



The Parish of Pangbourne with Tidmarsh and Sulham  
St James | St Laurence | St Nicholas

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS



Photo credit: Rachel Jeremiah

of the Parochial Church Council  
for the Parish of Pangbourne with Tidmarsh and Sulham

We have undertaken to share the  
Common Vision of Oxford Diocese  
*'To become more Christlike for the sake of God's world'*

## TOWARDS A COMMON VISION



## Patrons

St James the Less, Pangbourne  
St Laurence, Tidmarsh  
St Nicholas Sulham

Church Society Trust  
Bishop of Reading  
Henry Scutt

## PCC Membership and Objectives

The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission (No. 1127943), made up of elected and ex-officio PCC members of St James the Less, St Laurence and St Nicholas (in accordance with the Church Representation rules).

## Banks

- Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Delf House, Skelmersdale WN8 6WT (Changed from HSBC in January 2022)
- CCLA Investment Management Ltd, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4ET

## Independent Examiner

- Mr D W Norris, The Grange, North Street, Theale, Reading, RG7 5EX

## Insurance

- Trinitas Church Insurance, Spectrum Building, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 55 Blythswood Street, Glasgow, G2 7AT

## Statement of Intent

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Pangbourne with Tidmarsh and Sulham (PTS) consults and co-operates with the Incumbent **'in promoting the whole mission of the Church in this parish, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.'**

## Parochial Church Council

<b>Chair</b>	Revd Mark Hopkins	<b>Elected Members</b>	Wilma Grant (PCC Lay Chair and Deanery Synod Rep)	2023 - 2026
<b>Secretary</b>	Vanessa Saunders		Jacky Rix-Brown	2021 - 2024
<b>Treasurer</b>	Stephen Billyeald		Penny Billyeald	2022 - 2025
<b>Church Wardens</b>	Julia Sheppard		Vanessa Saunders	2023 - 2026
	Jill Palfrey (Deanery Synod Rep		Dilys Rogers	2023 - 2026
	2023 - 2026)		Mark Littledale	2023 - 2026
			Emma Barker	2023 - 2026

## Business of the Parochial Church Council 2023

The PCC met six times and the Standing Committee met twice.

## A Report on Changes in the Electoral Roll

In 2023 there were 133 members. The revised roll in April 2024 has 130 members.

Four people came off. Three people moved out of the area but remain on the Electoral Roll.

One person has been added to the Electoral Roll.

*Vanessa Saunders, Electoral Roll Officer*

We thank all the committee and group members for all they have contributed, and continue to offer, to the life of the church community in PTS.

### PCC Policies in 2023

- Prevention and Safeguarding Policy Updated annually
- Pastoral Visiting Policy
- Health and Safety
- Food Hygiene
- Data Protection
- Safer Recruitment
- Payment of Staff
- Tithing and Charitable Giving
- Collections
- Reserves and Investments

## A Review of 2023

*Rector Rev Mark writes...*

***“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:19)***

2023 has been a year of “new things”. Nationally, a new king, Charles III, was coronated on 6<sup>th</sup> May, an occasion marked in our Parish by services in Pangbourne and Tidmarsh and local street parties. Locally, we welcomed into our parish our new curate, Rev Rachel Jeremiah, who was ordained deacon on 1<sup>st</sup> July. She joined us with her family, Mike, Naomi, Hope and Barnaby, and already has helped me greatly in developing our carer and infants group Noah’s Ark, and building upon our ministry to the bereaved. This in addition to all her diaconal responsibilities of leading worship, preaching, baptising, taking funerals and pastoral care in the parish, and I am grateful for her personal and practical support as a member of the ministry team.

We also gave thanks for the ministry of three of our priests with permission to officiate who celebrated the anniversaries of their ordination. Revd Brian Tims celebrated his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary since his ordination in July, Revd Barry Ashdown celebrated his 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination in September, and I celebrated a more modest 10 years of ordination in July.

