod. Revd Jo had held the post of Deputy Rural Dean during the previous year.

Revd Ritah Namakula, curate in St John's, Harpenden, was priested in July. Revd Jo welcomed a curate in the summer – Revd Sam Davis.

The vacancy in Kimpton & Ayot St Lawrence was filled in late September, and we welcome Revd Liz Guest to that parish.

There have been 3 Synod meetings in 2024:

In January, we gathered at St Mary's, Redbourn. Our final synod under the leadership of Revd Dennis was an opportunity to share our parish highs and lows – addressing 3 questions:

1. Something that went really well at Christmas or something new you did that went well;
2. Something that is going well in the parish or some new initiative; and
3. Something that is a challenge or struggle at this time in the parish.

In July we met at St Leonard's, Sandridge, and as well as the aforementioned commissioning of Revd Jo, we had a very informative presentation from Polly Eaton, the Diocesan Eco Officer.

October saw us meeting in St Mary's, Kinsbourne Green, and we heard a fascinating talk from the Dispute Advisory Service, given by Jacob Kurien and Corinne McCrum.

Membership of Diocesan Synod saw its 3-yearly revision in 2024.

Sue May (Deanery Secretary)

Report of Activities

Communications

Email newsletters

Our weekly email subscriber count is currently 262 (last year 247), and around 65% of recipients at least open the email each week (this is similar to last year). Mailchimp, our providers, suggests that we are just under twice as successful as our peers, but whether this is fair or not is not clear as we do not have the definition of “peers” beyond them being “non-profit”.

Social media

We currently have accounts on Facebook, Instagram and X. Given the change in direction for X (more news and politics), it is now receiving less attention from us.

WE have 391 followers on our Facebook page (up from 369 last year) and 158 followers on Instagram (up from 146 last year).

We are using social media to reach more people; most crucially, social media is a good way to communicate with younger people and those who do not yet come to church.

If you aren't already following us, you can find us at the following locations:

- Facebook: @stjohnsal5
- Instagram: @stjohnsal5
- Twitter: @stjohnsAL5

Website

The St John's website has continued to be one of our key “shop windows” as St John's seeks to demonstrate how we are Living God's Love.

2024 was a maintenance year for the website.

We are currently without statistics as the website provider has discontinued these and we need to enable Google analytics.

Live streaming

We have continued to routinely live stream our services since first starting this activity in November 2020.

During the last 12 months we've had 4,325 views (up from 3,900 views), and of more relevance, 616 hours of viewing (down from 702 hours of viewing). We have 237 subscribers (March 2023: 238).

Our live stream serves two audiences:

- for our regular services, members of the congregation that cannot make it to church on this particular occasion
- for funerals, those who live away from Harpenden, including the frail.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow live streaming crew for their support in delivering our live streams. if you are interested in joining us, please do get in contact.

Neil Middleton

Dorcas

Dorcas continues to meet to mend and refurbish vestments, hangings and altar frontals. As with all things, finance is at the forefront of planning and we hope to be able to start a new project in the Autumn that will involve some embroidery, allowing us to use our imagination.

We have also been asked to make new curtains for the hall – a lovely idea but requiring thought as the fabric will be costly. Here is where you can help by donating or suggesting ways for us to persuade people to part with their pennies in a fun way. I look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Davies

Eco Church

We are delighted that St John's was awarded the Silver Eco Church award in May 2024, three years after getting the Bronze award. The Eco Church award scheme guides churches to work through practical ways to care for creation. Over 3,000 churches in England and Wales have achieved a Bronze, Silver or Gold award since the scheme started in 2016. The surveys cover five areas of church life: Worship and teaching; Buildings; Land; Community and global engagement; Lifestyle.

Some of the things we do to minimize our use of resources:

- recycle as much as we can and use recycled paper in the office
- we use recycled loo roll and try to use environmentally friendly cleaning products
- we rarely use disposables in our catering, preferring to wash up our crockery
- we encourage walking/cycling to church and lift shares, and provide cycle racks
- we have measured our carbon footprint, and found ways to reduce it
- we hold recycling/reuse events, including a Repair Fair in November 2024
- we carried out an energy survey of the church
- we use energy-efficient light bulb
- we have insulated our lofts and ceilings where possible

Some of the things we do to care for our natural environment:

- we take part in No Mow May, encouraging wildflowers for pollinators
- we have an area of native wildflowers
- we avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides
- we grow plants to benefit bees, birds and butterflies
- we provide bee 'hotels'
- we compost all garden waste
- we regularly hold litter picks
- we regularly pray for environmental issues and have special Sundays related to caring for God's world

We have weekly 'eco tips' in the Pew Sheet, and articles in the Parish Magazine, to encourage the congregation and local community to act in eco-friendly ways. Events such as the litter picks are advertised to the surrounding area. A reminder that there are recycle points for greetings cards, candles and stamps in the church porch.

Future plans

- To install swift nest boxes on the north side of the church, planned for spring 2026.
- We have invited Tim Hill, from the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust to visit and suggest ways of improving our grounds for wildlife.
- An event for Fairtrade fortnight, 22nd Sept – 5th Oct.
- Another Clothes Swap event, with All Saints and St Mary's, probably in 2026.

We are keen to welcome new members – please contact Margaret Charlston, or anyone else in the team: Anne Edwards, Debbie Knight, Ella Connolly, Nic Connolly, Andrew Harbord, Margaret Charlston, Sally Hart. We all miss Liz Neville, who was a loyal and enthusiastic supporter of Eco Church.

Margaret Charlston

Faith and Light

Faith and Light continues to be a much-loved gathering place for a community of adults with learning disabilities and their families and carers. We meet monthly, sharing in some exploration of faith, worship and prayer, and a wonderful tea. For more than 30 years, the churches of Harpenden have faithfully brought tea to us at F&L - including St Nick's, All Saints, St Mary's, Our Lady of Lourdes, the URC, High Street Methodist, Christ Church, Bethany Fellowship, and the Society of Friends. Our wonderful pianist Caroline Swanson comes to us from Our Lady of Lourdes, and the volunteer planning committee comes from four different churches. Faith and Light is one of the most ecumenical parts of life at St John's.

