

The Parish of St John the Evangelist Cleveland



Annual Reports and Accounts 2023



**To be presented to the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 19 May 2024**

Clevedon St Johns Annual Parishioners Meeting 2024

to be held in St Johns Church on
Sunday 19 May 2024 at noon

AGENDA

- Welcome and Opening Prayer
- Election of two Churchwardens

to be followed by the

Clevedon St Johns Annual Parochial Church Meeting

AGENDA

- 1 Welcome and Opening Prayer
- 2 Apologies for Absence
- 3 Minutes of the 2023 APCM – for approval
- 4 Matters arising not covered by the following items
- 5 Reports: The PCC will present the Annual Report to the meeting which includes:
 - Report on changes in membership of the electoral roll
 - Report on what the PCC has done over the past year
 - Financial Statements of the PCC for the year ending 31st December 2023
 - Report on fabric, goods and ornaments of the church
 - Report on proceedings of Deanery Synod
- 6 Elections and Appointments:
 - Election of 3 members for the PCC
 - Election of 1 Deanery Synod representative
 - Appointment of Independent Examiner or Auditor to the PCC
- 7 Address by Chair
- 8 Any other business
- 9 Closing Prayer

to be followed by the

first meeting of the newly elected St Johns PCC

AGENDA

- 1 Election of Officers – Vice Chair, PCC Secretary, Treasurer, ERO
- 2 Date of next meeting

Clevedon St Johns Annual Parishioners Meeting 2023

Held in St Johns Church on Sunday 23 April 2023

Fr Brendan Clover took the chair. There were 30 people present.

Election of churchwardens Two nominations had been received, so Nicola Coaker and Gary Lewis were declared duly elected.

This meeting was followed by the

Clevedon St Johns Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Chaired by Fr Brendan Clover.

1. The annual report had been circulated to all before the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence received from Edward and Andrew Callow.
3. Minutes of the APCM 2022 were approved.
4. There were no matters arising.
5. Presentation of the Annual Report, covering changes to the electoral roll, PCC report, financial statements for year ended 31 December 2022, report on fabric goods and ornaments of the church, and report on Deanery Synod. The Electoral Roll stood at 75.
6. Elections and appointments:
 - a. Deanery Synod. There were 2 vacancies. There had been no nominations, but Sarah Lewis came forward at the meeting, and she was declared duly elected.
 - b. PCC. There were 3 vacancies. There were three nominations, so Michelle Hibberd, Helen Callow and Jane Carter were declared duly elected.
 - c. Churches Together in Clevedon. There were 2 vacancies, which still stand as no-one came forward.
 - d. Independent Examiner. Mike Bowles was appointed.
7. Chairman's remarks. Fr Brendan said that it was important to celebrate our tradition of worship. He exhorted us to pray and care for each other. He also drew attention to our website, which had both local and international visitors, 7000 in 2022 and 2000 so far this year.
8. Any other business. Martin Ingram suggested that a fund for homeless people be established, to be called the David James Memorial Fund, to which people could be asked to contribute £1 per month. Money could be used to help people such as the man living in the north porch, given to InHope or Andrew House.

Father Brendan thanked Fiona Dixon and Sue Rossiter as they stepped down as Treasurer and Secretary. Gary Lewis thanked Father Brendan for his leadership.

The meeting closed with prayer.

2023 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of Clevedon St John the Evangelist

1. Aim and purposes

St. John's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the priest in charge in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church and Church Hall.

2. Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St. John's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services 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.

When planning our activities for the year, we consider the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and particularly supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

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

3. Churchwardens' Report

We are glad to report on another year of service, growth and stability at our church. Visitors comment positively on the welcome and friendship that is so apparent when they come to church with us. We both feel that the warmth to people and beauty in worship are the hallmarks of this faithful and committed congregation.

2023 saw the sudden loss of several longstanding, hard-working and much-loved friends: David James and Mike Callow. The lower hall has been renamed in honour of David (and Margaret!) and was officially opened by Bishop Michael on our Patronal Festival last May. Both David and Mike were commemorated with quarter peals.

We feel heartened to see our attendance continue to build and new members join our church. Participation by the wider community at Christmas and other festivals increased significantly year on year. It is also notable that the generational mix at St John's is far better than in the church as a whole. We interpret this as a vote of confidence in our tradition which takes worship very seriously but also puts such a priority on social events and friendship.

