



The Church of St John the Evangelist, Carterton

Annual Report and Accounts
of the
Parochial Church Council 2024

This report covers the calendar year

January to December 2023

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Foreword by the Team Rector, Reverend Andrew Tweedy

2023 was another challenging year for St John's Church, due to rising expenses, stagnant income and various health challenges faced by members of the Ministry Team and other congregation members. However, despite these challenges, we have seen growth and progress in a number of areas of God's mission among us, especially in discipleship, Children and Families ministry, prayer ministry and service to the community.

The Ministry Team was strengthened by the addition of Wend Smith as an Assistant Children and Families Minister, training with our Children and Families Minister Gary Long, and Rev Barry Hanson as a part time Associate Priest. Both Wend and Barry have fitted into the team really well and have brought fresh ideas and enthusiasm. We've welcomed Rev Katie Welborn back after maternity leave and have enjoyed her ministry accompanied by the delightful Jesse.

Our vision is to be a growing vibrant church, rooted in Christ, that reaches out and serves the whole community. I sincerely believe that we are rooted in Christ: we follow the lectionary and preach and practise God's message of love and redemption; we serve the community in a number of ways from, for example, Kintsugi Hope courses, Inspire, and Repair Cafés to Friday Drop-in and our Kids' Clubs amongst others. The area we need to focus on now is becoming a growing and vibrant church. We experimented with the Lighthouse services which were well received; however, we didn't really reach anyone new. Even so, the church is now in a position to move forward: we have the advent of a software program, ChurchSuite, which will allow better communication; we have strong links with both St Britius and St Mary's which will allow us to work together to form a strong Benefice; we have an established pattern of worship and of outreach. What can we look for in the future? I would like to see more events that reach out to the people of Carterton, especially on the new estates. Staff changes can bring a feeling of being unsettled but let's embrace this time of transition and focus on taking positive actions. I was shocked to realise that many people living on the periphery of the town don't even know where St John's is! What an exciting opportunity!

As I write this, we are preparing for the "Thanks for our volunteers' service"; we have made a list of all the different areas of church life dependent on your support, this report gives some indication of the hard work that's involved. I won't attempt to thank everyone by name since, inevitably, I'd make a mistake and miss someone out, but I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all of you because without you, the church simply could not function well! However, may I say a personal thank you to Rev Ian, Katie and Carol for their support and for all that they have contributed to the life of this church over the past years.

God bless you,
Drew Tweedy
Rector

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Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is pleased to offer our Annual Report and Accounts for 2023.

Our vision at St John's is to be a growing vibrant church, rooted in Christ, that reaches out and serves the whole community. The PCC is committed to implementing this vision and recognises that we have a responsibility as a charity to advance the cause of the Christian Religion in the Parish of Carterton and to work to enable the people of the parish to live as followers of Jesus Christ.

The St John the Evangelist Parochial Church Council is the "trustee body corporate" responsible for working with the incumbent in promoting the whole mission of the church, spiritual, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical in the Parish of Carterton. It has a specific responsibility for the care and maintenance of the "Parish Centre for Worship" (the St John's Church building) in Burford Road, Carterton. To facilitate this work, the PCC oversees the activities of the Church and maintains the fabric of the church building.

The PCC address is St John's Church, 6 Burford Road, Carterton, Oxfordshire, OX18 3AA. It is part of the Deanery of Witney in the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. It is a "Body Corporate" (see PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2017) and is currently an "excepted charity" which is therefore not registered with the Charity Commission (ie: it has no charity number). This would have to change were our annual income to exceed £100,000.

The Church of St John the Evangelist began life in 1908 as a Mission Church in the Parish of Black Bourton. It was rebuilt in 1963 as a dual-purpose hall/church and developed again in 1994 with a new worship area and other facilities including an office. It first had its own minister in the 1960's and the vicarage was built in 1962. Another phase of building was completed in 2010 to extend the church yet further by adding a small kitchen, a catering kitchen and a storage room. As a result, St John's is a now modern multi-purpose building right in the centre of Carterton.

A wide range of activities take place here but in the end we, like Jesus, are about people and relationships. We seek to be the best human beings that we can and believe that this is best achieved by being disciples of Jesus Christ. We are not perfect but are always learning. Without the generosity and sacrifices made by Carterton people over the years none of this would be here for us today and for those who come after us.

The New Benefice

The original Benefice of Brize Norton and Carterton and its Team Ministry was formed in 2003 and comprised the churches of St John's in Carterton and St Britius in Brize Norton. In 2021 the Diocese of Oxford expressed a wish to incorporate the neighbouring "orphan" parish of Black Bourton within the Benefice. (St Mary's was in fact the "mother church" which planted St John's in Carterton.) In November 2021, the PCCs of all three churches unanimously resolved to support this proposal.

On 1 December 2022, the three churches officially became the Benefice of Brize Norton with Carterton and Black Bourton. Each parish retains its own distinct entity, style of worship and its own Parochial Church Council. The Team Ministry support all three parishes in pastoral matters and worship, and their congregation are invited to meet together for worship and social occasions.

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Ministry

The Team Ministry comprises:

- The Reverend Andrew (Drew) Tweedy, Team Rector
- The Reverend Barry Hanson, Associate Priest from September 2023
- The Reverend Ian Howard, Team Vicar (*)
- The Reverend Katie Welborn van Santen, Curate (*)
- Mrs Hilary (Billie) Tweedy and Mrs Carol Howard, Licensed Lay Ministers
- Mrs Lyndsay Baker, Licensed Lay Minister and Spiritual Director
- Mr Gary Long, Children and Families Minister
- Ms Wend Smith, Assistant Children and Families Minister from September 2023

(*) Rev Howard continues his recovery from sickness and has been able to perform certain occasional duties. Rev Katie took maternity leave from June and celebrated the birth of baby son, Jessie, in July. She returned to light duties in December.

Rev Stephen Bessent left the ministry team in March and we thank him for his contributions to services and other pastoral care duties.

Worship, Prayer and Teaching

At the heart of our activities are worship, prayer and teaching about our faith. We want people to think for themselves and know the scriptures as a foundation for their relationships with God, others, the planet and ourselves and to express this in worship, prayer and action.

The regular weekly pattern of services at St John's comprises Sunday worship services include an 8am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion service once a month, with the main service taking place at 10.30am. This follows a basic pattern of Holy Communion (CW Order 1) on the first and third Sundays of each month.

An Informal Service takes place on the second Sunday of each month designed more specifically for families with children. This service is led by Gary Long, the Children and Families Minister, and encourages the children to take an active role. It is proving very popular and has become the best attended service of the month.

A Morning Worship service takes place on the fourth Sunday and comprises bespoke Morning Prayer which is made up of modern Church of England liturgy put together to suit the theme of the day.

A joint-Benefice service of Morning Worship is held on the fifth Sunday of the month, with the venue alternating around the parish.

An afternoon Messy Church service is held on the first Sunday, apart from January, April, August and December.

A midweek service of said Holy Communion (Common Worship (CW) Order 1) takes place every Thursday morning attended by a small but regular congregation.

Lyndsay Baker introduced a regular monthly Sunday afternoon service: "Creative Space". A quiet, reflective time with an opportunity to be refreshed and draw near to God as we discover more about Him and ourselves through creativity. We are all creative whether we think it or not as we are made in God's image!

Lyndsay also trained up a small team of prayer ministers who offer prayer after Sunday morning services and special events.

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St John's is in the fortunate position of having a good range of audio and technical facilities. The Sunday morning in-church worship service continues to be broadcast "live" over the internet, as well as being archived for subsequent viewing via Facebook and YouTube. By this means, we continue to be able to reach many more people who would not normally attend our church. Special thanks go to Ian Harley, Mike Cox, and Stephen Hester for their expertise and diligence in making the technology work so successfully.

It was with great sadness that the death of Andrew Monkhouse was announced following a brief illness in March 2024. Andrew was also a valued and much-loved member of the Technology team, an active volunteer in Men's Ministry and other areas of church activities.

The Civic/Battle of Britain service was held in September where members of the Town Council and RAF Brize Norton participated. The annual Remembrance service took place as normal in November, at which many of the local uniformed organisations, charitable groups and the Town Council were represented.

Throughout December, we held various Christmas services and events. We held a Christmas Fayre early in the month. The Christingle service was held in church, with people making their own Christingle just before the service. A contribution towards the cost of oranges was kindly made by Morrisons supermarket. An evening carol service was held in the building and broadcast live. A "no-rehearsal" Nativity service for the children replaced the December Informal service. A reflective "Long Night" service was led by Rev Katie on the Thursday morning before Christmas, aimed towards people who were not looking forward to Christmas. A crib service was streamed on Christmas Eve morning. Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve was another in-house and virtual service, with a Christmas Day service held in the building and online. Rev Barry organised a Posada where a crib "visited" households in the community. Knitted lambs, made by members of the congregation, were kept by each household to be brought the crib service on Christmas Eve.

In addition to all the above services, regular smaller gatherings are held in private homes around the parish: home groups, study groups and prayer groups which supplement the worship pattern.

In May, we joined in the celebration of King Charles III coronation by televising the service in church and participating in the Town Council's children's tea party activities.

In September, the church held a Pet Blessing service. It is hoped to repeat this in future years. In October a Baby Loss Memorial service was held and this is also one that can be held annually.

Worship and Teaching for Children and Young People

Gary Long, the Children and Families Minister, continued with a large programme of work in the community. The weekly Kids' Club on Tuesdays and Wednesday for children up to eleven years of age provide a forum to offer Christian teaching. These children have become very comfortable helping at the monthly Informal Service. Following the resignation of our trainee youth worker, Chris Welsh, in January, Gary was ably and enthusiastically assisted by Wend Smith throughout the year. In September, she was officially appointed as Assistant Children and Families Minister. Wend has brought several new ideas to the programme of events and is attending a Diocesan supported training course to expand her knowledge.

Once again Gary arranged a programme of events throughout the year during the school holidays. The range of activities include picnics, country walks and recreational events and were well attended by families.

Gary continued to develop and expand his links with the local schools in the Benefice, and with support from other Clergy Team members, provides regularly weekly assembly services in person or by broadcast to nearly all the local schools. St John's Church of England Primary, Edith Moorhouse, Carterton Primary and

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Gateway schools continued to come to St John's for their Christmas and Easter services. Brize Norton school again held some term-end services at St Britius. The pilot project for a target group of teenagers at the Community College encouraging them to explore their faith journey over lunch continued to be well-attended with numbers increasing from the new intake of students from the local primary schools who were already familiar with Gary's teaching. (Thanks go to Carol Howard for providing pizza.) The church hosted the end of year valedictory service for St John's School, and a Christmas Concert for the Community College.