This year we lost one of our most faithful members, Stephen Laney. Stephen had been coming to F&L for decades. He was a much-loved part of the Harpenden High Street, often found sitting on the benches outside of Sainsbury's, ready to chat with anyone. He died suddenly on his 70th birthday, just before Christmas. It was a privilege and a joy to conduct his memorial service at St John's, which was attended by more than 80 people. We sang Stephen's favourite hymns and remembered his unforgettable smile.

Visitors and newcomers are always welcome to come to Faith and Light. If you know of any adult with learning disabilities who might like to join us, please tell them about F&L. But everyone is welcome! We usually meet the first Sunday of each month.

Lauryl Awbrey, Chaplain

Flower Guild

The Flower Guild continues to thrive. We have three new members and now have a man as part of the team. We are always looking for new members, young and old. Experienced or not. All welcome.

We have enjoyed decorating the church throughout the year, especially Easter, where the church visibly springs to life.

Continued thanks to Liz Curran for her help and guidance and to Briony Linsell as secretary.

The Christmas and Easter donations have been distributed to the respective flower arrangers, thank you.

Mary Hoare

Junior Church and Mini Church

Junior Church is a fun and interactive session of movement, arts and crafts, and games for those aged 5 and over. It takes place in the church hall, and starts at 9.25am, a few minutes before the start of the main service. When families arrive at the hall, children are registered and those for Junior Church can attend with or without their grown-up. The session is led by volunteers, including qualified teachers and all volunteers are DBS-checked.

The aim of Junior Church is to explore the basics of life as a Christian, in a fun, child-friendly way, and to fully bring children and young families into the life of St John's. The topic for each week's Junior Church session mostly links with the lectionary, but most importantly provides young people with the knowledge and understanding needed to fully access church services. This year that has included sessions such as learning about what the Bible is and what the Bible is made up of; exploring the 40 days of Lent and creating a 40-piece paper chain, currently displayed in the hall; learning the Lord's Prayer with actions to help remember the words.

Towards the end of 2024, Junior and Mini Church moved to being offered weekly during term-time, with All-Age services on the first of the month taking place in church itself. This frequency of sessions has proved to be popular with a range of families attending, including new families to St John's.

Mini Church continues to be a fantastic way for our youngest church members, along with their parents and carers, to participate in the life of the church.

Our sessions from January to March have covered an exciting range of stories, from Jesus calming the storm and his journey in the desert at the start of Lent, to the story of the fig tree.

Minis and their accompanying adults have also learned the Five Finger Prayer to help us pray regularly for ourselves and others. Each session includes a fun activity tied to the day's story—recent favourites have included magnet fishing, finger painting, and playdough. We have recently started using different coloured cloth on our mini altar to match the various colours we see in church as we journey through the church year. Mini Church is well-attended, with an average of seven children and accompanying adults.

We are expanding our number of adult leaders and hope to encourage more in the future.

Sophie Crowley and Christine Kenyon

Little Acorns

We have had another busy and successful year!

Little Acorns meets on a Tuesday morning from 10.00 - 11.30 in the church hall. Over the past year we have had 46 sessions with an average attendance of:

- Summer 36 children and 35 adults
- Autumn 30 children and 31 adults
- Spring 29 children and 30 adults

plus five play and stay sessions run by Revds Tim and Ritah and Christine over the summer holidays with an average attendance of 24 adults and 25 children. This proved very popular. These numbers were slightly down on last year but made the sessions more manageable.

We have had donations of £3,300 and expenditure of £1,276. Since September 2023 we also have a QR code to make donations through, which has resulted in more donations; £239.50 before fees, £203.57 after.

I would like to thank all the volunteers for their support as without them the group could not run. A special thanks to Steve Whiting for handling the money and Alison Gardiner for producing our tick sheets.

As part of her training, Revd Ritah ran Little Acorns last Summer Term. She found it valuable experience.

Our homemade cakes are our USP plus the delicious coffee. We have a core number of adults who have supported us over the years and return with different children. This has meant our community is becoming closer. The children learn the routines of our sessions so by the time they move on, they are used to sitting for a short story.

We have done a wide variety of activities, including biscuit icing, decorating dinosaurs and at Easter we made cards and had an Easter egg hunt. Revd Tim told the story of the 3 Trees and each child left with an Easter egg.

It has become our custom for the volunteers, Tim, Ritah and Amanda to meet at the Plough and Harrow for lunch after the last meeting of the term. This is a great way to catch up on everyone's activities which are not about Little Acorns.

We now look forward to another year. It is always sad to say goodbye to children who have been with us for some time, but it has been a pleasure to watch them grown and develop. We look forward to welcoming new children in September.

Christine Kenyon

Magazine

The Parish Magazine's focus on 'what's going on this season... and beyond' continues. In Spring 2024, sparked by Revd Tim, contents are now grouped by categories including Features, Church Celebrations, News to Know, Family Life, Community Action and Regulars. The aim is to inform St John's congregation and serve the Southdown community. Among wider Southdown editorial information is the Harpenden Trust's two cafes, Grove School Fair and Southdown Performing Arts Centre. A new Local Treasures interview spotlights magazine advertisers who work and trade in the parish. The public, parishioners and even other churches have expressed appreciation of the magazine.

Susan Kerr continues as Editor, and Martyn Wainwright as designer. One or several members of the Ministry Team check contents before the layout goes to the printer. Sarah McKie, in charge of distribution, maintains regular contact with the printers. Her organisation of the volunteer delivery database enables timely deliveries to 4,000 Southdown homes and businesses. The delivery volunteers are vital to the magazine and St John's, a precious link within the parish. The magazine is posted on St John's website as well.

Parish Administrator Amanda Knights has succeeded in pursuing new advertisers, and her proposal of the Local Treasures spotlight is a thank you to existing advertisers. Her efficient invoicing has helped improve revenue flow. Design and printing are the only financial expenditure in producing the magazine, and although the cost continues to exceed advertising income the conclusion is that the spend provides a valuable representation of St John's Church in Southdown, our presence and service.

Susan Kerr, Editor

Mothers' Union

I am delighted to say we have a membership of 24, and all meetings this year, held in the Committee room, have been well attended. We were very pleased to welcome new members Jenny Cope and Sue Walker.