Father Brendan has taken on an additional parish and St John's is now working in an Affinity Relationship with All Saints with St Saviour in Weston-Super-Mare. We had confirmation from our Diocesan Bishop and the Archdeacon of Bath that the interim ministry at St John's had been successful in every measure and that consequently Father Brendan

would be able to be inducted as our Vicar. This decision has given us security and is a mark of the remarkable post-covid recovery that we have seen at St John's.

This shared arrangement has only been possible with the generous support of retired and additional clergy. Father Robert Ward and Prebendary John Andrews have offered cover during both weekday and Sunday Masses. We have also been fortunate to receive the ministry of Father Mark Smith, who is now also an Associate Priest in the Parish. We are conscious of the additional work for our vicar and - now that our numbers and finances are improving - we will want to look at revisiting the plan to employ a Parish Administrator to support Father Brendan and the PCC.

One of our aims has been to put St John's at the heart of life in the town, in Father Brendan's words, 'to be the town church'. Our May festival has continued to build in activity and quality and the church has been increasingly used as a concert venue, notably by Clevedon Choral who have given several excellent concerts. In 2023 we additionally opened the church as a visual arts venue during North Somerset Arts Week.

A busy church can only do its work if people get fully involved. We have both felt hugely supported by the congregation this year and we would like to say thank you to everyone who has supported the parish through coming to church, attending social events, and for doing all the unseen mundane things that go on behind the scenes.

Lastly, we would both like to express our thanks to Father Brendan. We enjoyed celebrating his Ruby Ordination Anniversary last summer and we constantly give thanks that he has felt called so strongly to be in this church, doing this work. What a difference he is making!

Nicola Coaker and Gary Lewis

4. Worship and Prayer

Daily services were maintained throughout 2023, as well as a weekly Sunday club for children. There was also a Lent Group and occasional services for Feast Days and other occasions. A parish pilgrimage to Walsingham took place in October with an increased number of pilgrims and has become a yearly event in the life of the Parish. All are welcome to attend our daily services. At present there are 75 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 26 of whom are not resident within the parish. 105 people attended at Easter, and 100 at Christmas. The average Sunday attendance, counted during October, was 55 adults and 4 children, but this number was supplemented by an average attendance of 42 during the week plus those who watched live online or afterwards. Our school continues to use the Church for seasonal events and workshops and important milestones in the life of that community such as at beginning and end of term. As well as 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 gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. There were 2 baptisms in 2023 and 6 funerals.

Our servers have over the last year covered many of the extra services now available and offered during each week and at major festivals. Grateful thanks are given to all members of our growing serving team who each play an important part.

Online presence

Our online presence at St John's continues to reach out across our worshipping community and indeed beyond, with our content being regularly shared across the Deanery and Diocese.

Our YouTube channel has grown in subscribers over the past year to 211 with 'views' of over 5.5k and total watch time of 370hrs. Whilst this is down on last year, the 'in person' congregation has grown and as such the need for our worshipping community to watch recorded services has diminished. Nevertheless, the YouTube channel still serves a missional purpose with some of the congregation growth resulting from having seen our services in this medium. Also, we have regular international viewers from America, Canada, Poland and France as well as from across the UK.

Our Facebook page continues to be a presence for good in a world of social media which isn't always necessary so. The group has 332 members, the content is regularly shared far and wide and it is a useful page for imparting information in forms of announcements and Newsletter, the latter of which is read by many beyond our parish. In the past year our live streamed services have been watched in real time by many of our congregation who have been poorly and unable to attend whilst our ability to livestream funeral and memorial services has brought comfort to relatives and friends who have been unable to be there. Likewise, our WhatsApp group currently has 46 members where, again, information can be imparted and beautiful images of our worship and Church are displayed. Our contact email list is also used to send our Newsletter, information and a link to our Daily Mass and is a link to friends both in the Parish and for those who have moved away but still take part in our worship.

If you would like to be added to the email list or WhatsApp group, please e mail me at: electoralrollofficer@stjohns-clevedon.org.uk or speak to me or one of the wardens.

In the near future, we have plans to begin livestreaming our services directly onto YouTube so they can be accessed by anyone without the need for a Facebook account and I welcome any further suggestions that can help improve our online presence.

Kevin Coaker

5. Community and outreach

Membership is currently nine people: Sarah Lewis, Debra Ward, Margaret James, Betty Taylor, Judith Boulden, Maurice Miller, Dilwen Miller and Celia Andrews. We are supported regularly by other members of the congregation when putting on events and catering for funerals.