The PCC is looking forward to being able to encourage and maintain the burgeoning faith journey of these young children as they grow into teenagers by adding the resources of a youth worker to the ministry team.

The weekly Friday term-time "Drop In" group continued to remain popular for parents with pre-school toddlers, and attendance again reached maximum capacity.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals ("Occasional Offices")

The Ministry Team has worked hard to offer a first-rate service for these events, but we are unable to escape from national trends in what people want to do. The Ministry Team has continued to work closely in both churches of the Benefice to cover needs.

Nineteen baptisms were held at St John's during the year. Billie Tweedy organised pre-baptismal meetings with the families to prepare them for their service.

A total of eleven funeral services and thanksgiving services in church, four services at crematoria and two burials or committal of ashes were conducted during the year. The Ministry Team also supported burial services on behalf of the other churches in the Benefice. St John's is not a popular venue for weddings and no weddings took place during the year.

Mission and Evangelism in the Community

In response to the Commission given to Christians by Jesus Himself (See Matthew 28 vv16-end), St John's seeks to reach out to others with the love of God. Actions are more powerful than words and we seek to earn a hearing for the Gospel.

A regular programme of social activities took place during the year. These included monthly church family breakfasts, a Burns Night Supper in January, an Easter Sunday family breakfast. A Flower Festival and Harvest Supper were held in October.

None of our social and communal activities could happen without the support of church volunteers and the catering team led by Ian Harley.

An annual event that forms part of our outreach programme to the community takes place at the beginning of December. To coincide with the Town Council's event of a street fayre and lantern parade to switch on the Christmas Street decorations, the church "opened up" to invite people to come in for a free warm drink and children's craft activity. We also ran our sweet tooth tombola stall at the Street Fayre to publicise the "open church" and handed out leaflets advertising our Christmas service and 2024 programme of services and social events. The refreshments were once again kindly donated by Lyn and Stephen Bostock and sweets were generously donated by members of the congregation and it's just 20p "a go", so this proved popular especially with the children. This was followed by a Christmas Craft Fair the next day where the lanterns from the Street Parade were on display in church.

Our "Party Package" initiative originally started life several years ago as a means of generating revenue for a Discipleship Fund to help support with a monetary grant for applicants who wished to pursue a specific

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mission project such as short-term volunteering trips abroad with a missionary organisation or to just explore their personal faith journeys. A small PCC sub-group, currently comprising Lyndsay Baker (chair), Steve Bostock and Ian Harley, oversees approval of grants from the Fund, helping people. This can be to help purchase Christian literature or attending events such as Spring Harvest.

Party Package bookings are supervised by Liz Wood and continue to offer competitively priced occasions for families to hold their own children's parties. We thank Liz and her team for their work in running these events.

Church finances are also boosted through church hall hiring to community groups. These currently include weekly group meetings of uniformed organisations, occasional civic meetings, funeral wakes, family parties and exercise classes. Bookings work around other activities in the church calendar. Discounted rates are available to church family members, and special consideration is given to those organising charity fund-raising.

Our Vision for the Future

In a continuing effort to reach members of the community who wish to explore their faith journey, a Lighthouse Service was introduced held on the third Sunday afternoon of the month. This is a work in progress and its impact and success will be reviewed going forward. Other means of outreach will also be explored.

Volunteers

St John's is fortunate to be able to call on a committed number of volunteers without whom our current ministry would be unsustainable. The range of backroom tasks that keep the church functioning is vast: paying the bills; keeping our computer systems working; overseeing safeguarding and data protection regulations; checking accoutrements in the facilities; putting out the rubbish; refreshments and catering for social church family events; gardening and flower arranging; administering private hire bookings; leading home group meetings; men's and ladies' ministry; social groups and pastoral care; and also providing the music at our worship services. The PCC recognises and gratefully thanks all those who gave so generously of their time. More volunteers are always welcome.

Pastoral Care – Carol Howard

Mrs Carol Howard continued to lead the team during the year. Behind the scenes their work has continued to be vital as they support and pray for those they care for. We feel that there are still levels of anxiety, a loss of confidence and a feeling of vulnerability among some people still present after the Covid 19 lockdown and current economic hardships being faced by many people. Ideally, we would like to extend the team. Thank you to everyone for their valuable contributions. Janet Sayer has now re-joined the team of 8. Carol and Rev Ian take Home Communion to 5 members, 2 from St Britius and 3 from St Johns.

There is a need to support people emotionally, something that the whole church family can do well. Our calling is to befriend newcomers or anyone who looks distressed or isolated at coffee time after the service. We no longer have a rota with one person in attendance, instead members of the team wear their badges and approach people as necessary, offering friendship, support and/or prayer. We have made a point of speaking with new people without making them feel overcome. Some prefer to sit quietly; others are pleased to see a familiar face when they return.

The effects of the cost-of-living increases experienced by everyone during the year, especially regarding the pressure on spiralling heating costs and food price rises, have meant many people in the local community have experienced difficulties and are struggling. St John's continued opening the church as a "warm space" on alternate 1st and 3rd Wednesday morning, to provide fellowship and a soup lunch prepared by

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Billie Tweedy and team on a rota. Around twenty-four people have been attending these sessions, mainly church members but others from the general community have also come in. The event proved so popular it continued throughout the year as a “coffee morning” fellowship event.