I wish to personally thank Revd Brian for his service as a priest with Permission to Officiate in the parish which he stepped down from in August. I have been very grateful for his preaching and leadership of worship, and his personal support as a colleague. I also thank Mark Littleedale for his service as a church warden, which he stepped down from at the APCM in April 2023, and I am grateful for his continued support as a member of PCC, the music group, and for advice on building matters and practicalities at St Nicholas Church Sulham. I am pleased that Emma Barker joined the PCC in April 2023, and has also taken on the additional role of foundation governor for Englefield CofE School.

After a turbulent year on the national stage in 2022, 2023 was also not without its challenges. We continue to pray for the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, and for many other troubles around the world. We are also conscious of the increased challenges faced by many due to the rising cost of living. Our Lent lunches took place again this year in aid of Christian aid, we continue to support Reading Food Bank (Readifood) at our harvest festival and the Children’s Society through

our popular Christmas Eve Christingles, in addition to supporting charities listed later in the report. We must remain conscious of those around us in particular financial difficulty.

The wider Church of England in 2023 continued to debate questions around provision of blessings for same-sex unions as part of the *Living in Love and Faith* process. Although moves have been made towards offering prayers of blessing, the divided nature of the church on this issue has caused hurt and worry to many, especially members of the LGBT+ community. At the APCM in April I made clear my support for prayers for same-sex blessings should the national church authorise them, and the PCC began a process of thinking through the Inclusive Church statement, which reads, *“We believe in inclusive church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.”* We have not yet formally adopted this statement as a church but in 2024 will be undertaking a seminar series on each of the characteristics listed here with a view to considering adopting the statement once the seminar series is concluded.

Locally, we have also had challenges and setbacks with our church buildings. St Nicholas’ church Sulham has suffered from leaks in the roof and we have endeavoured to get these fixed though this is an ongoing challenge. At St Laurence church, Tidmarsh, we were able to repair the South Wall with support from the Friends of St Laurence. We will continue in 2024 to develop plans for replacing the toilet in Pangbourne church with a disabled accessible toilet.

Below in the report are listed the many activities which we have undertaken as a church which we should be enormously proud of. There are too many for me to list them all, but of particular note I want to give thanks for the February Quiz; the Spring Flowers Sunday at Sulham; Schools Day in July; the concerts from the Welsh Male Voice Choir, the Berkshire Chamber Music festival and the Moonrakers which took place in St James Church; the harvest supper, and the Christmas events and activities. The theme of our Christmas tree festival this year was “Joy to the World” highlighting the plight of different ecosystems and the importance of creation care.

I am enormously grateful for the many, many people who continue to support the work of our churches at Pangbourne, Tidmarsh and Sulham. Again, these are too many to list, but especially I want to express my gratitude to our churchwardens, Jill Palfrey and Julia Sheppard, our administrator and PCC secretary Vanessa Saunders, and our treasurer Stephen Billyeald. As each of these reports will show, we have a proud team of flower arrangers led by Sarah Rasmussen, a faithful band of musicians and singers led by Wilma Grant, and regular bell ringing organised by tower captain Len Palfrey. There are many others involved in seen and unseen roles, including those who help manage the churchyards, cleaners, welcomers, event organisers, servers and sacristans. In 2023, the Reverend Brian Tims, the Reverend Barry Ashdown and the Reverend Tony Naden have supported me as Rector in the leading of worship, preaching, and undertaking weddings and funerals. Their assistance in this regard is invaluable. I am also very grateful for the hard work and support of our curate Reverend Rachel Jeremiah and the ease at which she has settled into her role here at Pangbourne, Tidmarsh and Sulham.

As 2023 has shown seeds of new growth and signs of hope in the midst of challenging times, I pray too that 2024 will be a time for these “new things” to develop and flourish.

# A Report on the Activities of the Parish in 2023

## Parish Vision

A united parish with three churches reaching out to all in our community and beyond as a Christian witness.

## Parish Mission

To offer a warm welcome, fellowship and a caring environment to families and worshippers of all ages. To actively grow our church family by encouraging people to learn more about what it means to be a follower of Christ and to continue to serve those in our local and wider community through discipleship and love.