The hall kitchen is now functional. Sarah Lewis met with the Environmental Health Officer in September and is working her way through the list of recommendations that she has been given to meet council requirements. She has taken and passed her Level 2 food hygiene training course.

We have organised and run a number of fundraising events such as the summer and Christmas fayres and church community events such as the rose reception, the parish 'bring and share lunch', parish BBQ and harvest lunch. We also catered for specific events such as Father Brendan's induction, the Betjeman evening and funerals for church

members. We have asked for profits from our fundraising events to be ring-fenced for a Hall Fund so that we can replace the chairs and tables in the near future.

In 2023 we worked towards a closer relationship with our primary school and have been glad to see this blossom into new events in 2024.

Sarah Lewis

6. Portishead Deanery 2023

Deanery Synod Representative, Clergy and Church Wardens attended a number of synods meetings. Highlights included an evening of dialogue with our Diocesan Bishop, Bishop Michael Beasley, held at Golden Valley primary School in Nailsea. There was also an opportunity to engage with the Church of England Strategy for cross generational evangelism (Growing Faith) in a meeting at St Andrew's Clevedon led by Prebendary Tony Cook.

The Deanery has had the difficult task of planning reductions on clergy allocation and the reduction of St John's Clevedon from a full-time post to a 0.5 role is one such reduction.

7. The Church and Hall buildings

Church

There have been frustrating delays to our heating project. Permission by faculty has been obtained and a contractor appointed. We had hoped to deliver the boiler replacement scheme in the autumn, but the contractor discovered that to meet the requirements of a modern system we will need an external flue pipe. As our building is Grade 2* listed and the site of the vent will have to be on the prominent south side of the tower we have had to return to faculty planning and seek advice. We hope that a solution will be agreed with the diocese and the works completed in early autumn at the latest.

The light fittings in the church have almost entirely been renewed. We have used energy efficient LEDs and the hue is more sympathetic to the historic building. We have also had our five-yearly electrical inspection in December and a number of non-urgent items have been identified several of which will be incidentally addressed by the boiler works.

Martin Ingram, Derek Coaker and Gary Lewis have cleared gutters on the north and south roofs. In doing so it is evident that the down-chutes from the upper roof have slipped and will require future attention.

We have added several ornaments to beautify the interior of our church, both resulting from a bequest from the late Derek Hollyhomes. An icon of St James from Derek's own collection has been donated and is now on the western pillar in the north aisle. A statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was purchased, partly with a legacy from Derek's estate and this is now located by the altar in the Lady Chapel. This will be a focus for the Regional Walsingham Festival each September.

Hall

It has been good to see the newly refurbished kitchen in the James Room come into full use and the meeting space there is now used regularly for parish and other events. The kitchen now contains all the items that we had planned and the works from Aztec have been completed and signed off.

The next project for the hall will be to replace the infra-red heaters in the upper hall. These had been maintained far beyond their expected lifespan by the late David James and have provided remarkable service. We plan like-for-like replacements.

The vicar and churchwardens are extremely grateful to all the volunteers who help clean and maintain our buildings. To mention just a few, Margaret James continues to attend to the management of the hall on a daily basis, Vera Ostrehan devotes many hours to cutting the lawns in our beautiful grounds, Judith Boulden polishes our myriad brass items and Martin Ingram has coaxed another year's service from our ancient boiler and devoted untold hours to ensuring that the church is prepared for every service.

8.Parish Safeguarding Officer's Report for the Parish of St John the Evangelist Clevedon

National Safeguarding Issues

The past year has seen considerable changes in national safeguarding governance. The Independent Safeguarding Board, set up to provide scrutiny of the Church of England's safeguarding processes, was terminated in June 2023. Two reviews have been undertaken to consider the future of Church safeguarding – The Wilkinson Report published in November 2023 and the Jay Report published on 21/02/24. The Jay Report, in particular, recommends a total overhaul of the Church's safeguarding structures, to shift responsibility away from individual dioceses to two new charities, which would be completely independent of church authorities. We await the outcome of the response group, chaired by the lead safeguarding bishop. There will be a national audit of all safeguarding process in 2025 and Bishop Michael wants all parishes to be fully utilising the Parish Dashboard system by the end of 2024.