The programme of speakers organised by Andrew Ballard proved to be stimulating and very enjoyable. We were fortunate to have four clergy among them: Revd Mark Hammond from High Street Methodist, Canon Dennis Stamps from St Nicholas and our own Revd Ritah Namakula and Ven Andrew Ballard. Of course all their talks were vividly informative and thought provoking.

In May we learned a great deal about the impressive work done at Keech Hospice, and in November Carol Cooke took us through a lifetime of words that had inspired her.

Judy James, West Cluster Co-ordinator talked us through the Paper of Options for the future of St Albans Diocesan MU after which votes were counted. In April the Trustee Board will explain in detail the final decision made and what that will mean for the Branch.

Linda Downie joined us at our first meeting in 2025 and described the work she and colleagues do at Bovingdon and other prisons. Treating the men with respect, giving them hope and helping them to see that there is a better way to live once they are released results in fewer re-offenders.

Again this year we met to make posies for the St John's Mothering Sunday service which were greatly appreciated, and we made Christingles for an afternoon service to support The Children's Society.

Working together to bring joy to others creates a bond of friendship and these busy Saturday mornings with lots of conversation and much laughter are very precious. We also continue to send Baptism Anniversary cards for St John's.

In April we hosted the Lady Day service for the other churches in West Cluster. Many thanks to Revd James Brown, who led the service, and to Brenda Cottle, who carried our banner. It was a great success, and six MU banners were paraded at the start and end of the service. Tea and cakes were served afterwards in the hall and our guests really appreciated the effort we had made to dress the tables and make the cakes.

In July Sandra Cresswell generously opened her house and lovely garden so that we could gather for a Summer Tea Party. The weather was perfect and so were the sandwiches and cakes. We were delighted to have David Brown and Jo Klein with us. Once again Gudrun Ledwith organised an impressive raffle.

In August a group of us visited St Albans Abbey and after an enlightening guided tour we enjoyed tea and cake in the refectory.

Our banner was paraded again in September when Julia Smith carried it at the Diocesan Festival Service at St Mary's, Hitchin.

In November several of us attended the Autumn Sharing Day at St Mary's, Kinsbourne Green, another occasion to gather with members from other churches and to catch up with good friends.

In December Revd Ritah Namakula and Ven Andrew Ballard worked together to produce a beautiful service of Christmas Carols and readings. After this Advent service in the Lady Chapel we enjoyed a festive tea and were delighted that Amanda Knights and Revd Tim Vickers were able to join us. Di Borthwick provided one of her entertaining quizzes which proved challenging and good fun.

A group of us gathered at St Mary's, Redbourn for an Epiphany Service in January 2025 and once again we were treated to delicious refreshments by our very hospitable hosts.

This has been my sixth year as Leader and I am so grateful for all the help and support from Alison Gardiner, Gudrun Ledwith, Anne Edwards, Sandra Cresswell, Brenda Cottle, Andrew Ballard and indeed all members of the Branch. We know that change is coming and the way we organise ourselves and our meetings will soon be different, but we continue with confidence and enthusiasm.

Faith, friendship and prayer and a shared commitment to all that Mary Sumner stood for will continue to inspire us, and our work for Mothers' Union will continue. The fellowship and spiritual support which is so evident at all MU meetings is special. We are blessed with a shared faith, and we have been given the opportunity to support St John's and support the work of our charity overseas and at home.

Carol Cooke, Branch Leader

Music

It was a privilege to be appointed Director of Music at St John's in September 2024. I am very grateful for the support of every member of the Church Choir and have enjoyed working with them. The choir has maintained the tradition of leading the music in weekly sung services and on principal festivals, including the Advent Carol Service, the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and Music and Readings for Holy Week, and I am thankful for the extra singers who have provide reinforcement from time to time, including services on Candlemas, Mothering Sunday and Easter Sunday. Grateful thanks are also due to Terry, whose accompanying in several services allows me to conduct the choir, which significantly enhances the musical output. We now publish the choir anthem each week in the Order of Service and Pew Sheet, and the choir has widened its repertoire. We are also aiming to increase the range and variety of music sung in weekly services; a psalm was chanted in each service throughout Lent, and during Easter a more contemporary worship song is being sung in the Gradual.

Our newly formed Junior Choir rehearses for 30 minutes twice a month on Sundays immediately after the morning Eucharist and has joined the Church Choir for the all-age worship on the first Sunday of each month and at other special occasions, including Mothering Sunday and Easter Sunday. There are currently six children in the choir, aged from 7 - 11, and they receive pocket money for attending, as well as free musical education. I am very keen to hear from anyone, of any voice part or age, who would like to join either of our choirs. The benefits of singing are well documented, in terms of physical and mental health, social connection and creativity.

There are a number of instrumentalists amongst the congregation at St John's, and their accompanying of the hymns in the Advent Carol Service really enhanced the occasion. I would love to involve them more frequently in worship in the coming months. We are also keen to engage with the wider community and non-churchgoing public through music; to this end we have begun a series of concerts and recitals, and will be hosting a 'Come and Sing' Evensong in the coming weeks. Details of these occasions can be found through the church's magazine, weekly newsletter and social media pages.

Thank you to everyone for their support for me and for music in the church in the past months, and I look forward to continuing to help music and flourish.

Matt Harrison

Outside Giving

St John's is committed to giving 10% of our income to charity each year. This is managed by a small committee comprised of Nick Lockett, Keith Slinn and Eranda Wickramasinghe.

Each year we ask the congregation for suggested charities. In 2024 18 charities were recommended and a vote was taken, grouping the charities in three categories: local, national and international.

The results of the votes for 2024 (to be paid in 2025) were:

- local – Hector's House 30, **Rennie Grove** 33, Carers in Herts 24
- national – Horatio's Garden 25, Honeypot 22, **Alzheimer's** 40
- international - **Mercy Ships** 35, Médecins sans Frontières 23, Save the Children 29.

In 2023 we agreed that Mind in Mid Herts should receive a 2-year donation, so we will be giving £1500 to them, sharing the remaining amount between Rennie Grove, Alzheimer's and Mercy Ships.

Nick Lockett

St Luke's Cell

St Luke's Cell is a prayer group dedicated to praying for people in any kind of need. It has members both at St John's and High Street Methodist Church. The St Luke's Cell list is of people in the parish or relatives or friends of those living in the parish who are in particular need, and for whom our prayers have been asked. St Luke's Cell Prayer Group are always happy to pray for you (confidentially if needed). The group is named after the disciple and physician Luke, who is the patron saint of doctors. A request can be as simple as a name, if preferred. We don't need to know details in order to pray. Each of us prays for a small number of people on the list, moving to a further group each month. We also meet together on the second Wednesday of each month in St John's Church at 2.30 pm when we pray for all those on the list in a short

service. Would you like us to pray for you? You can get in touch with the parish office, a member of the ministry team or with Michael Hughes (01582 765576) from the group.

Michael Hughes

Servers

St John's has a dedicated team of 14 servers to help at services, with an age range from 8 years old, to some getting onto, let's just say, their later years! The newest server joined the team a few months ago, and some have been serving for 20 years, or more.

Serving is all about assisting the ministerial team at services by ensuring that the altar is properly set and prepared for the service. It also includes supporting the ministry team to ensure that the service runs smoothly. It is a great privilege to be involved in the services at St John's and can be very satisfying; also, believe it or not, it can be great fun!

We are always looking for new members of the team and if you think this might be something for you, please do not hesitate to come and have a chat with me, or any member of the ministry team. Just for the record, you do not need to be baptised or confirmed to become a server, serving is simply part of our commitment to our Christian Faith.

As a newbie Head Server it has been a steep learning curve for me, and I still can't remember all the proper names for everything! A very big THANK YOU to all on the serving team for their commitment and support.

Matt Barter
Head Server

Tea at 3 (T@3)

A merry band of volunteers from St John's have been providing a greatly enjoyed afternoon tea to folk from Southdown for the last 12 or so years. For those of you who may be unaware of this, these started as a tea, held once or twice a year in one of our homes for the members of the congregation who for whatever reason no longer were able to enjoy such things. We offered homemade sandwiches and cakes on bone china tea sets and provided an atmosphere for happy conversation - often nostalgia and much story telling.

After a couple of years it was suggested that people would much enjoy these on a more regular basis and so it was decided in 2015 to hold a tea in the church hall on the last Friday of every

month for anyone, whether a member of St John's or not, and the word soon spread. Inevitably numbers fluctuate, but we now have a steady number of regular visitors and new faces are regularly joining us.

As highlighted in our report last year we are a tight little number of volunteers who undertake the cooking, setting up tables and the total running of these events and all the clearing up! No charge is made but donations are much appreciated, and our guests are always greatly appreciative and very generous. We would be very interested to hear from anyone who may be interested in helping with these teas; if they can also bake, even better but not vital as there are many other tasks to be undertaken.

Briony Linsell

Toddler service

The Toddler service runs during termtime from 10.15 to 11.15 on Thursday mornings and is open to all preschool children from birth. The sessions are led by Christine, Tim and Ritah and we have on average six children per session, predominantly children who attend St John's, but we welcome all children and families.

The service opens with a prayer, and the children light an LED candle on a mini altar, which echoes mini church on Sunday. We listen and participate in a bible story and then enjoy a craft activity. This is differentiated for different age groups, and we have a range of items this year from tea light holders to hens with baby chicks. All the crafts relate to the theme of the week and are linked to the Bible story.

We then hold communion where we offer bread sticks and squash / water and families are invited to join in and participate in breaking the bread and drinking the wine. We end the sessions with a 'Thank you God' section where we invite children or their parents to say one thing they are thankful for each week. This is followed by a goodbye song and prayer.

Christine Kenyon

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published in October 2019.

Aims and purposes

St John's Parochial Church Council ("the PCC") has the responsibility of promoting the whole mission of the Church within the ecclesiastical parish: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of the Parish Hall.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and become part of our church community at St John's. The Ministry Team, in conjunction with the PCC, maintains an overview of worship and makes suggestions on how our worship can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

As trustees of a registered charity, the PCC must report each year on how we have carried out our charity's purposes for the public benefit, which we set out in this trustees' report. We consider that we have complied with our duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on the meaning and scope of "public benefit", when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable parishioners 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 Christ, the crucified and glorified Lord
- provision and pastoral care for people living in the parish
- missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of St John the Baptist and the Parish Hall.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024 (continued)

Achievements and performance

Worship and prayer

The PCC is keen to offer a wide range of services during the week and over the course of the year that our community may find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. In addition to our main 9.30 Parish Eucharist on a Sunday, which we continue to livestream for the benefit of those unable to attend in person, we offer Common Worship Morning Prayer Monday to Friday, and a weekly midweek communion. We began a pattern of services each month at 5pm on a Sunday to offer variety: Faith and Light (non-denominational worship for adults with special educational needs); Book of Common Prayer Evensong; Celtic Evening Prayer; a said Eucharist; a Taizé service.

This year we have been able to welcome more new families to our church, and this is an important part of our vision. We offer an All-Age Worship on the first Sunday of the month; Junior and Mini Church has been taking place on the second and fourth Sundays of the month and is well attended. We have a toddler service on Thursday mornings, which attracts 5-10 toddlers and parents each week.

Aside from our regular services, we also held several important annual services. In June we welcomed Archdeacon Charles Hudson to preach at our Patronal Eucharist, celebrating the Birth of John the Baptist.

In October, we held our annual Harvest Festival, joined by local Brownies and Rainbows, and also celebrated Black History Month.

The church is normally open daily from 10am to 5pm.

The PCC seeks to ensure that all are welcomed at our regular services. At present we have 142 members on the Church Electoral Roll, 96 of whom are resident in the Parish and 46 of whom have stated their eligibility is due to six months or more habitual worship. Since the previously reported number of 175, 6 members have died, 1 resigned, 51 were removed (either being no longer eligible or because they did not renew) and 25 were added.

In addition to our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the amazing gift of life, in marriage services public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services family and friends express their deep sorrow but also give thanks for the life which is now completed and commend the person into the gracious hands of God. During the year, there were no weddings (but one renewal of vows), 19 baptisms, 8 funerals in church and 2 at the crematorium, 1 memorial service, and 4 burials of ashes.

During 2024 we also admitted a total of 8 young people to their First Communion. In November we welcomed Bishop Stephen Venner to confirm five members of our congregation in a special service.

We have encouraged members of the congregation to deepen their relationship with God in a variety of ways. We ran a Lent course and have held short study courses on different books in the Bible, which has been well attended. In Advent we held an Advent Book Club.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024 (continued)

Use of the church

During this year, the PCC has been considering how to make best use of our beautiful building. We continue to use both our High Altar and nave altar for worship. During the coming year we will be continuing to explore how best to use that space.

There are several challenges for us in the coming year in relation to the building. We need to consider our use of the sanctuary and how we use the space in the church more generally: the sound system is in need of an upgrade; one of our two boilers has failed; repairs are needed to the church porch. The PCC is keen for the church to be kept open for personal prayer and is also delighted to see it used for musical events. We were able to welcome back regular hirers of the church for concerts, including Roundwood Park School, Hardynges Choir, Sonorité and Continuum and the AT Society. Many events are already booked for 2025, highlighting the church's use as a good resource for the community.

Music

The PCC was delighted to be able to appoint Matt Harrison as our Director of Music in September. Matt had been playing the organ for us for some time and has now started to build up our adult and junior choirs.

The parish hall

The hall continued to be used during the year for both regular and one-off hirers. Fusion Pre-School have been the main tenants in the Hall on weekdays 8-2pm. Harpenden Musical Theatre Society found a new home during the year. Little Acorns, our baby and toddler group which meets on Tuesdays, continues to grow, and the other regular hirer is the Dance Studio. We also have two Rainbow and Brownie groups who meet in the hall on a Thursday and two new groups that joined us in September and meet on a Tuesday.

During the year, we revisited our plans to redevelop our hall into a parish centre (Project Phoenix). This project was launched a few weeks before the Covid lockdown, and we recognised that Covid had a significant impact, not only on our fundraising but also on the way the congregation now interacts with church; furthermore, the costs of the build have increased and it has proved difficult to secure further pledges. We have concluded that it is not going to be possible to achieve our original vision. However, we are committed to providing a safe and welcoming space for all our hall users – including the congregation – with good kitchen and toilet facilities and adequate storage space. So we are exploring options to redevelop and extend our existing hall, using the £500,000 that has been pledged already, as a basis for further fundraising.

Mission Action Plan

Our Mission Action Plan provides our priorities as a parish. We have 5 areas for development:

1. Building up the community life of St John's
2. Stewardship and giving
3. Children and young people
4. Welcome and invitation
5. Deepening discipleship

Further information on our Mission Action Plan SMART goals can be found at:

<https://resource.stalbansdiocese.org/maps/?id=4683#mapview>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024 (continued)

Pastoral care

We have a team of pastoral visitors who are able to visit those in need, with some authorised to give Communion. St Luke's Cell is a prayer group, which prays for individuals in any kind of need.

Charitable giving

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith, and the PCC donates a part of its stewardship income each year to charities: one local, one national and one international. For 2024 the charities chosen are Rennie Grove, Alzheimer's Society and Mercy Ships. We will also be giving a second year donation to Mind in Mid Herts.

In addition, our Christmas Appeal in 2024 raised £2,200 for the work of the Anglican Cathedral in Lima.

Outreach

A large number of group activities take place at St John's, led by volunteers with both talent and commitment. These provide a range of services to benefit members of the congregation and the wider parish community. Details of these activities can be found on our website.

We run a very successful monthly Tea@3 event, which provides tea and companionship to a number of people, especially the elderly and lonely, in the parish.

We publish a free quarterly parish magazine which is available online and distributed to every home and business within the parish. This publicises our church service times and forthcoming events; the aim is to attract and inform readers in Southdown who are not regular churchgoers about what is going on locally as well at church, whilst also appealing to our congregation. We also communicate news and events to 247 members of the congregation via a weekly e-newsletter.

Ecumenical relations

St John's is a member of Churches Together in Harpenden and our ministers attend monthly church leaders meetings.

Financial Review

Total income during 2024 was £297,436 (2023: £278,012), an increase of £19,424 or 7.0% compared to the prior year. This increase was mainly due to increased interest income and a legacy (£15k). Excluding the Parish Centre, income increased by £20,547 or 11% to £207,814 (2023: £187,267).

Total expenditure during 2024 reduced by £22,473 or 10% to £199,716 (2023: £222,189). The largest item of expenditure was the parish share of £91,757 (2023 £95,319). The reduction was mainly due to the hall roof repair in 2023.

Our planned missionary giving of 10% of our voluntary income to outside charities in 2024 decreased by 9% to £13,341 (2023: £14,679).

The net of total income and total expenditure for 2024 was a surplus of £97,720 (2023: £55,823). The new Parish Centre had a surplus of £87,501 (2023: £75,945), with the general fund generating a deficit of £9,592 (2023: deficit of £34,902) and the designated fund surplus of £19,811 (2023: deficit of £20).

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024 (continued)

As a result of the net surplus, total net assets as at 31 December 2024 of £645,965 are £97,720 higher than total net assets as at 1 January 2024 of £548,245. Total net assets are represented by general, designated, and restricted funds.

General funds decreased by £4,350 from £20,841 as at 1 January 2024 to £16,491 as at 31 December 2024. This represents around 1 month of ongoing expenditure.

Designated funds increased by £11,569 from £164,450 as at 1 January 2024 to £176,019 as at 31 December 2024, mainly due to receiving a legacy payment.

Restricted funds increased by £90,501 from £362,954 as at 1 January 2024 to £453,455 as at 31 December 2024, due principally to donations received for the Parish Centre.

Outlook for the future

The financial position of the PCC as at 31 December 2024 shows the need for substantial improvement towards reducing the underlying structural deficit noted previously.

The trustees consider that the PCC is a going concern as at the date of approving the 2024 accounts. This is based on considering the level of funds held, the breadth and financial position of its donor base, known or anticipated future changes to either income or expenditure, and planned future capital projects. The PCC will prepare a budget for 2025 which will anticipate further improvements in the underlying deficit. Separately, plans to raise funds for capital projects such as the church porch, re-ordering, a new boiler and an improved sound system will need to be made and prioritised. In all of this, the PCC needs to ensure that the reserves are gradually rebuilt.

Reserves policy

The PCC seeks to operate on a balanced budget basis but periodically sets aside such amounts as it deems prudent to meet anticipated abnormal expenditure. Such amounts are held in designated funds and are represented by bank balances and accounts receivable within the general assets of the PCC. It is the policy of the PCC to hold in general reserves at least the equivalent amount of two months of general running costs, which is currently approximately £33,000. The PCC is aware that as at 31 December 2024 this had fallen to £16,491 and that work is needed to restore the deficit.

Structure, governance and management of the PCC

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and is a registered charity. The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules. All members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. Certain members of the PCC are allocated specific responsibility for some of the matters which affect the parish, e.g., Safeguarding. These individuals attend appropriate training courses provided by the Diocese where necessary and report back to the PCC as a body.

The PCC met five times in 2024 and attendance at meetings was 83% of the maximum possible number of 13.

Prior to each PCC meeting, a Standing Committee (comprising the incumbent, curate, one co-opted member of PCC, Treasurer and Secretary) meets to draw up the agenda of items to be discussed.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024 (continued)

At its meetings this year, the PCC has carried out the necessary formalities such as appointing its officers and reviewing its committee structure. Alison Bygrave was appointed as Treasurer in September. There continues to be a focus on safeguarding and all members of the PCC have undertaken the required level of training as provided by the Diocese. The Safeguarding and Health & Safety policies have been reviewed and updated where necessary.

The PCC devolves some of its work to teams, and all members of the PCC, as well as further members of the congregation with particular skills or interests, are invited to sit on those teams, which meet on a regular basis (or liaise electronically). The current teams are Eco-church and Junior Church. Two members of the PCC sit on the Deanery Synod providing an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the Church of England.

Approximately a week before a meeting, all PCC members receive the agenda, reports from any groups that have met since the last meeting and any briefing documents for items under discussion. Within two weeks of a PCC meeting, minutes of that meeting are circulated to all members. These minutes go on public display on the noticeboard in the porch, once they have been formally approved at the following PCC meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

St John's Church is situated on St John's Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire. It is part of the Diocese of St. Albans within the Church of England.

The PCC can be contacted at: St John's Parish offices, St John's Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 1DJ.

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission, number 1131603.

PCC members who have served from 1 January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:

Vicar

Tim Vickers

Curate

Ritah Namakula

Readers

Lauryn Awbrey (also Deanery Synod)

Anne Edwards

David Nye (also Deanery Synod)

Secretary

Mary Jean Pritchard

Council members

Andrew Ballard (co-opted)

Stuart Burnett (from May)

Sophie Crowley

Mary Hoare (from May)

Christine Kenyon (from May)

Alistair Meldrum

Liz Macdonald

Nick Luckett (co-opted)

Churchwardens

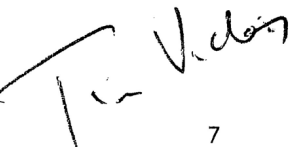
Vacant

Treasurer

Alison Bygrave (from September)

The Trustees Report was approved by the PCC on 4th May 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Rev Tim Vickers - Incumbent



PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE PCC OF ST JOHN HARPENDEN

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 9 to 19.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the PCC's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

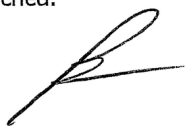
Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared the accounts (financial statements) in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has since been withdrawn.

We understand that this has been done in order for the accounts to provide a true and fair view in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the PCC as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



Roger Cox FCA (ICAEW)

Miller & Co Chartered Accountants
5 Imperial Court
Laporte Way
Luton
LU4 8FE

Date: 6 May 2025

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted	TOTAL	2023
		General	Designated	Funds	2024	(Note
	Note	£	£	£	£	18)
						£
INCOMING RESOURCES						
Incoming resources from generated funds:						
Voluntary income	2	138,776	15,675	79,061	233,512	238,987
Activities for generating funds	3	26,125	615	-	26,740	24,101
Investment income	4	10,609	3,189	10,560	24,358	6,135
		<u>175,510</u>	<u>19,479</u>	<u>89,621</u>	284,610	269,223
Incoming resources from church activities	5	11,871	955	-	12,825	8,789
Total incoming resources		<u>187,381</u>	<u>20,434</u>	<u>89,621</u>	297,436	278,012
RESOURCES EXPENDED						
Cost of church activities						
Missionary Giving	6	16,596	-	-	16,596	16,125
Parish Share	6	91,757	-	-	91,757	95,319
Fabric and Running Costs	6	36,364	-	-	36,364	67,214
Mission & Education	6	5,644	535	-	6,179	8,685
Staff Costs	6	30,049	-	-	30,049	23,272
Other costs	6	16,563	88	2,120	18,771	11,574
Total resources expended		<u>196,973</u>	<u>623</u>	<u>2,120</u>	199,716	222,189
Net income/(expenditure) for year		(9,592)	19,811	87,501	97,720	55,823
Transfers between funds		5,242	(8,242)	3,000	-	-
Net movement in funds		<u>(4,350)</u>	<u>11,569</u>	<u>90,501</u>	97,720	55,823
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS						
Total funds at 1 Jan 2024		20,841	164,450	362,954	548,245	492,422
Total funds at 31 Dec 2024		<u>16,491</u>	<u>176,019</u>	<u>453,455</u>	645,965	548,245

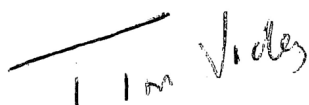
The notes on pages 11 to 19 form part of these financial statements.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	9	63,888	63,888
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	10	11,260	61,706
Bank and cash balances		589,803	466,542
		601,063	528,248
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors payable within one year	11	(18,986)	(43,891)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		582,077	484,357
TOTAL NET ASSETS		645,965	548,245
THE FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Unrestricted income funds:			
General	12	16,491	20,841
Designated	13	176,019	164,450
Total		192,510	185,291
Restricted income funds:	15	453,455	362,954
		645,965	548,245

The financial statements were approved by the Parochial Church Council on 4th May 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

 Tim Vickers

Rev Tim Vickers - Incumbent

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparation

The PCC constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 governing the individual accounts of PCCs and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and is a registered charity. The address of the registered office is given in the administrative details section of the trustees' report. The financial statements are presented in pounds sterling and rounded to the nearest pound.

These financial statements are prepared on the basis of the PCC being a going concern. The trustees make their own assessment of the PCC's ability to continue as a going concern to assure themselves of the validity of this assumption when preparing accounts. In making this assessment, the trustees take into account all available information about the future for at least, but not limited to, 12 months from the date the accounts are approved. There are no material uncertainties about the PCC's ability to continue. In addition, as at the date of approval of these accounts, there are no contractual commitments in relation to the new Parish Centre, and its development will be conditional on successful fundraising.

Funds

Unrestricted funds represent the remaining income funds of the PCC that are available for spending on the general purposes of the PCC, including amounts designated by the PCC for fixed assets for its own use or for spending on a future project and which are therefore not included in its general reserves as disclosed in the trustees' report.

Restricted funds represent income funds that must be spent on restricted purposes and details of the funds held and restrictions provided are shown in the notes to the accounts.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Incoming resources

Income and endowments are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when:

- the PCC becomes legally entitled to the use of the resources;
- and inflow of economic benefit is probable; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Planned giving, collections and donations are therefore generally recognised when received. Tax refunds are recognised when the incoming resource to which they relate is received.

Grants and legacies are accounted for when the PCC is legally entitled to the amounts due.

Rental income from the letting of the church, the church hall, and the property in Linwood Road is recognised when the rental is due.

Interest income is accrued.

All other income is recognised when it is receivable.

Resources expended

All other expenditure is generally recognised when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation and settlement is probable and quantifiable.

The diocesan parish share is accounted for when due.

Fixed assets

Consecrated and benefice property is not included in the accounts in accordance with s.10 (2) (a) of the Charities Act 2011. Movable church furnishings held by the vicar and churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal are inalienable property, listed in the church's inventory, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time). Such assets are not valued in the financial statements. All expenditure incurred during the year on consecrated or benefice buildings and moveable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvement, is written off as expenditure in the statement of financial activities.

The Church Hall has been fully depreciated, however as it is still in use and is providing economic benefit through rental income it has been retained on the balance sheet but with a valuation of £nil.

The Linwood Road property is held at cost. The land element of the property is not depreciated in accordance with the applicable financial reporting standards. Whilst buildings are ordinarily depreciated, no depreciation is provided on the building element of the property as the current estimated residual value of the property is not less than its carrying amount and the remaining useful life of the property currently exceeds 50 years, and therefore any depreciation charge would be immaterial.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

At each reporting date an assessment is carried out of whether there is any indication that an asset should be written down (i.e. whether the carrying amount on the balance sheet is more than its recoverable amount). If there is no indication that an asset should be written down, it is not necessary to estimate the recoverable amount.

Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	TOTAL	TOTAL
	General	Designated	Funds	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£	£
2 VOLUNTARY INCOME					
Planned Giving:					
Gift Aid donations	104,237	-	-	104,237	108,247
Tax recoverable	16,953	-	-	16,953	24,162
Non gift aid donations	4,086	-	-	4,086	14,390
Collections (open plate)	6,731	-	-	6,731	-
Tax recoverable on collections	1,407	-	-	1,407	-
Grants	-	-	-	-	14,800
Donations, appeals etc.	5,362	675	-	6,037	1,443
Legacies	-	15,000	-	15,000	-
Parish Centre fundraising	-	-	65,693	65,693	62,288
Tax recoverable on Parish Centre funds	-	-	13,368	13,368	13,657
	<u>138,776</u>	<u>15,675</u>	<u>79,061</u>	<u>233,512</u>	<u>238,987</u>
3 ACTIVITIES FOR GENERATING FUNDS					
Church Hall lettings (non-church activities)	25,382	-	-	25,382	18,194
Fundraising Events	-	615	-	615	113
Other funds generated	590	-	-	590	-
Linwood Road property rental income	153	-	-	153	5,794
	<u>26,125</u>	<u>615</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26,740</u>	<u>24,101</u>
4 INVESTMENT INCOME					
Bank interest	10,609	3,189	10,560	24,358	6,135
	<u>10,609</u>	<u>3,189</u>	<u>10,560</u>	<u>24,358</u>	<u>6,135</u>
5 INCOME FROM CHURCH ACTIVITIES					
Income from Social events	2,118	955	-	3,073	3,420
Parish Magazine advertising	4,303	-	-	4,303	1,675
Fees for Weddings & Funerals	5,449	-	-	5,449	3,694
	<u>11,871</u>	<u>955</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,825</u>	<u>8,789</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	TOTAL 2024	TOTAL 2023
	General	Designated			
	£	£	£	£	£
6 COSTS OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES					
Missionary and Charitable giving (also see note 8)					
Relief and development agencies	16,596	-	-	16,596	16,125
	<u>16,596</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16,596</u>	<u>16,125</u>
Parish share	<u>91,757</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>91,757</u>	<u>95,319</u>
Fabric and running costs:					
Church running costs	9,571	-	-	9,571	12,699
Church maintenance	2,320	-	-	2,320	2,926
Organ/piano tuning & maint.	870	-	-	870	965
Grounds upkeep	2,360	-	-	2,360	370
Hall running costs	6,486	-	-	6,486	6,617
Hall maintenance	4,672	-	-	4,672	30,739
Vicarage running costs	109	-	-	109	2,878
Linwood Road property upkeep	819	-	-	819	1,757
Upkeep of services	1,346	-	-	1,346	4,666
Parish Office Admin Costs	7,810	-	-	7,810	3,597
	<u>36,364</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>36,364</u>	<u>67,214</u>
Mission & Education:					
Parish magazine	5,644	-	-	5,644	6,362
Education	-	535	-	535	2,323
	<u>5,644</u>	<u>535</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,179</u>	<u>8,685</u>
Staff Costs:					
Working expenses of incumbent	4,227	-	-	4,227	4,478
Wages and salaries	25,822	-	-	25,822	18,794
	<u>30,049</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>30,049</u>	<u>23,272</u>
Other costs:					
Flower Guild expenditure	-	-	-	-	20
Promotional and communications	544	-	-	544	-
Sundry expenses	6,359	88	-	6,447	2,861
Wedding & funeral fees to Diocese	2,107	-	-	2,107	1,181
Wedding & funeral fees – other	4,868	-	-	4,868	3,280
Costs of fund-raising	-	-	2,120	2,120	173
Bank charges	528	-	-	528	66
Social events	734	-	-	734	2,331
Independent examiners fee:					
Independent examination	1,050	-	-	1,050	948
Accountancy	372	-	-	372	714
	<u>16,563</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>2,120</u>	<u>18,771</u>	<u>11,574</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

7 STAFF COSTS	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	23,667	17,220
Social security costs	1,637	1,196
Pension	518	378
	<u>25,822</u>	<u>18,794</u>

The average number of staff employed was 2 (2023: 2)

There are no employees who received employee benefits of more than £60,000 (2023: none)

8 MISSIONARY AND CHARITABLE GIVING	2024	2023
	£	£
The missionary and charitable giving is made up of the following donations		
Relief and development agencies		
Accrual for 2024 Charitable Giving	13,341	14,679
Harvest Appeal	450	680
Christmas Appeal – Anglican Church in Lima	2,200	-
Other	605	766
	<u>16,596</u>	<u>16,125</u>

9 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	Linwood Road property	Church Hall	TOTAL	
	£	£	£	2024
Actual/ deemed cost:				2023
Brought forward at 1 January	63,888	48,299	112,187	112,187
Carried forward 31 December	63,888	48,299	112,187	112,187
Depreciation:				
Brought forward at 1 January	-	(48,299)	(48,299)	(48,299)
Charge for year	-	-	-	-
Carried forward 31 December	-	(48,299)	(48,299)	(48,299)
Carrying value at 31 December	<u>63,888</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>63,888</u>	<u>63,888</u>

The Curate's House at 2 Linwood Road was independently valued on 2 March 2010 at £380,000

10 DEBTORS	2024	2023
	£	£
Gift Aid Tax recoverable	5,301	46,906
Prepayments and accrued income	5,959	14,800
	<u>11,260</u>	<u>61,706</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

11 CREDITORS	2024	2023
	£	£
Outside giving	15,541	14,679
Accruals and deferred income	3,445	28,446
Other creditors	-	766
	<u>18,986</u>	<u>43,891</u>
12 GENERAL FUNDS	2024	2023
	£	£
Brought forward at 1 January	20,841	40,766
Transfer from Designated fund	8,242	177
Transfer to Restricted fund	(3,000)	14,800
Net income / (expenditure) for year	(9,592)	(34,902)
Carried forward at 31 December	<u>16,491</u>	<u>20,841</u>
13 DESIGNATED FUNDS	2024	2023
	£	£
The PCC operates seven Designated Funds:		
Parish Centre	6,988	6,988
Organ - Reserve to fund future organ repairs	21,045	21,045
Legacies - Legacies received and spent	66,966	48,777
Music at St John's	527	-
Children's work	420	-
Fabric reserve	16,185	23,752
Linwood Road property	63,888	63,888
	<u>176,019</u>	<u>164,450</u>

The movements on the Designated Funds during 2024 were as follows:

	Parish Centre	Organ	Legacies	Music
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward at 1 Jan 2024	6,988	21,045	48,777	-
Income	-	-	18,189	615
Expenditure	-	-	-	(88)
Carried forward at 31 Dec 2024	<u>6,988</u>	<u>21,045</u>	<u>66,966</u>	<u>527</u>
	Children	Fabric	Linwood Road property	TOTAL 2024
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward at 1 Jan 2024	-	23,752	63,888	164,450
Income	955	675	-	20,434
Expenditure	(535)	-	-	(623)
Transfer to general fund	-	(8,242)	-	(8,242)
Carried forward at 31 Dec 2024	<u>420</u>	<u>16,185</u>	<u>63,888</u>	<u>176,019</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

13 DESIGNATED FUNDS (continued)

The movements on the Designated Funds during 2023 were as follows:

	Parish Centre £	Organ £	Legacies £	Flower Guild £
Brought forward at 1 Jan 2023	6,988	21,045	48,777	197
Income	-	-	-	-
Expenditure	-	-	-	(20)
Transfer to General fund	-	-	-	(177)
Carried forward at 31 Dec 2023	<u>6,988</u>	<u>21,045</u>	<u>48,777</u>	<u>-</u>

	Fabric £	Linwood Road property £	TOTAL 2023 £
Brought forward at 1 Jan 2023	23,752	63,888	164,647
Income	-	-	-
Expenditure	-	-	(20)
Transfer to General fund	-	-	(177)
Carried forward at 31 Dec 2023	<u>23,752</u>	<u>63,888</u>	<u>164,450</u>

Fund descriptions:

Parish Centre – for the build of a new parish hall/parish centre, replacing the current hall.

Organ – for the replacement or repair of the organ that is in place in the church.

Legacies – being receipts from legacies where no restrictions apply that the PCC designates for the purpose of paying for items of a capital nature.

Fabric – for repairs to the fabric of the church building.

14 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	TOTAL 2024 £
Fixed assets	-	63,888	-	63,888
Current assets	35,477	112,131	453,455	601,063
Current liabilities	(18,986)	-	-	(18,986)
Total	<u>16,491</u>	<u>176,019</u>	<u>453,455</u>	<u>645,965</u>

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	TOTAL 2023 £
Fixed assets	-	63,888	-	63,888
Current assets	64,732	100,562	362,954	528,248
Current liabilities	(43,891)	-	-	(43,891)
Total	<u>20,841</u>	<u>164,650</u>	<u>362,954</u>	<u>548,245</u>

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

18 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	TOTAL
		General	Designated	Funds	2023
	Note	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds:					
Voluntary income	2	148,242	-	90,745	238,987
Activities for generating funds	3	24,101	-	-	24,101
Investment income	4	6,135	-	-	6,135
		178,478	-	90,745	269,223
Incoming resources from church activities	5	8,789	-	-	8,789
Total incoming resources		187,267	-	90,745	278,012
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Cost of church activities					
Missionary Giving	6	16,125	-	-	16,125
Parish Share	6	95,319	-	-	95,319
Fabric and Running Costs	6	67,214	-	-	67,214
Mission & Education	6	8,685	-	-	8,685
Staff Costs	6	23,272	-	-	23,272
Other costs	6	11,554	20	-	11,574
Total resources expended		222,169	20	-	222,189
Net income/(expenditure) for year		(34,902)	(20)	90,745	55,823
Transfers between funds		14,977	(177)	(14,800)	-
Net movement in funds		(19,925)	(197)	75,945	55,823
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds at 1 Jan 2023		40,766	164,647	287,009	492,422
Total funds at 31 Dec 2023		20,841	164,450	362,954	548,245