The fortnightly INSPIRE group 2nd and 4th Wednesday afternoon offers people the chance to get together for company and a variety of activities. It starts with a prayer and ends with a prayer and hymns. It has continued to grow throughout the year and now has around 34 regulars. We would value more kitchen-trained volunteers to help with catering. Shawn Bayliss and Gary Seely have now been kitchen trained and share the rota in the kitchen, they also help setting up and clearing the hall which is much appreciated.

The hardship fund was set up by the PCC in 2020 to fill an identified need by offering one-off emergency financial assistance to families struggling to cope with a loss of income due to difficult personal circumstances. Funding grants are approved by a sub-group comprising Lyndsay Baker (chair), Re Drew and Billie Tweedy and Linda Wooloff.

Support has also been offered to those in need in a variety of ways. Practically through offering transport, shopping, collecting prescriptions, but also by donating to the food banks, helping with house moves; spiritual support through prayer, prayer shawls, counselling, home communion and of course emotional and social support by extending a hand of friendship through phone calls, visits or meeting up. Thank you to all who serve in this way. “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’ (Matthew 25:40).

A “kit” remains available in the church to provide immediate aid to a homeless person who might seek help at the church door, to provide clothing, emergency food and the bus fare to travel on to a shelter.

Kintsugi Hope - Louise Griffiths & Billie Tweedy

The partnership between St John's and Kintsugi Hope continued through 2023. This is a Christian charity which enables churches to work in partnership with them to run well-being courses for those who wish to work on their mental health. The aim being to build resilience. Louise Griffiths and Billie Tweedy continue to work as Group Leaders, however, Jacky Long decided that she did not wish to act as Group Leader going forward as she had other projects within the church that she wished to work on.

A second course was completed in December 2023 and was held in the Family Centre next door to the church. The PCC have agreed that future courses should be held in this venue to encourage those who do not have a Christian faith to attend and to help with reaching out to the local community. The course consisted of nine attendees, three of whom had no link to St John's church. The course was successful with all attendees remaining engaged throughout and also meeting up for a couple of social events. Friendships were created and developed, and a WhatsApp group set up to enable individuals to stay in touch and support each other.

During 2023 the first Kintsugi Hope Group (held the previous year) also held a couple of reunions to enable members to stay in touch.

Louise is working to build a relationship with the welfare team at RAF Brize Norton. She met with a number of them in summer 2023 to explore how Kintsugi Hope could help some of the individuals they are dealing with who are suffering with their mental wellbeing. The message was received well and one of the team attended the last Kintsugi Hope course to experience it for herself. She was very positive about how we could work together and took this message back to the team. Another member of the welfare team has expressed her intention of attending the next course. We are hoping that this will lead to more introductions in the next few months. Due to GDPR issues it is not possible to simply provide a list of

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names. Each person must be approached individually which will take time. The plan going forward is to approach local doctors' surgeries in the next few months to spread the message further.

It had been hoped that an additional course could have been run in the spring of 2023 but securing the venue and agreeing terms and requirements via the trustees took longer than anticipated. Going forward the plan is to hold 2 courses a year in the spring and autumn/ winter. The next course is due to start in April 2024 and Billie is also planning to run a course for her home group.

Eco Church – Billie Tweedy

During 2021, Billie Tweedy took the lead in registering St John's to become an accredited Eco Church, an initiative being promoted by the Church of England. We achieved Bronze level status almost immediately, and were awarded Silver in 2022. Since then, we have been working towards attaining the Gold standard. This is an initiative which the PCC hope our youth members could embrace and actively support.

The Repair Cafe initiative, in collaboration with the Carterton Environmental Awareness group, continued with several sessions taking place during the year, the aim being to reduce the number of items being sent to landfill. This provided the opportunity for people to bring in personal items for repair by a group of voluntary helpers. This service is free of charge, but donations are invited. It has proved to be very popular. Our recycling programme continued with to expand by the addition of a "clothes swap" event also held several times a year, giving people the chance to pass on unwanted clothing items and add to their wardrobe.

There are several recycling boxes in the church foyer – for ink cartridges/toners, candles, dental care packaging and used toothpaste brushes.

We also remain vigilant in trying to save energy costs by installing more efficient equipment, turning off lights, turning down heating where applicable etc. During 2024, the PCC plan to upgrade the inefficient radiant heater system in the Hall area. It is hoped donations from the congregation to help cover the substantial costs related to this.

Plans continued during the year to develop the back garden into a quiet reflective space with a view to encouraging more wildlife to visit. Thanks go to Jackie Thomas for leading this project.

Charities supported by the PCC and Church Members

Apart from specific collections when global emergencies occur, the charities we currently support on a regular basis are:

Children's Society – Giving via personal collection boxes is changing as more people report that they are no longer using much cash and hence do not have spare coinage in pockets like they used to. I am encouraging as many people as possible to continue with the boxes, but also giving them the opportunity to donate to The Children's Society using the card reader in church. This means our treasurer needs to know about each donation and he then writes a cheque totalling the amount given that way, I am aware this is extra work for him, and I am very grateful to him for his willingness to do this. The Box total for 2023 (boxes and card donations) came to £2,468.70 which was marginally up on the previous year (£2,367). The number of box holders is reducing, so I am constantly on the lookout for new box holders. The annual Christingle service took place in December which raised £205.21, this was added to the money I raised at the church Christmas Craft Fayre, making a total of £334.96. The Thank you letters with totals are always displayed on one of the boards in the hall.

Gatehouse Oxford –The PCC continued supporting this project with a monthly bank transfer donation of £50, in place of preparing and delivering sandwiches, helping the Gatehouse continue its work to help the

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homeless in Oxford. The annual retiring collection for them during Advent raised a further £150. (Lyn Bostock)

The Besom in Witney- A box in the foyer is available for donations of non-perishable foods, toiletries and household products but receipts still have not really recovered since the pandemic. (There are several other food banks in the town who receive food donations.) The proceeds from the annual Harvest Service, were once again gratefully received and passed on to the Besom who have worked hard to meet the increased requests for crisis food parcels to vulnerable people in the area. (Linda Wooloff)

CAP (Christians Against Poverty) - St John's is proud to have continued its partnership with this debt relief charity. Members of the congregation continue to work with the CAP Debt Coach as client 'befrienders'. It is hoped that this work will grow as there are many facets to CAP's national work that will meet the needs of people in Carterton. The PCC makes a regular monthly monetary donation to assist the local area CAP office in Witney with their running costs.

Family Centre: We continue to maintain close links with our neighbours in the Allandale Centre.

The PCC encourages members to give to other charities beyond our own church. A Christmas concert organised by the Community College was hosted in church in December.

Ecumenism

St John's is part of "Carterton Christians in Unity", the operating name representing Carterton's ecumenical activities along with the other churches in the town. The World Day of Prayer service in March, coordinated by Linda Cox, and an Easter activities workshop for families were arranged. The clerical leaders of the churches meet on a regular basis and are discussing how other activities can resume in 2024 and it is hoped that the Pioneer Ministry initiative led by the Methodist Church leader (Ian Worrall) will provide opportunities for further ecumenical outreach to the housing estates on the periphery of the parish.

RAF Brize Norton Chaplaincy

For many years there has been a good working relationship between St John's and the Chaplains at RAF Brize Norton since there is now no longer a church presence on the Base. The Chaplaincy Team are assured of a warm welcome at St John's as a venue when needed. Despite the frequent changes in their team as the chaplains regularly get moved on to new postings, we look forward to working and praying together in future as this relationship of mutual support is highly valued. The RAF Chaplaincy help organise and lead the annual Remembrance Day Service in November.

St John's CE Aided Primary School

The school has continued to perform well. The links with St John's Church are strong and healthy with weekly assemblies led by Gary Long, who has built an effective relationship with the school's senior management team and the teaching staff. Mike Watts and Rev Tweedy continue to serve as part of a well-qualified and engaged body of Governors.

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Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Administrative Information

Structure, Governance and Management

The PCC operates under the law as stated in the “Parochial Church Council Powers Measure”. Membership and the appointment of members is governed by the latest edition of the “Church Representation Rules”. The PCC is 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.

PCC Membership

The Annual Parishioners’ and Church Meetings took place on 14 May. These meetings were held in the church building and broadcast via Zoom. At the Parishioners’ Meeting the current churchwardens, Alison Brown and Allister Holt, stood for re-election and were returned unopposed. Both receive our grateful thanks for their work in this role.

A selection of the following made up ex-officio members of the PCC during the year:

Team Rector: Reverend Andrew (Drew) Tweedy

Licensed Lay Ministers: Lyndsay Baker, Carol Howard

Churchwardens: Alison Brown and Allister Holt

Deanery Synod Representatives: Mrs Carol Howard was elected at the APCM in May. There is still one vacancy.

A total of nine lay members completes the PCC. Up to three members can be elected each year to serve for a period of three years and are eligible for re-election at the end of their time in office. On appointment, each new member is asked to agree to follow our Good Working Practice Guidelines which set out meeting procedure. An important focus is on demonstrating mutual respect and considerate behaviour.

Elected 2021 Stephen Bostock, Ian Harley (for a period of three years). One vacancy remained

Elected 2022 Elizabeth Wood and Linda Wooloff (for a period of three years). Two vacancies remain.

Elected 2023 Michael Cox and Ray Goodson (for a period of three years). Although re-elected, Janet Sayer resigned during 2023 creating an additional vacancy.

The full PCC met nine times during the year. At the May meeting, the PCC agreed to reduce the number of meeting dates to a bi-monthly pattern. Matters requiring urgent attention and decisions were dealt with via email. The meeting regularity was subsequently amended to add a further meeting date in October.

PCC Officers in 2023

Chair: Reverend Andrew Tweedy

Lay Chair: Allister Holt

Secretary & Electoral Roll Officer: Linda Wooloff

Treasurer: Ray Goodson

Sub-Groups

Standing Committee: This committee comprises the Rector, Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary. Meetings are held monthly via Zoom prior to the PCC meetings. The committee met six times during the year. Their main role is to prepare the agenda in advance of the full PCC meetings.

Hardship Fund: As mentioned above, the PCC set aside a sum of money to provide a Hardship Fund to offer one-off financial payments for families identified as being in particular need. This team comprised

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Lyndsay Baker (chair), Billie Tweedy, Rev Drew Tweedy and Linda Woolloff. Several emergency grants were sanctioned during the year to help local families in crisis.

Discipleship Fund: The PCC set up a sub-sub-group to administer the Discipleship Fund which handles applications to the grant scheme, as mentioned earlier. Members comprise Lyndsay Baker (chair), Steve Bostock, Ian Harley and latterly Rev Drew Tweedy. During the year the fund supported a family to enable them to attend Spring Harvest.

Social Media/Communications: A further sub-group was established specifically concentrating on our social media offering. During the year they have worked on redesigning our website, increasing our Facebook and Instagram presence, and updating publicity material. The group is led by Billie Tweedy with assistance from Ian Harley, Kath Monkhouse, Wendy Smith, Mike Watts and Liz Wood.

Deanery Synod

Our representatives on this body are Rev Tweedy and Carol Howard.

Electoral Roll - Linda Woolloff, Electoral Roll Officer

The Electoral Roll closed prior to the Annual Meeting. The Roll opened after the Annual Meeting in 2023 at 73 members. At its close in April 2024, five members had left and one had joined, so the new total is 69.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) – Mike Watts, Data Control Officer

Mike Watts replaced Liz Wood as Data Control Officer in May. He conducted a review of our practices to ensure they comply with current guidance. We endeavour to follow current national policy when retaining or destroying personal information. GDPR forms continue to be received and processed by the PCC Secretary.

The PCC continues to use the Blind Copy option when communicating electronically with many the church family members or others who have expressed a desire to be kept in touch with church events.

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Unfortunately, no replacement stepped forward during the year to take over the role of our Safeguarding Officer. Shirley Sanderson, the Safeguarding Office for St Britius, has taken over the lead role for an interim period until a new Safeguarding Officer can be recruited.

The Verification Officer for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks is Stephen Bostock.

Fabric

General Building Maintenance

The latest Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in January 2023. No urgent issues were identified but Mike Cox worked with the architect who had conducted the inspection to develop a schedule of works by order of importance, when funds permit. These include replacing the inefficient radiant heaters in the Hall and Old Chancel, replacing some of the outdated windows, upgrading kitchen equipment, roofing repairs and lightning conductor upgrade.

Routine maintenance and some general repairs were carried out during the year such as servicing of the boilers, fire equipment and main door servicing. Statutory inspections were carried out as required by safety regulations. The updating of our Virgin Media communication hub required a changeover to a new telephone number.

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For several years, we have been fortunate enough to be able to employ a weekly cleaner. However, in May, she retired, and it proved difficult to find a replacement at a reasonable cost. (Thanks to Mike Cox for pursuing and eventually resolving this.) Limited funds do not allow us to afford the services of a caretaker and general housekeeping and maintenance of our facilities is carried out by volunteers. We offer grateful thanks to Mike Cox in particular for his expertise and diligence in overseeing the safety of our building and facilities and to ensure that our statutory obligations are maintained, and repairs and servicing are undertaken when needed.

Audio-Visual

The technical team continued to provide the virtual services which enable the church to stream the main Sunday worship and other major services. These services continue to be available on Facebook and YouTube so can attract a wider audience. Broadcasts are archived on our website and YouTube to allow people to watch them later. Viewing figures have been encouraging, although a drop-off in numbers has been noticed as the country gradually opened up again to allow families more outdoor activities during the year which quite often take place on a Sunday.

Along with the Ministry Team, thanks particularly go to Ian Harley and Stephen Hester who operate the technical desk on a Sunday.

Over the years, improvements and repairs to the technical equipment have followed a somewhat piecemeal pattern. Thanks go in particular to Ian Harley for managing to overcome breakdowns and replace equipment as necessary to keep the system functioning efficiently. Although the PCC authorised a review of the whole technology system in 2022 with a view to upgrading its efficiency and compatibility, that had to be put on hold. This will require outside specialist input, so will only take place when funds are available.

Mike Watts has provided his invaluable expertise in helping to run our office software and IT systems. During the year, Mike oversaw the replacement of several back-office systems. He continues to look at ways to improve our software efficiency. Billie Tweedy continues to oversee the day-to-day administration of our website, Facebook pages and our Church Near You page on the Diocesan website which is now provides a much-improved advertisement of the church's activities. Mike has also been available to provide "help desk" solutions and to coach other members of the leadership team in use of these systems.

Financial Review – Ray Goodson, Treasurer

The financial statements that combine to form the Annual Accounts for St John the Evangelist Church Carterton are formulated on a 'Receipts and Payments' basis as defined Section 133(1) of the Charities Act 2011, ergo, the Gross Income from all sources does not exceed £250,000 for the financial year. This Review inclusively covers the calendar year January to December 2023 and forms an obligatory part of the Annual Report.

As is required by current Charity Commission Financial Regulations, the 'Annual Accounts' of the PCC have been independently examined. That procedure was carried out by Shilton Accounting Services whose independent examiner's report follows this review.

Overview

It is an indisputable fact that without the ability to withdraw funds from its investment funds this church's financial position would be economically unviable. By way of explanation - the "top line" and "bottom line" are two sections of an income statement, or profit and loss (P&L), of an organisation. This income statement essentially focuses on the organisation's revenues and expenses during a particular period. The

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top line refers to the total revenue and the bottom line is the net income after all expenses have been deducted.

Plainly if the “revenue” (top line) is not of sufficient size to cover all the expenses incurred the bottom line becomes negative – effectively in debt. Without the ability to increase the revenue (top line) by withdrawing funds from the investment funds to put in the daily account, the St John’s accounts would have been in a negative situation. The relevance of this and its cost becomes apparent later.

Income

The end of year income statement shows a different emphasis in the activities forming the basis of the Revenue stream, compared to previous years. During previous finance periods, the mainstay for adding revenue has always been the Standing Order (Planned) Giving. However, during the 2023 financial period a significant number of church members using this method of giving left St John’s, resulting in a 46% reduction in the amount given in this way. The Parish Giving Scheme method of giving did, however, compensate to some extent by delivering a 23% increase this year. This was still not enough though, to prevent the 2023 Total Revenue being 5.4% down on the 2022 figures. Encouragingly, at the final tally when all “Other receipts” were taken into consideration, the overall picture showed a 3.5% increase over 2022. Additionally, although interest income from the investment accounts fell during the year the addition of the £21K+ earned, ensured that the 2023 “Receipts Total” which amounted to £81,251 (the “top line”) showed a 2.1% increase over of 2022.

Expenditure

Currently the “Expenditure” statement for the 2023 period shows 28 different payment categories creating an annual “Payments” total (Bottom Line) of £143,982 – a total almost 15% up on 2022. The Diocesan Parish Share is, as always, the costliest with the costs of our employees in second place. Of the “controllable” costs, the gas and electricity usage created a 108% increase in Utility costs. As explained in the “Overview” at the start of this review when the “bottom line”, in this case £143,982, exceeds the “top line”, the account is effectively in debt. The deficit during this financial period amounted to £62,731.

Overall Summary

Many of the PCC’s costs are obligatory in that they cannot be modified without a contractual change. A business would most probably consider the following to increase the bottom line:

- Strategy 1: Look for ways to increase income – fund raising; appeals for specific items/projects; generosity schemes; asking members of the congregation to increase their giving are among many such ways of achieving that.
- Strategy 2: To continue to withdraw cash from invested funds to meet extraneous costs in addition to the cost of “mission”.
- Strategy 3: Find ways to decrease expenses.

Reserves Policy

The PCC’s policy, agreed in 2018, to seek to maintain a “Reserve of Unrestricted Funds” equivalent to two months’ average expenditure payments continues as the Reserves Policy. The funds held in the CBF deposit fund (currently £37,088) is deemed to be the St John’s Church PCC Reserve of Unrestricted Funding. 2023 has been the highest spending period yet, however the method of calculation is retained for 2024, resulting in a figure of £23,996 being designated as the nominal “Reserve”. It was also restated that, in the event of unexpected financial difficulties requiring funding over and above the reserved money, unrestricted income from the other CCLA investment funds could be used to supplement the “Reserve”.

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Personnel

The PCC extends its gratitude and thanks to the Finance Team – Ray Goodson (all financial aspects and banking) and Alison Ford (Gift Aid reclaim) for their hard work. Ray in particular works on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the finances remain on track. Our grateful thanks also go to Jacky Thomas who has continued to assist Ray as Administrative Assistant for Finance in many of the duties the Finance Assistant's role encompasses.

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Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees (Parochial Church Council)

Independent examiner's report to the St John's Church Carterton Parochial Church Council

I report on the accounts of the St John's Church Carterton PCC for the year ended 31st December 2023, which are set out on the following pages.

Respective responsibilities of PCC and examiner

The PCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently 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 examiner's 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 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

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.


Name: David Cuthbertson ICPA Cert(Acc) Open
Shilton Accounting Services
21st March 2024

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Statement of Income & Expenditure

St John's Church Carterton
Income and expenditure year ended 31st December 2023

Receipts	2023	2022
Activities	£	£
Planned Giving	8,500.00	16,097.87
Cash Collections	5,655.86	5,930.89
Parish Giving Scheme Receipts	14,582.88	11,862.58
Gift Aid Recovered	4,218.89	8,979.97
Request/Donations	3,789.49	3,187.55
Facilities hire	1,758.50	2,409.50
Statutory Fees	-	1,790.00
Other Receipts	21,548.71	7,781.78
	<u>60,064.83</u>	<u>58,040.14</u>
Investments		
Investment Income	21,142.58	21,567.35
Bank Interest	49.48	0.10
	<u>21,192.06</u>	<u>21,567.45</u>
Total Receipts	<u><u>81,256.89</u></u>	<u><u>79,607.59</u></u>
Payments		
Employees salary costs	25,896.16	21,655.00
Pensions	2,128.94	462.08
Curates housing costs	29,748.72	8,219.35
Employees expenses	452.11	596.84
Parish Share	56,450.53	55,197.12
Visiting Clergy Fees	2,673.80	229.00
Heat and lighting	9,920.17	4,769.25
Insurance	2,135.41	2,004.84
General admin	1,776.59	883.58
Subscriptions	459.00	700.00
Printing and stationery	126.59	192.00
Cleaning	1,298.88	1,186.00
Clergy Expenses	1,574.34	1,751.25
Diocesan Statutory Fees	1,131.00	
Mission Media	167.95	134.50
Repairs & Renewals	1,148.60	180.00
Damage deposit refunds	200.00	200.00
Waste disposal	312.00	291.70
Telecommunications	1,897.82	1,851.53
Church Supplies	349.35	285.84
Maintenance/Supplies	428.12	9,524.13
Accounting fees	528.00	539.40
Legal fees	128.69	108.74
Other expenses	3,789.58	3,492.24
Fellowship Events	2,488.06	876.34
Mission Giving & Donations	4,599.18	7,565.94
Childrens Society	3,180.55	2,180.61
Asset Purchases		634.80
Total Payments	<u><u>149,981.88</u></u>	<u><u>125,712.98</u></u>
Annual surplus/deficit	<u><u>- 62,730.99</u></u>	<u><u>- 46,105.39</u></u>
Adjustment in valuation of Investments	<u><u>61,824.41</u></u>	<u><u>- 96,269.82</u></u>
Total annual increase/deficit in assets	<u><u>- 915.58</u></u>	<u><u>- 142,375.21</u></u>

Ray Goodson

Responsible Financial Officer

Date: March 2024

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Parish Return Statement

Parish return St John's Church Carterton For the period from 01/01/2023 to 31/12/2023					
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £	Previous year £
Tax efficient retained giving	73,052.38			73,052.38	27,980.45
Other planned giving					
Collectors at services	5,656.46			5,656.46	5,930.89
All other giving					
Gift Aid received	4,248.80			4,248.80	8,379.97
Lupulus received	3,789.49			3,789.49	3,107.55
Grants					
Total voluntary giving	86,757.62			86,757.62	46,058.86
Pardialing					
Dividends and interest	21,486.06			21,486.06	21,567.45
Church activities	1,758.50			1,758.50	1,790.00
Other income	21,548.71			21,548.71	30,191.28
Total income	109,792.89			109,792.89	106,607.59
Costs of fundraising					
Mission giving and donations	10,777.75			10,777.75	10,757.49
Diocesan parish share	56,450.53			56,450.53	55,197.12
Salaries wages and honoraria	27,025.06			27,025.06	22,714.32
Clergy and staff expenses	24,450.03			24,450.03	16,188.60
Stature's fees	1,121.00			1,121.00	
Church running expenses	9,481.06			9,481.06	8,044.39
Church utility bills	9,320.17			9,320.17	4,768.25
Repairs and maintenance	1,576.72			1,576.72	9,704.13
Other expenditure	3,469.55			3,469.55	4,327.14
Total payments	143,181.85			143,181.85	135,712.50
Net in valuation of investments	61,010.41			61,010.41	95,760.82
Excess of receipts over payments	916.58			916.58	- 140,375.41
Cash and investment at end	741,262.96			741,262.96	855,658.17
Cash and investment at start	740,346.38			740,346.38	741,762.96

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Statement of Assets

St John's Church Carterton				
Statement of Assets at 31st December 2023				
	2023		2022	
	Unrestricted Funds		Unrestricted Funds	
	£	£	£	£
Cash accounts				
Opening Balance	20,414.50		23,575.39	
Movement	- 3,882.99		- 3,160.89	
		<u>16,531.51</u>		<u>20,414.50</u>
HSBC Current Account Closing	12,199.34		16,323.32	
HSBC Fabric Fund Closing	4,332.17		4,091.18	
Total Cash accounts		<u>16,531.51</u>		<u>20,414.50</u>
Investment Accounts				
Opening Balance	721,197.20		859,996.95	
Movement	2,966.41		- 138,799.75	
		<u>724,163.61</u>		<u>721,197.20</u>
CCLA Deposit account	37,088.24		35,936.24	
CBF Investment Funds	687,075.37		685,260.96	
Total Investment at valuation		<u>724,163.61</u>		<u>721,197.20</u>
Total assets		<u>740,695.12</u>		<u>741,611.70</u>
Liabilities				
PAYE	260.89		260.89	
Pension	87.85		87.85	
Total Liabilities		<u>348.74</u>		<u>348.74</u>
Net assets & liabilities		<u>740,346.38</u>		<u>741,262.96</u>
Increase/decrease in assets		<u>- 916.58</u>		<u>- 142,375.21</u>

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Bank Reconciliation Statement

St John's Church Carterton			
Bank reconciliation 31st December 2023			
	Balance as accounts	Balance as statement	Difference
HSBC 70724513	12,199.34	12,199.34	-
HSBC 51416170	4,332.17	4,332.17	-
CCLA 3001D	37,088.24	37,088.24	-
CCLA 3001S	326,714.37	326,714.37	-
CCLA 3002S	360,361.00	360,361.00	-
Total	<u>740,695.12</u>	<u>740,695.12</u>	-

Appendix – Group Activity Reports

Ladies' Ministry

Unfortunately, the bi-monthly Ladies' Breakfasts was suspended in September until more volunteers come forward to provide the catering.

Men's Ministry – Steve Bostock

The Men's Ministry events have almost returned to the regular sequence that we had pre- pandemic.

The Men's Breakfasts have been held every two months, with a full English breakfast served in the church hall before the attendees move into the main body of the church to listen to the guest speaker. Among the speakers in 2023 we heard from Rev Miles Welborn, the husband of our curate Rev Katie, who gave an enthusiastic talk about his spiritual journey and his affinity to Hereford Cathedral. Attendance has regularly been between 30 and 35 which has been most encouraging, thanks to the efforts of Gary for contacting the men who attend the family services. The menfolk always appreciate the excellent preparation of the cooked breakfasts by the kitchen team comprising Ian Harley, Andrew Monkhouse and Allister Holt.

The S.T.I.G. Nights have been replaced with Aunt Sally Nights which have proved to be very popular. The game is very local to this part of Oxfordshire so needed some explanation initially, but the men soon took to the challenge and had some great fun launching wooden sticks at a small wooden doll. The curry options were also as good as usual. The equipment was loaned to us by Ben Campion but, before he moved to the Lake District, he very kindly donated the set to our event, for which we are most grateful. These evenings will continue in the months between the Breakfasts, as advertised.

The Men's Bible Study met once a month led by Rev Drew but this was postponed from September due to the increased workload that the clergy were facing. It is intended to resume the Bible Study meetings in the early part of 2024.

The Men's Ministry Team (Steve Bostock, Mike Cox, Ian Harley, Allister Holt and Andrew Monkhouse) is grateful for the continued support towards the affiliation of the St John's group with Christian Vision for Men (CVM) who provide great inspiration and resources for us to use at our events.