Local Safeguarding Issues

My first year has been rewarding and a massive learning curve. Although I have had experience of working with perpetrators and victims of abuse within the Criminal Justice Service, it has been a new challenge to familiarise myself with the priorities and policies within the church setting. I have had considerable help from Nicola Coaker and Father Brendan Clover, for which I offer my thanks. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team have also been a great source of support and knowledge. I have recently been fortunate to enlist the help of Kevin Coaker, despite his very busy schedule, in a collaborative review of our current training requirements and timeliness of DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and eligibility criteria. The following is an update of our current situation:-

Training

We are currently reviewing all persons whose roles indicate their need to undertake safeguarding training and the level necessary in accordance with their responsibilities. Kevin and I will be attending the 'Train the Trainer' workshop in June 2024 and we envisage

that the majority of basic and foundation safeguarding training can then be carried out by ourselves on the church premises.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

In 2023, ThirtyoneEight, a Christian independent safeguarding charity was appointed to manage the DBS checking system and provide training. We are completing a review of all eligible persons and implementing update reminders. Depending on the nature of the responsibility of the role, there will be a mixture of basic and enhanced checks, which are updated on a three yearly basis. Those who have opted for the automatic update service have been asked to provide documentary evidence to be retained by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. I will be attending a DBS eligibility training event (basic/enhanced) in June 2024.

Parish Dashboard

We have registered for the dashboard, which methodically guides through all safeguarding tasks. It also advises on the latest policy and practice guidelines and helps us prioritise our tasks. It also provides an action plan for review by the PCC and automatic reminders of uncompleted tasks. Father Brendan will be an owner with myself, which allows him to input information onto the dashboard. Other relevant person(s) will be approached to be viewers and therefore have direct oversight of our progress.

Policies

The Safeguarding Policy has had its annual review (2024) and our Media Policy will be reviewed with regard to our implementation, in accordance with the Safeguarding Handbook and National Guidelines.

Incidents to Report

There have been no safeguarding incidents to report. An interesting statistic from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team at Bath and Wells is that 90% of the safeguarding referrals received related to concerns about vulnerable adults. It is therefore important that those who carry out any role within our church should undertake Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse – an excellent piece of online training. Safeguarding is everyone's concern and it is important that we are regularly reminded of its importance to the wellbeing of our church.

Parish Safeguarding Officer Network

A network has been set up between ourselves, Christchurch and St. Andrews. We will soon welcome the PSO at St. Peters. This group meets on bi-monthly basis and is a positive source of support and good for exchanging information.

June Fegredo Parish Safeguarding Officer

9. Tower Captain's Report to APCM

Quite a notable year in the ringing chamber where the passing of two great friends and ringers was marked with the ringing of bells as was the Coronation of the King.

In April we rang a half-muffled quarter peal of whole pull Bob Doubles to mark the loss of David James. We continue to miss this remarkable man. It also marked the loss of Evelyn

Ingram. This occasion was only my second quarter as conductor, the first, many years ago, having been under David's guidance and encouragement.

May was a busy month with preparations to ring for the Coronation. The third peal on the bells since they were hung, was rung both for the Coronation and as a celebration of the life and work of David James. On the morning of the Coronation, Saturday 6th May, 13 ringers were able to 'Ring for the King', with the 4 learners ringing an 'open' bell for the first time. All those present were given a badge to commemorate the occasion.

Our second quarter peal of the year was to celebrate the life of another of our band. Mike Callow had rung with us at St. John's for many years, the first quarter he rang at St. Johns (with David) being recorded in 1974.

In September we rang for Lucy Ingram's wedding; the only wedding with bells during 2023.

In October we set off on our outing visiting Loxton, Badgworth, Hutton and Locking for a sunny afternoon's ringing. 12 people, and 1 dog, were able to ring, and listen to, some bells that have been sounding out over Mendip for over 600 years. Where will we get to in 2024?

Overall fewer practices were cancelled because of a lack of numbers during 2023 and very few services were not preceded by ringing.

Two of our young beginners have decided that bell ringing is not for them, however Edith has started practising and is doing extremely well. Michelle, Poppy and Rob continue to make progress. Well done to them all. Thank you to all our ringers for the regular effort put into ringing at St. Johns.

Nick Dixon, Tower Captain

10. Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St. Johns the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, churchwardens, treasurer, and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC met 6 times during 2023.