## Parish Action Plan

- Focus on ways to increase our engagement with children and families.
- Encourage and enable church members to grow their relationship with Christ through personal discipleship.
- Raise our profile in the community and strengthen our links with local schools, groups, organisations and individuals in all three villages.
- Develop our use of digital technology to further our mission.
- Improve access to our churches for all.

## Church Administrator

Vanessa Saunders is employed as the parish administrator.

## Safeguarding

**Parish Safeguarding Officer - Jill Palfrey**

**Verifier - Vanessa Saunders**

Safeguarding is a standing item at every PCC meeting. The Safeguarding Policy is reviewed and approved annually by the PCC. A 'Promoting a Safer Church' poster is displayed, together with the Parish Safeguarding Policy, at each of our three churches. The poster gives contact details for our safeguarding officer and a contact at the diocese. Safeguarding arrangements are also clearly visible on the parish website.

There have been no safeguarding concerns raised officially during 2023. One matter was discussed informally with Charlotte Wilmshurst who is the Berkshire Area Safeguarding Advisor but no action was required.

The PCC are up-to-date with their basic training and our Verifier and PSO have completed the necessary modules. A draft Social Media policy has been prepared by Revd Rachel Jeremiah which will go to the PCC for approval. The Rector and PSO completed the Domestic Abuse module but need to complete the Safer Recruitment module during 2024.

**Jill Palfrey**

## Health and Safety

The PCC is mindful of the risks associated with its various activities. The PCC has particular regard to the child protection and vulnerable adult's requirements at all times.



## Insurance

Our insurance provider is Trinitas Insurance and all three churches are covered by one policy.

## Mission Partners and Charities Supported in 2023

The Charities we supported in 2023 were as follows:

For our Tithe

- **Local** – Faith Christian Group (Readifood)
- **National** – Sue Ryder
- **International** – Miriam Dean Fund

We also donated to:

- Christian Aid
- Plan International
- Readifood (harvest food donations)
- Royal British Legion
- Royal County of Berkshire Churches Trust

## Christian Aid

Lent lunches were held in aid of Christian Aid and raised £411.50.

## Services and Worship in PTS

**Our heartfelt thanks go to the lay members of the Ministry Team:**

Julia Sheppard, Wilma Grant, Jill Palfrey and Heather Thorne, Mark Littledale, Vanessa Saunders **and to our retired priests with Permission to Officiate:**

Rev Barry Ashdown, Rev Tony Naden and Rev Brian Tims.

**Permission to administer the chalice in Communion in 2023 was held by:**

Len Palfrey, Hugh Richardson, Julia Sheppard, Heather Thorne, Jill Palfrey, Brian Tims, Christine Tims. **Thank you to those who have taken part in staffing our parish worship.**

## Occasional Offices

- **9 Infant Baptisms**  
Our thanks go to Penny and Stephen Billyeald for Baptism service ministry.
- **5 Weddings and 1 Service of Prayer and Dedication**
- **16 Funerals** took place in the parish and at the crematoria, **5 Memorial Services** and **6 Burials of Ashes**  
A special service for those recently bereaved was held at All Souls Tide in St James.

## Deanery Synod

Area Dean: The Revd Dr David Archer/Revd Grant Fensome

Lay Chair: Dr Chris Newman/Vacancy

Parish Deanery Representatives: Wilma Grant and Jill Palfrey, one vacancy

During 2023 the Deanery Synod met on 23 March; 8 June and 30 November. The meeting on 19 October was rescheduled to 30 November.

Agenda items included the Parish Share formula and allocation to Bradfield Deanery and the Deanery financial accounts. The structure of the Deanery was also discussed but no changes were made in 2023. There were key vacancies during 2023 with the previous Area Dean Rev David Archer stepping down in October and Rev Grant Fensome from Upper Basildon being appointed in November. Vacancies also included the treasurer, secretary and lay chair. The Area Dean hopes to fill these posts early in the new year.

**Wilma Grant and Jill Palfrey, Deanery Synod Representatives**

## All Churches Together

PTS representatives were Hugh Richardson (Treasurer), Dilys Rogers, Tony Naden (Chairman until April 2023). Tony was given warm thanks, having continued in post longer than he had wished. The struggle to encourage new, younger leadership continued and we were pleased that Rosemary Sandbach of Basildon Benefice took up the post of Chairman at the AGM, following Tony Naden's retirement. We are still in need of new younger members of the committee.

Another very successful Advent Carol Service was held in St. James' church. Rosemary headed the team organising our Unity 'Agape' service in Spring 2023 which was very well received. The quiz was dropped as our fundraising activity having run its course. Instead, we hosted Whitchurch Art Cafe one Saturday, which was successful so it is planned to continue doing this.

The need for new blood is even more pressing with Etta Dearden of St. Bernadette's moving away.

**Jacky Brown**

**All Churches Together Secretary**

## Music and Singing

The Singing Group had not met since pre Covid in 2020 but the singers and musicians continued to lead the worship on Sunday morning's mainly at St James but also at St Laurence and St Nicholas for special services and festivals e.g. the Patronal Service at St Nicholas and all together worship at St Laurence.

Singers from Purley, Upper Basildon and St Bernadette's joined the singers for the All Churches Together Service in St James on 6 December.

Thank you to Ian Busby, Martin Holliday, Pat Linton, Mark Littledale, Helen Norris, Dilys Rogers, Cliff Thorne, Ellie Thorne and Heather Thorne for singing and playing for services throughout the year. Also, a big thank you to Mike and Hope Jeremiah who played for the Harvest service in October.

**Wilma Grant, Music Co-ordinator**

## Noah's Ark

During 2023 Noah's Ark continued to be appreciated by those attending, although the numbers have reduced slightly over the latter months of the year. Revd Rachel has joined Revd Mark and Jill Palfrey in leading each week and the topics covered have been many and varied with a half-termly theme and allowing for festivals. It follows the familiar format of coffee and chat, with craft and toys for the children, followed by a very short service with a story, prayer, praise songs with shakers and the birthday hat. After the candles have been extinguished, we have a short time of nursery rhymes and the goodbye song.



We enjoyed visits from Word Puppets in half-term holidays. Word Puppets (our warden Julia Sheppard is one of the puppeteers) give of their time and expertise freely. Revd Mark is a 'trainee puppeteer' and Revd Rachel 'had a go' when they visited in October.

We have a small band of very loyal helpers to whom we are so grateful. If you are interested in being involved and can commit to helping on Friday mornings please talk to Revd Mark, Revd Rachel or Jill.

**Jill Palfrey, Churchwarden**

## Bell Ringing

It was with great pride that we rang for the coronation of our new King and Queen. A full peal was rung to celebrate the occasion which enabled our Ringing Master, Michael Palfrey, to call his first peal. A beautiful new peal board, paid for by contributions from the ringers involved, now hangs in the ringing room to mark this achievement.

It is with great regret that we have accepted John Harland's decision to give up ringing due to age and health issues. Into his nineties John is one of our longest serving members and we will miss his humour and wisdom.

We took part in the annual schools open day, where pupils from Pangbourne and Englefield Primary schools come to church to learn about church life. We demonstrated how bells are rung and all of the children, under close supervision, had a go at ringing a bell at backstroke.

We frequently welcome visiting ringers on practice night and with their help all of the band is making progress, learning new things and improving what they already know.

We are always on the lookout for new recruits, if you want to have a go, or just find out a bit more about bell ringing, our door is always open, just come in when the bells are not ringing.

**Len Palfrey, Tower Captain**

## St James Café

St James Café moved from monthly to fortnightly from January 2023, and now meets every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in St James church from 11am-12.30pm. I continue to be grateful for all who help at the café and have sustained it this year. The café has a steady number of attendees (on average 10-15 come each time) and is a balance of regular church attenders, our brothers and sisters from St Bernadette's RC church, and members of the community who might attend church on a more occasional basis. It provides a much-needed place of fellowship, friendship and conversation outside of the regular Sunday services, and is a reminder to the community we are a flourishing church that is not just a "Sunday only" church.

I have also been pleased to note that on the days in which there is a café, attendance at the Wednesday 10am service at St James is consistently higher.

There have been a few challenges with how in Lent the café dovetails with our traditional Lent lunches, which has made for a long Wednesday for some, but overall, I have been encouraged by the success of St James Café.

**Rev Mark Hopkins, Rector**

## Flower Arranging

*Thanks to Pauline Jones, Beverly Hughes, Dilys Rogers, Jayne Davidson, Pam Killender, Lorraine Ashdown, Pat Coyle, Jill Palfrey, Margaret Rhodes, Fiona Hope, Alyson Ebbrell, Sarah Rasmussen.*

The gifted and enthusiastic team created many wonderful displays throughout the year.

Particular thanks to Pauline and all those who designed and implemented the magnificent Coronation event in May.

Investment in a selection of reusable faux flowers eked out the longevity of the arrangements and reduced flower costs. Wherever possible water-based arrangements in vases were used which meant that and only one box of oasis was purchased all year.

Installing church flowers bi-weekly takes approximately 3-4 man-hours installation/clearance and 2-3 hrs sourcing of flowers (driving & collecting materials) with ad hoc maintenance through the 2 weeks with watering etc.

**Mothering Sunday** - Daffodil posies were made and given to members of the congregation.

**Easter** - yellow and white arrangements in glass vases.

**Harvest** - natural flowers Autumn tones in jam jars and baskets with ivy and fruit/veg along the window sills.

**Remembrance** - Crochet poppies reused in a different format – re-engineered into a 3D cross altar piece and pew ends used the large bumper plastic poppies. Faux poppies were used in the striking altar pedestal.

**All Souls** - memorial wreath - thanks to Dilys Rogers.

**Advent** - Advent Crown – thanks to Lorraine Ashdown.

Copper and winter foliage with red and white Christmas flowers complemented the usual Christmas tree display with its ecosystem theme.

A community wreath event was made in Sulham where parishioner & friends were supported by Gillian Alderton & Gill Haggarty. The Pangbourne event could not be fitted in due to other floristry commitments leading up to Christmas.

Only one wedding asked for Church arrangements last year but due to lack of available team members it was not possible to take it on.

All arrangements were pared back due to a smaller team. Thanks for all the hard work and enthusiasm shown by each member of the flower team. Thanks also to Mark Littledale for the stunning photos for the church Facebook page.

**Sarah Rasmussen**

## Englefield School

Englefield School continues to flourish. Academic results are pleasing and this is combined with providing a caring and tailored education for children that find learning a little tricky. Staffing at the school continues to be a cohesive and supportive team who have the care and education of all children in the school at the heart of everything they do. The Governing Body, again a cohesive team, support the school in every aspect of school life. Children at the school receive a wide variety of opportunities for enrichment including many music and sporting activities. Other clubs provided relate to Street Dance, Gardening, Art. One of the highlight enrichment activities in the last year involved a whole school (two coaches) visit to Windsor Castle where children had the opportunity to visit the castle but also had the huge privilege of seeing the final resting place of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.

Key Stage One performed their nativity play to parents and visitors. It told the traditional nativity narrative under the title of 'Christmas with the Aliens' where the meaning of Christmas was explained to some friends from outer space! The school was very grateful that members of Pangbourne and Sulham congregations and clergy took the time to watch the play.

Englefield School received its five yearly Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools and received a Good judgement. The school were pleased with the outcome especially in view of many positive comments within the report.

Key Findings:

- A clear Christian vision is linked firmly to Jesus' parable of the mustard seed. This inspires deep levels of nurture and respect, enabling all to flourish.
- The strategic leadership of the school is effective. However, monitoring of the Christian vision of the school is not sufficiently robust.
- The Christian vision inspires all to engage in social action for their local community. Opportunities to develop global awareness, however, are underdeveloped.
- Collective worship lies at the heart of each day and is a joyous expression of the Christian vision. This ensures that all are nourished spiritually.
- RE contributes well to pupils' religious literacy, allowing pupils to recognise and respect a diversity of beliefs. However, pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith is at an early stage.

Other comments:

*'Inspired by the vision, there is a focus on highly effective pastoral care. There are many effective strategies in place to look after everybody's mental health and wellbeing. This is a strength of the school.'*

*'RE meets the needs of every pupil by offering a range of support. This includes working with less able pupils so that they keep up with the pace of learning, while offering challenge for more able pupils. As a result, all pupils flourish in the subject, whatever their needs or backgrounds'*

Englefield School continues to have very close links with St Mark's Church at Englefield and Reverend Julia Myles is very active within school in many areas. The school is also very grateful for its links with Pangbourne, Sulham and Tidmarsh. Reverend Mark and Reverend Rachel come into school regularly to take whole school assembly which are very thought provoking and enjoyed by children and adults alike. Englefield School continue to enjoy visiting St James the Less Church, Pangbourne for the annual school's day, the children and again the adults, get much out of the day and the school are very grateful for being invited to the event. **Julia Sheppard**

## Fabrics Goods and Ornaments

Routine maintenance and servicing of all three of our churches continued during 2023. This includes the three organs being tuned regularly as well as requiring the occasional repair and also the fire equipment being serviced. Gutters are cleared annually at St Laurence and St Nicholas. The tower clock at St James is serviced annually, as are the two gas boilers. The three churchyards continue to be maintained by volunteers. We are very grateful to those who put in many hours of work in the churchyards, including pupils and staff from Pangbourne College who help us each year in the summer as part of their community service.

During 2023 particular details to note are:

*St James* – the Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in October of 2023 and the report was received in December. The recommendations will be considered by the PCC.

As noted previously the two boilers, installed 25 years ago, continue to be a concern due to their age and the availability of spare parts. After a consultation with a firm experienced in church heating the PCC agreed to a trial of under pew heaters which will happen early in 2024 in readiness for a time when the boilers are no longer able to be repaired. When the boiler was serviced it was found that a new flue extractor fan was required and it was not possible to have heating until a new one was sourced and fitted. Another heating failure occurred which required the electrician to attend and although the cause of the problem was not found it was eventually fixed.

A roof repair was carried out in January on an area at the west end of the nave adjoining the tower and also to the vestry roof. In some exceptional weather it was found that there had been some water ingress round the pillar by the servery but this problem has not recurred. Pruning of the magnolia tree and a yew tree took place and the dead tree in the south area of the churchyard was cut down, leaving the trunk.

Last year it was mentioned that there have been small falls of plaster during the year and that this was probably exacerbated by people allowing the heavy wooden entrance door to slam. It has been noticed that the door continues to be allowed to slam and therefore this problem continues.

*St Laurence* – rendering on the exterior wall to the left of the porch failed. The repair of this area was organised in conjunction with the work that was carried out on the north side of the south boundary wall. In preparation for this some tree work was carried out in the south west corner and volunteers cleared the area bordering the wall and weeded the wall itself.

The contractors completed the repairs and repointing in November. Simultaneously the gates and gate posts were removed to widen the entrance for easier access and the gate posts were found to be rotten. These are due to be replaced in 2024.

We are grateful to the Friends of St Laurence for their contribution to the cost of the wall repairs.

*St Nicholas* – repairs to the roof in various areas were carried out in January but subsequently during some periods of extreme weather rain penetrated again both on the north side of the chancel and the south west corner of the nave. The repairs for this will be carried out in January 2024. As a result of the dampness more of the wallpaper has loosened and this was tidied by a member of the PCC. Subsequently the wallpaper has deteriorated further. The roof at St Nicholas

is an ongoing problem as water will always find a way in. There is also the previously mentioned problem of dry rot in the vestry and the extent of this is not known.

There was a fault with the outside light, causing tripping of all the lighting, and an electrician attended to fix this and it was found to be due to debris in the exterior junction box. A PCC member repaired the lychgate.

As you will note we have been able to execute repairs as and when necessary but all three church buildings are a cause for concern and we have to anticipate major repairs or replacements being required in the future.

**Jill Palfrey, Churchwarden**

## **Green Gym**

Our regular group of volunteers continued to cut the grass and maintain the churchyard throughout 2023. Not all of our volunteers are church goers but are only too willing to help, frequently coming between Green Gym sessions to work on their own.

Parts of the churchyard are difficult to maintain, closely spaced grave surrounds make mowing impossible and strimming very difficult, but we usually manage to cut all of the area at least once per year. Where appropriate we continue to weed old graves and several have now been covered with weed suppressant membrane and gravel or flint, making future maintenance easier.

We are grateful to those Green Gymers who dedicate their time to weeding and maintaining the edges of the churchyard and the flowering areas, much enhancing the beauty of this quiet, peaceful place.

As is now usual, the students from Pangbourne Collage came and worked very hard in the churchyard as part of their community service.

We are always on the lookout for new people willing to give a little time to help, especially as our average age is over 70!!! Anyone is welcome to join us on Green Gym days, or at times to suit yourself, just turn up and we will find you a job!

**Len Palfrey**

## **Finance Committee Report for 2023**

The Finance Committee comprised Rector, Treasurer, Jill Palfrey, Gill Haggarty, Julia Bion.

The committee considered several matters during 2023 and made recommendations to the PCC. Subjects for discussion included:

- 2022 Financial Statements & Report
- 2023 budget
- 2024 draft budget
- Reporting financial results to the PCC during the year
- Reporting progress on a range of community activities, organised by PCC members and others, to raise the profile of the church in the communities

- Recommending to the PCC that we:
  - Donate a total of £2,000 as our tithe to three charities in respect of 2023
  - Increase charges for organist, musicians, vergers, and winter heating at weddings & funerals from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024
  - Increase Parish Administrator salary and payments to Music Co-ordinator, organist and musicians' fees from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024

**Stephen Billyeald**  
**Treasurer to the PCC**

## Treasurer's Report on 2023 Statement of Financial Activities

Accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

### Headline Figures

**Unrestricted funds** representing day-to-day operations of the parish showed an operating deficit of £4k. This was more than off-set by a gain of £9.5k of funds held in investments.

Income was £3k higher than in 2022 as a result of an increase in plate collections in churches.

Expenditure was £7k higher than 2022. The main increases were on Church Repairs (£5k) and Curate's house rent (£3k).

We have £44k of unrestricted funds in the bank and invested at the end of the year.

**Restricted Funds** which are funds donated for specific purposes showed a deficit of just £816

The main expenditure was from the Flower Fund which now has a balance of £31k.

We have a total of £46k in Restricted Funds

### Investments

Reserves of Unrestricted and Restricted Funds are invested in Church of England investment funds; the value of our investments rose during the year by £9.5k. These funds have grown by more than £48k over the past six years.

**Endowment Funds** are capital funds donated for specific purposes from which we can only use the income; these showed an operating deficit of £8.1k. The prime purpose of these funds is to maintain the Sainsbury grave in Pangbourne cemetery and the Gunter, Donaldson and Graham-Hodgson graves in St Laurence churchyard; any additional income can be used for maintenance of St James's church and churchyard and St Laurence's church and churchyard.

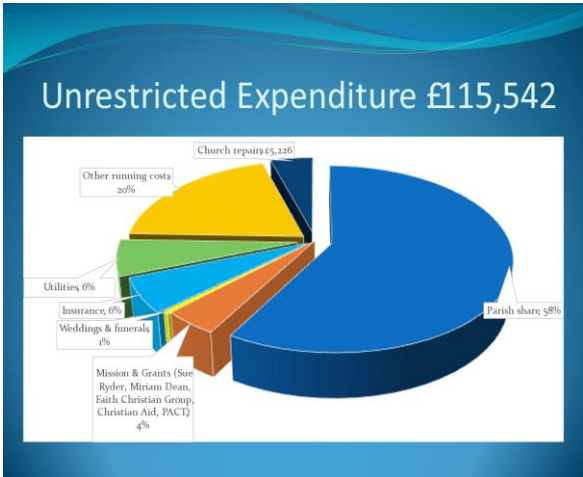
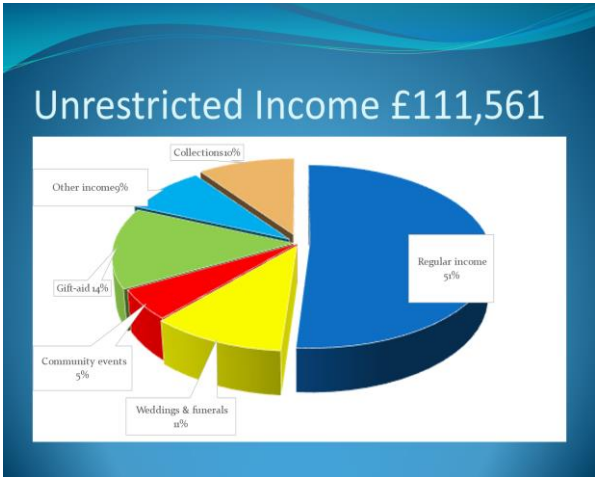
The investment gain on Endowment funds during the year was £9.7k.



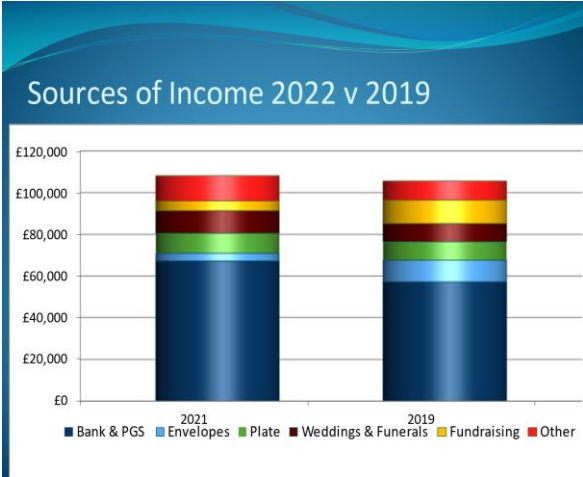
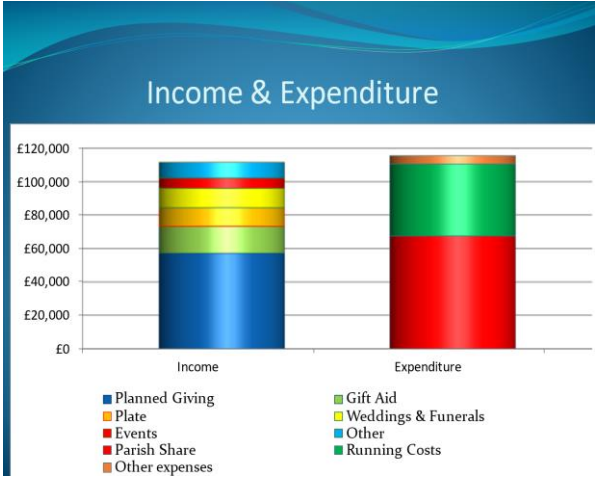
The PCC has decided to adopt total return accounting on two of our endowment funds. This allows the capital gain, over and above inflation, to be allocated to income, thereby making better use of the funds for the care and maintenance of St James and St Laurence churches and churchyards, without affecting the underlying value of the original endowment.

### Unrestricted Income & Expenditure

Income and expenditure breakdown as follows:



Regular income includes bank standing orders, parish giving scheme and envelopes, all of which attract gift-aid; we also claim gift-aid on most plate collections. Plate collections continued to recover well in 2023. Wedding and funeral income was similar to 2022 and income from community events was £1.3k higher than 2022.



It is our aim that planned giving (including gift-aid) covers the cost of parish share. The running costs and charitable giving is then covered by other sources of income including weddings & funerals, plate collections, community events and other donations.

Whilst planned giving, plate collections and income from weddings and funerals are above pre-covid levels, income from community events has not yet fully recovered. Other sources of income include one-off donations and legacies which cannot be forecast or relied upon.

**Stephen Billyeald**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Revd Mark Hopkins, Rector

Date: \_\_\_\_\_