11. Administrative information

St. Johns Church is situated in Queens Road, Clevedon. It is part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells within the Church of England. The correspondence address is St Johns Vicarage, 1 St Johns Road, Clevedon BS21 7TG. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2020) and a charity currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2023 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

- Fr Brendan Clover
- Nicola Coaker, Warden
- Gary Lewis, Warden
- Robert Watson (from April 2023), Deanery Synod Representative

Elected members:

- Judith Boulden (until 2024)
- Helen Callow (from April 2022 co-opted) and Hon. PCC Secretary (from April 2023)
- Derek Coaker (from April 2022)
- Kevin Coaker, Electoral Roll Officer
- Angela Edgar (from April 2023) and Hon. Treasurer
- Michelle Hibberd (from April 2023)
- Sarah Lewis (from April 2022) and Deanery Synod Representative (from April 2023, resigned April 2024)
- Peter Woolf from April 2022

June Fegredo, Safeguarding Officer attends PCC meetings periodically to provide updates.

12. Financial Statements and Treasurers Report

The Parish of St. John the Evangelist, Clevedon Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023

The following accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) issued by the Charity Commission to comply with the Executive Committee's obligations as the trustees of the Charity for keeping accounting records

Income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Gift Days & Sundry Collections (Non Gift Aid)	640.45	657.05
Income Tax Recovered	10,524.16	9,012.48
Other Planned Giving	5,951.17	1,425.00
Planned Giving	21,382.00	45,350.05
Service Cash Collections	5,278.59	3,345.80
Assigned Fees	596.00	371.00
Fundraising	4,905.59	2,008.25
Interest Received	595.04	67.05
Charitable and Ancillary Trading	1,070.00	303.63
Non Recurring Grants	152.50	18,460.37
PCC Fees Received	604.00	728.45
Recurring Grants	150.00	150.00
Extraordinary/ Other Income	5,407.31	4,725.06
Prior Year Adjustment (Hall Account)	5,261.90	
Prior Year Adjustment (Bell Account)	3,101.25	
Prior Year Adjustment (Reserves Account)	59.59	
Cash In Hand	167.42	
	<u>65,846.97</u>	<u>86,604.19</u>

Expenditure

Assigned Fees Payable	42.00	106.00
Church Administration	26.19	1,936.56
Trading Costs	-	36.00
Church Hall Transfers	5,150.00	15,692.61
Church Maintenance	2,753.73	5,095.70
Church Running Expenses	11,441.92	8,362.34
Clergy Expenses	2,080.25	1,520.91
Remuneration	-	309.45
Diocesan Quota	21,360.00	20,827.00
Fund Raising Expenses	6,632.80	
Home Mission & Other Societies	412.50	1,664.79
Secular Societies	606.78	
Upkeep of Churchyard	170.00	129.83
Other Payments	5,412.34	10,501.43
Total Expenditure	<u>56,088.51</u>	<u>66,182.62</u>

Surplus/Deficit

9,758.46

20,421.57

Balance Sheet @ 31st December 2023

	2023	2022
Current Assets		
No1 Account (Current)	35,134.15	33,960.82
Hall Account	5,261.90	
Bell Account	3,101.25	
Reserves Account	59.59	
Cash in Hand	167.42	
Restricted Funds Balance	4,131.16	4,136.19
Total Assets	<u>47,855.47</u>	<u>38,097.01</u>
Funded By:		
Reserves B/Fwd	38,097.01	17,675.44
Current Year Surplus (Deficit)	9,758.46	20,421.57
Total	<u>47,855.47</u>	<u>38,097.01</u>

Notes to the Accounts

1. The accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis and no account has been taken of accrued/prepaid income or expenditure

Basis of Independent Examiners Statement

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the organisation and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the officers concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below,

Independent Examiners Statement

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

1. 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 Charities Act to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: *K. Swinney*

Date: 09/05/2024

NatWest Bank Account as of 31st December 2023	£39,265.31
CCLA- Church Board of Finance Savings Account- Fabric Fund	£7,646.43
CCLA-Church Board of Finance Savings Account-Organ Fund	£933.72
CCLA-Church Board of Finance-Savings Account Religious Ed Fund	£7,252.86

One significant difference when comparing this year with 2022 is that St John's received grants for maintenance, fuel and towards the refurbishment of the lower hall i.e. the James Room and development of the catering kitchen, these were offset by expenditure and the transfer of funds to the hall, last year.

This is a summary of the 2023 accounting year, starting with the analysis of Income.

There has been an increase in the Income Tax recovered as we are now receiving part of our Gift Aid monthly because of the parish joining the Parish Giving Scheme, details of this are later in this report.

There was a decrease in Planned Giving, a very generous doner was no longer able to support St John's. However, we saw a very significant increase in Other Planned Giving due to several factors, firstly the encouraging uptake in membership of the Parish Giving Scheme, secondly, as our church membership is growing, new and existing members have generously reviewed and increased their giving. They continue to donate using the various methods available, e.g. Card Reader, On-line Giving, Give a Little Scheme. We reintroduced the Service Cash Collection in April 2023, a legacy of Covid restrictions, this had a significant positive effect on our income. We have received several anonymous monetary gifts, plus a legacy. Some of these funds have been approved by the PCC to fund such things as the purchase of the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, pay the duty to HMRC on the fund-raising initiative, The Evangelist Gin Project and to fund the refurbishment of the Processional Cross. We are enormously grateful for the doners generosity. A Homeless Fund (restricted) was created by the PCC from David James Funeral collection kindly donated by his family to St Johns. David was an avid supporter of homeless charities.

We have seen an increase in our parish Community and Outreach Committee's activities and events, which have generated much needed income reflected in the increase we see in fundraising proceeds.

Moving on to expenditure, in this year we have funded the groundwork for the installation of a new boiler, however, we have not had the cost of the masonry work and roof repairs as in the previous year. The purchase and installation of the boiler remains a work in progress.

We have seen an increase in all our Church Running Expenses due to the significant rise in inflation in the last year, this has had an overall impact on our costs. In 2023 we started to pay some of our organists, however, some are very generous and offer their services freely and we are very grateful for this.

We paid our parish share in full this year. This is because of a clear increase in church membership and giving, the PCC made the decision to increase our Parish Share to the diocese by changing to Category F, hence the increase comparing 2022 to 2023.

The use of a new accounting system has provided a new level of detail and can now identify fundraising expenses. This does not mean that in the previous year we did not incur this expense, instead it was detailed within Church Running Expenses.

The Restricted Funds sit within the bank account and are as detailed. Redundant Restricted Funds inherited from church initiatives that ended several years ago were consolidated in 2023 into the unrestricted funds.

2023 has seen a change in Treasurer since Fiona handed over the reins at the end of 2022. I took on the role on an interim basis in the absence of a willing volunteer at last year's APCM. Since then, and after much praying Angela Edgar very kindly agreed to take over the role for which we are incredibly grateful. We have managed the church finances jointly from April until the end of the financial year. Since starting the new financial year, 2024, Angela is undertaking the role of Treasurer and comes to St John's with 34 years accounting experience.

Another change that has occurred this year was the move to a new accounting system, from spread sheet accounting to QuickBooks. The change is welcomed by the Diocese of Bath and Wells-Director of Finance and Operations who has informed the PCC that he supports any PCC who is working to improve it is understanding of its financial position and for the ease of ongoing financial reporting. One advantage of moving to a more formal and cloud-based system, allows for the handover of key financial information efficiently in the event of changes in key role holders. As a result of the accounting change there are some switches to allocations and descriptions of income and expenditure

The management of the church finances continued to operate within the requirements of the St John's Financial Control Policy, introduced in 2022. Following a review of the policy, the PCC authorised an updated version in July 2023, with the addition of an appendix of Expenditure Values and a List of Authorisation Levels, the introduction of payments over £100 should be authorised by 2 PCC members and Assets valued over £1,000 in future will be recorded on a Fixed Asset Register (Terrier).

This year the PCC approved for St John's to join the Church of England Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). This is a new free resource to help church members plan their giving and where appropriate, do so tax efficiently. This scheme is used by more than 75,000 people in thirty-six dioceses. PGS can help to increase giving year on year, improve cash flow and reduce administration for Treasurers and Gift Aid Secretaries. We thank all members of our church community who generously give to St John's either through the collection plate or through regular giving schemes. St John's could not operate without your support. At the time of writing this report, St John's has 21 PGS members.

Thank you to Fiona for her continued support during our interim period of handover, Margaret James, Gift Aid Secretary for compiling and making our claims from HMRC, Angela Edgar for her support and practical approach to accounting and to Katie Swinney who agreed to act as an independent examiner of our accounts, in place of Mike Bowles for this year only.

Nicola Coaker
Interim Treasurer 2023 & Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee