

ANNUAL REPORT

& FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS

2023

"For I am about to do something new. See, I have 'already begun!'"



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VICAR'S REPORT

WRITTEN BY REVD. STEVE RANKIN

Finish the Race

John Stephen Akhwari was a marathon runner who represented Tanzania in the marathon in 1968. He wasn't expected to win a medal and as it turned out, he didn't even come close. The fact that I'm mentioning him and a race over 50 years ago means something of note must have happened. His sheer determination and perseverance in the face of pain and adversity came to represent something much more profound and enduring than many athletes ever achieve.

He was running at high altitude for the first time and before too long he began to suffer severe cramps that slowed his progress. If that wasn't painful enough, then worse was to follow after he was caught in a melee of runners jockeying for position.

Akhwari fell to the ground, gashing and dislocating his knee. He also managed to smash his shoulder against the pavement. Seeing his injuries, most onlookers assumed he would pull out and go to hospital. Instead, he received medical attention and returned to continue running.

By the end of the race, 18 of the 75 starters had pulled out but Akhwari was not one of them. He finished last, over an hour after the winner (although his time was a very impressive 3 hours 25 minutes!)

A television crew was still on hand after the medal ceremony, when word was received that there was one more runner about to finish. He was cheered home by a few thousand spectators who had remained in the stadium after the sun went down. By the time Akhwari reached the stadium, he was limping and the bandage around his leg was flapping in the breeze.

He was asked why he'd carried on, and his

response has gone down in sporting history.

"My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race," he said. "They sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race."

We don't always see the fruit of our labours or get our just reward but happily, in this case, we can see something of the outcome of finishing the race.

He was awarded a National Hero Medal of Honour in 1983. The John Stephen Akhwari Athletic Foundation was founded, an organization which supports Tanzanian athletes training for the Olympic Games. He was invited to the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia. He

later appeared in Beijing as a goodwill ambassador in preparation for the 2008 Games.

He finished last, but he is honoured for finishing his race.

The Scriptures use the imagery of running, usually as a metaphor for persevering and pressing on.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." Hebrews 12:1

"Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14

I think that is a good framework to use for this review of our church life in 2023 and to look forward to the challenges and opportunities of 2024...



Bishop Sam explaining what Confirmation is during our Confirmation Service

THE ELIXER OF YOUTH - BECAUSE YOU'RE WORTH IT...

It is estimated that the UK population will spend £3.5 billion pounds on skincare products in 2024. That's an awful lot of money for lotions, potions, creams, gels and oils - but hey, we're worth it, right?

The vision of the Church of England is to become 'a church which is younger and more diverse' and to 'double the number of children and young active disciples.'

A 2018 Church of England Report showed:

- that national church attendance amongst 0-16s dropped below 100,000 for the first time since records began.
- that 38% of churches have no 0-16's and 68% of them have 5 or fewer.
- Only around 600 churches (4%) in the country (out of roughly 16,000), have more than 25 aged 0-16s in their church.
- Other research has shown that 85% of current church members became Christians between the ages of 4-14.

'Growing Faith' is a Church of England initiative looking at how to reverse this trend.

The main conclusion it reaches is that when school, home and church work together, children and young people's spirituality has the best chance of flourishing.

As a church we have, at most, 40 hours a year input with a child. A parent has around 3000 hours. A school around 1500 hours.

At St Mary's we have a vibrant children's ministry that connects with families, schools and church. We have been given the responsibility to disciple many children and as a result of investing time, finances and good people into this ministry we are seeing faith thriving.

When we look at our youth ministry amongst

secondary school aged children we do not see such a vibrant and thriving ministry. We should not belittle what we have, many churches would wish to be able to resource the youth ministry we have but when we compare it to the children's ministry and the size of our church then it is not at a level we feel it should be. The impact of the COVID pandemic had a much bigger effect on youth ministry and it has not looked like reaching it's potential since then.

Both the children's ministry and youth ministry have a fantastic team of volunteers, who serve faithfully and want to invest in the children and young people.

We do not want to take our children and youth ministries for granted but ensure we are maximising as best we can the resources God has entrusted us with as we join with the Church of England's ambition to double the number of children and young active disciples and take seriously the Growing Faith report.

It turns out that the secret of growing younger is less about lotions and potions and more about investing in the next generation for the sake of the kingdom of God - after all, they are worth it.

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Prayer Tree containing the names of every child and young person at St Mary's

CHURCH PLANTING, CROCHET, WATER BALLOONS, TRUTH & LIES

The diocesan vision consultation identified a number of key areas for ministry. Perhaps the most striking was recognising the 1.5 million people across the diocese that do not yet know Christ (of a population of around 1.9 million). Whilst there will be a number of different responses, the bishops' have spoken about church planting as far and away the most effective form of evangelism.

A leading missiologist, C. Peter Wagner stated, "Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under

"Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under Heaven."

heaven.”

New Worshipping Communities best reach new generations, new residents, new people groups and the unchurched.

A lot of work has been going on behind the scenes over the past year, to establish St Mary's as a Church Planting Hub. As I write we are about to launch the first Gathering with nine new or potential worshipping communities, including the three from St Mary's, joining from across this area.

One of those is looking to revitalise the existing church plant at Sale West and there is a great story that helps translate research and planning into human story.

Carol Dodgson, in her role as Community Development Officer at Sale West, started a weekly Crochet group on the estate. A number of single mums joined and formed a supportive social group. We organised a children's Houseparty – a weekend away with lots of fun, water balloons, crafts and God slots. We found some funding and were able to invite a number of these single parents and their children. In the end there were more non-church than Christian folk at the weekend.

Everyone had a great time – for some it was their first ever encounter with anything 'religious'. We kept up the momentum with monthly all-age Celebration services which many of the Houseparty folk came along to. They all came to the St Mary's Christingle service. The Crochet group kept meeting, trust developed, and relationships deepened.

Recently one of the mums spoke to Carol with a beaming smile and said, "I've been lied to all my life, but I believe Jesus is speaking the truth". She is now reading a Bible regularly and is coming to church with her children every week.

RUNNING THE RACE, FINISHING STRONG & PASSING THE BATON

We choose to invest our time, loyalty and money

in things that will have an impact for ourselves, families, and wider world. Thank you for being a part of St Mary's and Sale West Community Church – it wouldn't be the same without you!



The first Myriad Church Planting Training Hub

I'm aware, as with every passing year, that some of our church have run their race and gone to receive their reward in heaven. I was reflecting on how many of these folk invested their time, money and energy for the sake of the kingdom, echoing the words of the apostle Paul at the end of his life as he writes *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* 2 Timothy 4:7.

They finished strong and have passed the baton on to us.

Giving - of ourselves and our money is all about ministry; it is every service we have, each sermon preached, baptism families welcomed, Junior Church or Fuel sessions run, and the Gospel preached through Faith Matters and our Small Groups. Ministry is every bereaved family supported, each visit and home communion to the sick and housebound, school assemblies and classes held. Giving, in all its forms, makes ministry possible.

There are some obvious financial challenges facing us in the year ahead, investing in a new youth worker and children's worker, both working under Julie's leadership, the 150th anniversary celebrations, the church planting initiative. This means we need to see some significant financial breakthroughs this year.

If you consider St Mary's your church home, and are not yet giving financially, will you consider joining our Stewardship scheme? And if you are already giving but have not reviewed it this year, could you prayerfully assess whether there is scope to adjust your giving?

The ministry of our church changes lives both in our church and in the wider world.

The ministry of our church changes lives both in our church and in the wider world. There is much for which we as a church can rejoice and be thankful and we continue to look forward to an exciting and challenging time under God.

With every blessing, Steve

PCC REPORT

WRITTEN BY EMMA ATKINSON

St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of working with the incumbent, the Revd. Stephen Rankin, in furthering the mission of the church in the whole parish: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church and Church Centre. PCC members and Deanery Synod representatives are elected each year at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). Roles on the PCC are then elected at the first PCC meeting following the APCM.

Role	Name	Office held
Incumbent	Revd Steve Rankin	Chair, S, F
Associate Vicar	Revd Nathan Gregory	
Head of Operations (co-opted)	Emma Atkinson	PCC Secretary, HR, BM, P
Readers	Brian Macfaden	PCC Treasurer, S, F
	Outi Rankin	
Pastoral Workers	Gill Hart	M
	Mags Holt	
	Karen MacMillan	
	Ann McBurney	P
Wardens	Yorke Menzies	S, F
	John Vaughan	S, F, SW
Deanery Synod	Dave Atkinson	
	Avtar Diggwa	
	Matthew Kay	
	Jeff McBurney	F, P
	Rosemary Sigee	SW
	Ian Thwaites	M
Elected members	Rotimi Bajela	
	Jeremy Barnes	F
	Janet Darlow	
	Graham Fosh	HR, SW
	Joan Heys	Assistant Treasurer, F, BM
	Lorna Hitchin	Vice Chair, S, F, P
	Francis Hyde	M
	Helen Jarvis	F
	Elaine Jones	S, HR, P
	Claire Nathan	
	Barbara Shimmings	

(S - Standing committee, F - Finance committee, HR - HR committee, M - Missions committee, BM - Butterflies Management committee, P - Policies Review committee, SW—Sale West building committee)

PCC MEETINGS

9 PCC meetings took place during 2023, 8 were in-person, and 1 was over zoom. The APCM took place in April and was held in-person. Items discussed at the PCC meetings included:

- Safeguarding reports
- Missions giving
- Energy Audit
- Maintenance
- Ministry updates
- Quinquennial Report
- Butterflies Pre-School
- Restructuring children & youth team
- Church planting
- Plans for 150th Anniversary

STAFFING

The PCC employs a Head of Operations, Receptionist & Parish Administrator, Data Administrator, Parish Finance Officer, Children's Pastor, Children's Pastor Assistant, Café Manager, Church Centre Caretaker, Saturday Cleaner, and nine staff to run the Pre-School Group 'Butterflies'. A verger is also included on the payroll on a zero-hours basis.

ELECTORAL ROLL

The number on the electoral roll at the 2023 APCM in April was 413

WARDEN'S REPORT

WRITTEN BY JOHN VAUGHAN & YORKE MENZIES

2023 was John's third year as warden and Yorke's first. We start by giving thanks for the support that we have received in the role. In particular, we are indebted to those who act as Deputy Wardens and Sidespeople for their cheerfulness and flexibility. We work with such wonderful people.

There have been no changes to services to report in the year. We continue to be blessed by Steve, Nathan and Anees and those others who lead and preach. The 9:30 service typically sees around 110 people; the 11:15 attracts around 75; and the 7.00, 40-50. Add in those attending Junior Church and Fuel and we have over 300 individuals walking through the door on a Sunday. If that seems a lot, the three Christingle services were more than double that number. How people must have marvelled at how wonderful the building looked as they came through the door. Thank you to the decorating team for that. We also enjoyed hosting events for the diocese such as the ordination service in July and the Growing Faith conference in December. We are grateful that we can use our facilities to serve the wider church community.

As we look forward to celebrating the 150th anniversary of the church we must also accept that we have a building that is 150 years old. Not only are repairs expensive, the expertise to undertake them is in very short supply. We generally end the year without spending money that we have earmarked for repairs, in part because we simply cannot find people to do them. 2023 was no exception with two large portions of work not completed. One of these, the stonework to the South transept door, was actually completed in early 2024 but there remains some significant higher-level stonework and guttering issues to deal with. A report has been received and the PCC has approved an estimate to do the work. We are now negotiating when that will be undertaken. A small band continues to do sterling work in looking after day-to-day

maintenance and we are grateful to Norman, Alec and Phil for their hard work. The outside is kept tidy by a faithful gardening team that work in all weathers and we are grateful to them.

Each week we are blessed by the sounds of wonderful musicians who lead our worship. They are the more visible side of ministry but there are many others whose ministry is in the background, for example, those who give their time keeping the church clean. There are so many other people who contribute to the church. In addition to those mentioned we have people who make refreshments after the services; make floral displays; work on our tech desks; clean the church; polish the brasses; and staff the church office. Often these activities go unremarked on and unthanked, so please take time to say thank you more often to those who bless us with their work. Perhaps also pray about whether there is a role that you could take on. We

have vacancies on pretty much every team in the church and even 30 minutes once a month would be welcomed.

As we reflect on 2023 we marvel at how blessed we are as a Church family. We have a multi-generational and multi-ethnic community and a vibrancy that shines through our life here. In a time of decline in other parishes and the low numbers of children and young people who attend church nationally, we are, thankfully, not a 'typical' church. While we should give thanks for our successes we cannot rest on our laurels and must continue to look to the future. The bold vision to employ more support for our youth work will stretch our finances and we have challenges with fabric and with having enough people to support our activities. As we also look to a future where we will have church plants we do not know what challenges that will pose but we start from a solid base and pray that what we need will be provided.



(left to right) Lucy Moore, Bishop Sam & Julie Loynd at Chester Diocese's 'Growing Faith' conference hosted at St Mary's

We have a multi-generational and multi-ethnic community and a vibrancy that shines through our life here.

FINANCIAL REPORT

WRITTEN BY BRIAN MACFADEN

At the start of 2023 the PCC agreed a budget with a substantial deficit as we sought to launch our church planting proposal and extend our children and youth work, while continuing all our other ministries in a time of significant (10%) inflation. We shared this vision with our congregations and challenged them to help us grow our planned giving by 10% (£23,000) in 2023.

The result in 2023 was our expenditure exceeded our income by just £4,142, a fantastic result. At 31st December 2023 we held cash at the bank, including short term deposits, of £132,545.

We give thanks to God for His ongoing provision for our work in Sale, and the generosity of His people who support His work.

COMPARISON TO 2022

Most of the giving we receive comes through regular standing orders and stewardship envelopes, and we saw a 7.8% increase from last year (£302,037 in 2023 vs £280,244 in 2022). This was greater than the actual inflation of 4% over the past 12 months. We also received £15,059 in one-off donations (£812 in 2022). 13 people started donating regularly to our work during the year, and this financial growth is enabling us to continue growing our work.

We received an insurance payment for a lightning strike on the evening of 12th June 2023 which damaged a computer in the office, networking routers and audiovisual equipment in church. The claim was paid in full apart from the £250 excess.

Butterflies Pre-School Group had a deficit of £18,145 (deficit of £3,867 in 2022). This was due to lower numbers than usual at the start of the year and was anticipated. Butterflies is now back to full capacity. The surplus or deficit varies year by year depending on the number of children attending. Butterflies did not benefit from any donations in 2023 (it received a donation of £40,000 in 2022).

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

In 2024 the PCC have again approved a budget with a significant deficit in order to further

invest in church planting, children and youth, key priorities across the Church of England. As St Mary's celebrates its 150th year we trust that our congregations will respond to the vision and invest for the future of God's work, as our predecessors did so long ago.

We approach the challenges and opportunities of 2024 with confidence in God's continuing provision and your support.

RESERVES

All charities are expected to hold an appropriate level of reserves, which we use for:

- Working capital to balance our income and expenditure streams.
- Planning ahead by accommodating variations in our income from year to year.
- Meeting maintenance needs and
- Responding to opportunities as they arise.

The PCC has a policy to maintain approximately 3 months of regular expenditure in our reserves. At the end of 2023 our reserves were 3.0 months of regular expenditure (3.3 months at end of 2022).

The trustees are confident that, with continuing regular income from church members, there are sufficient reserves to support ongoing commitments for at least twelve months from the date of approval of these accounts.

INVESTMENT POLICY

Cash not required for day to day operations is held on deposit with the CBF Church of England Investment Fund.

No funds are held as custodian trustee.

MISSION GIVING REPORT

WRITTEN BY BRIAN MACFADEN

As a church we donate 10% of the giving we receive to missions, both here in the UK and overseas. We see this as our stewardship, or good management, of the money we receive from God, just as we encourage church members to steward their income.

This year we donated £28,889, which is 10% of the previous year's giving.

The Missions Committee oversees how we distribute these funds, together with the PCC. Most of the mission budget is given as regular support to organisations and individuals where there is a link with our church. We also retain some funds to allocate flexibly during the year.

This is where our support was donated in 2023. Our mission partners are shown in bold.

OVERSEAS MISSIONS

Church Mission Society	£400
Tim & Miho Walker - Overseas Missionary Fellowship	£1,800
Simon and Sue Yeomans - Operation Mobilisation	£4,600
Open Doors	£1,600
Philippines Outreach Centre	£2,609
Hope for Justice	£1,600
Simon & Amelie Latham - Mercy Ships	£3,000
Acts - Education in Africa - Burundi School	£1,800
David & Mary Robinson - Thai ministry	£700
Dan and Rachel King - Wycliffe Bible Translators	£500
A Rocha - Christian conservation	£100
FEBA (Arab world gospel radio)	£100
Tearfund (Relief & development work)	£100

UK MISSIONS

Boaz Trust	£1,800
Youth for Christ	£4,200
New Wine	£500
Bible Society	£1,400
Church Pastoral Aid Society	£1,200
Universities & Colleges Christian Fellowship	£300
Trafford South Foodbank	£400
Churches Together in Sale	£30
Evangelical Alliance	£150

From the Christmas Fair we also donated:

Simon & Amelie Latham - Mercy Ships	£1,524
Acts - Education in Africa - Burundi School	£550
Boaz Trust	£439
Youth for Christ	£516
Project Pearl	£260

We also gave a grant of £7,000 to Sale West Community Urban Trust and a donation of £35 from a women's event to Youth for Christ.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

WRITTEN BY MAUREEN CAIN

We follow the Chester Diocesan guidance and the policy statement of the Church of England publication, "Promoting a Safer Church", and look to these sources for information and guidance.

POSITION STATEMENT

The word 'Safeguarding' refers to all aspects of keeping people safe, primarily children and young people but also vulnerable adults. This is a really important aspect of Safeguarding as many of us can be considered as vulnerable during our lives. So a vulnerable adult is not just someone who is considered vulnerable because of their mental or physical condition which may be permanent. A person experiencing trauma in their lives such as illness, divorce, bereavement, financial hardship, redundancy etc will be vulnerable in many circumstances and this situation, if known, should be respected in conversations and other association.

This knowledge continues to be at the forefront of emerging and developing Safeguarding responsibilities.

As our Church continues to offer outreach to many groups with a growing number of volunteers, this knowledge continues to be at the forefront of emerging and developing Safeguarding responsibilities. So we place great importance on ensuring effective training and recording systems both from the diocese and also in-house.

TRAINING AND RECORDING SYSTEMS

We follow the Diocesan advice regarding training and we can report that a substantial number of our Church members have completed the required on-line training modules. During the past year Safeguarding modules such as Basic, Foundation, Leadership, Awareness of Domestic Abuse, Pastoral, and Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking have informed and educated our members on wider societal and humanitarian issues.

The more we can spread our knowledge through effective training and constant vigilance then the more purposeful we can be in ensuring a Safeguarding church.

The Church office keeps effective records of training and other regulatory requirements with individual prompts for the necessary renewals every three years.

We have confidential systems for recording Safeguarding concerns and the actions taken. We keep these records updated and reviewed appropriately.

In conjunction with the office I provide a report at each PCC meeting containing the numbers of people completing on-line training modules and also the numbers of concerns which have been reported.

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We have a Safeguarding team comprised of Church staff and volunteers. We meet to discuss issues arising, changes required and to refresh our understanding of recent guidance. A recent Archdeacon's Visitation concluded with a satisfactory report on our systems and procedures.

I consider an important aspect of my role is to address any issues both formally and informally, particularly regarding knowledge of how to keep everyone safe. Constant attention to the reality of Safeguarding in action is necessary and informal conversations are often a meaningful way of addressing the need to advise when friendship and offers of help may be conflicted with being safe in unknown situations. So the more we can spread our knowledge through effective training and constant vigilance then the more purposeful we can be in ensuring a Safeguarding church.

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

WRITTEN BY ROSEMARY SIGEE

The Deanery Synod meets three times a year in different Churches and gives an opportunity for members of different parts of the Deanery to share local news and events from their parishes and to hear reports from the wider Church. The meetings have four parts.

1. Refreshments as people arrive give an opportunity for general catch up.
2. A short service of worship led by the clergy of the host parish.
3. An address, usually by an external speaker, with an opportunity for questions and discussion.
4. A business meeting with previous minutes, reports, including any available reports from Diocesan or General Synods, and an update on news from parishes.

The meeting on 11 May 2023 was held at St Elizabeth's Church, Ashley and the address was given by Revd Vanessa Layfield, the Diocesan Engagement and Inclusion Officer. The Church should make everyone welcome and this involves training, doing accessibility audits and asking disabled people what would help them. Churches need to be more inclusive of those from other ethnicities and backgrounds. Do our congregations reflect the community living around us? Is there an unconscious bias to keep groups "like us"?

Dave Atkinson gave an outline of the work Trafford Youth for Christ does teaching the Christian perspective in RE in 12 local schools but sadly the work was affected by Covid and funds are low.

The meeting on 17 October 2023 was held at St Alban's Church, Broadheath and Revd Shemil Mathew, Vice Dean, Emmanuel Theological College gave the talk. Emmanuel is a Christ-centred, hope-filled and mission-orientated community which exists to equip the whole people of God to serve the whole mission of God today. It is the third largest theological college in England, with 18 members of Staff, 160 students and also pop-up theological students joining for short courses. The teaching centres are in the six CofE dioceses in the NW, in Blackburn, Carlisle, Chester, Liverpool, Manchester, and Sodor and Man and on-line. Students develop their particular gifts in a parish, combining practical training in a priest's duties with academic theology. Revd Jane Mottram then described her experience being in a placement

at St Mary's Partington while studying for her degree. Churches can help support the college work and the college can help churches.

Bishop Mark is developing a Vision for the Diocese which will eventually impact all areas of the diocesan life, including a balancing of resources, with the vision of reaching the 1.5 million in our diocese who don't know Jesus.

Reports were received from General and Diocesan Synods.

The meeting on February 7 2024 was held at Holy Cross, Timperley Parish and Revd Michael Loach, Vicar of Higher Bebington, talked about Environmentalism and the Church in three aspects: at the national level, in the diocese, and in the local church. The Church of England's Route map to Net Zero Carbon is aiming for all parishes and churches to be carbon net-zero by 2030, an ambitious target set by the 2020 General Synod. Many of the older buildings are a challenge but we can do small things such as keeping lights low, monitoring heating temperatures and ensuring good insulation. In many churches the focus is on schemes to heat the people rather than the whole building e.g. under-pew heating, zoned spaces and warmer clothes. There are some funds and other resources available. The Diocese and the Churches are being encouraged to get Eco status. Chester has now appointed a Diocesan Net Zero Officer and needs to appoint a Diocesan Environment Officer to provide more local support to parishes working towards net zero.

Reports from General Synod and the Diocesan Synod were received and also one about the Mothers' Union in Bowdon Deanery. Several branches have closed in the Deanery recently including ours as the members have aged and there are few new members. The M.U. does valuable work in prisons, providing holidays for families in need and supporting work here and in many countries overseas including war torn areas such as Ukraine. The Chester M.U. is also at risk of folding.

The next meeting, on Thursday 23 May at 7pm at St Mary's Church, Partington M31 4FB, will be an Open Deanery Synod Meeting to which other members of Bowdon Deanery churches are invited. This will be on the subject of the Diocesan Vision process. Please come.

CHILDREN

WRITTEN BY JULIE LOYND

Ubuntu

At the end of last year's report, I said that I was looking forward to seeing what God was going to do this year. God has been so faithful (and busy!) and looking back He has done more than we could possibly have hoped or imagined. Here are a few highlights:

- The Light Party – still a hugely popular event for our church and local community. A particular highlight was the amount of our lovely youth who asked if they could help at the event. They did such a fantastic job!
- Seeing intergenerational church happen with our new "One Big Family" services where all ages can get involved in all aspects of the service.
- The prayer tunnel in church at the end of our 9:30 service one week, when our church family prayed for our children, youth and Tiddler's families. We had such great feedback, our Church just loved being able to pray and bless our children and young families. One of the adults from church said that as they walked through the tunnel, she heard so many encouraging words from God about them.
- Our Caterpillars Parent and Toddler Group which has been consistently full each Tuesday afternoon for the past year. God is really at work here, all credit to Janet and the Caterpillars Team who give their time each week to make everyone feel so welcome and minister to those who attend.
- Seeing a child sat in the chancel praying after one of the 9:30 services.
- Working with St Mary's School on new ways in which we can help grow faith and support each other.
- A beautiful moment the other week when I walked into Junior Church at the end of the session, to see the children stood in circles with their hands on each other's shoulders praying for each other.



Julie and Nathan enjoying our 'Scratch Nativity' all-age service

- Seeing the joy on the faces of teachers, pupils, and families from St Mary's School at Day School Sunday as the Freedom Gospel Choir led everyone in worship.
- Our Tiddlers group, they get their own bullet point. They are just wonderful!
- ...So do our volunteers. They are such a blessing to the team and the children.
- Hosting Care For The Family's Parenting Events "Left to Their Own Devices" in October and "A Mind of Their Own" in February for our church, schools and local community.
- Doing treasure hunts around our church with 60 children from The Firs and being part of Forest Park Prep's amazing nativity service!
 - Being able to promote Growing Faith to other churches in Chester Diocese with Bishop Sam and Lucy Moore.
 - Youth hanging out with the younger children after the service and having a game of football.

To name but a few! It has been a beautifully busy year and God has been at work. As well as leading the Children's Ministry, I have been part of the Church of

England's Growing Faith Strategic Leadership Programme, which aims to equip leaders to work towards the Church of England's goal to double the number of children and young people in churches by 2030.

In my new role as Children, Youth & Families Director, I am looking forward to growing the team and thinking about how to further implement the vision for children's and youth work in building the foundations of a life-long faith. Our vision is to give our children and young people the space to:

- Know - Learn about the Bible and God's character
- Grow - Be free to ask questions to help them better understand and grow their faith.

- Show - Be able to look outwards to show God's love to others.

At the heart of all of these is the word "Connect". To know, grow and show faith is to learn to live in a relationship and friendship with God where we can connect with Him and vice versa. When we connect with God, and experience His love, it turns our head-learning into a heart-loving relationship.

For me, this verse really captures the heart of what God has been doing this year in this ministry in our Church.

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow" 1 Cor 3:6

For our church to help our children and young people grow in faith we have to work together as one body in Christ. I am so thankful for our

church family who have backed the vision and committed to investing in children and youth to grow the team, for all the volunteers who bake, help at events and give their time and energy in Junior Church throughout the year and for the children's spiritual grandparents and all members of our Church Family who have prayed, listened and continue to pray for our children and young people.

There is a South African word called "Ubuntu" which means "I am what I am, because of who we are". I think this is so true for our church family. Together we are all planting seeds of faith and helping God make them grow, so thank you for your time and investment in our young people. The best is yet to come.

Thank you so much,
Julie



Church family enjoying our annual picnic in Ashton Park



Caterpillars children learning that Jesus loves them through different craft activities



Families gathered at the 2023 Light Party

YOUTH

WRITTEN BY DAVE ATKINSON

Over 2023 we have seen the FUEL family grow more stable... across the board - FUEL & FUEL:Cell on Friday evenings, and FUEL:Sundays on (you've guessed it!) Sunday mornings. The young people who attend each week are enjoying themselves, following the rules/guidelines, learning about God, and having fun - a winning outcome! They're confident in how each of the groups run, and what's expected of them, and so when new people come along, they help them to 'fit in' to how the groups work best, and so there's little required from the volunteers in the way of discipline. Numbers are steady, we see most of the same young people each week and the majority of the attendees are currently in Years 7 & 8. Usually each year we lose the top end of young people, and hope to fill their places with the new Year 6s, but we are confident that the majority (if not, all) of the group will be continuing to attend right through to summer and beyond, so we anticipate a real growth in numbers over summer when the Year 6s do join us. In a time where numbers attending church youth groups seem to be in decline, we don't want to be turning young people away because we don't have enough volunteers to facilitate their attendance (this is your opportunity to get involved and volunteer with the amazing youthwork).

There are a couple of really exciting stories from just before the summer holidays in 2023 with one young person who had received an off-the-

cuff invite from a neighbouring family to "check out the church youth group if you're interested". They found themselves watching a vlogger on TikTok in June 2023 posing the question "Are you a lukewarm Christian?", and so decided to 'check out the church youth group', signed up, and came along that Friday (knowing no-one else who would be there, and even though her parents haven't had any connection with the church)... and even came to FUEL:Sundays that week too. She has been regularly attending both since, and also came along to the New Wine Worship event held at church in January, deciding to go deeper still, and is looking into baptism. This proves that a simple invite can stick with someone, and so don't be put off if nothing seems to happen straight away, invite anyway.

Another young person turned up at one of the church services randomly one week before summer. It transpired that he used to come along to FUEL when he was in year 7 (he's now in 6th Form), and although he hasn't joined in 'as a young person' with the groups on Sunday or Friday, he's regularly in the services each Sunday, and has started to explore volunteering on a Friday night. A great example of how we are called to be disciples who make disciples who make disciples.



Some of our young people walking through a prayer tunnel as the rest of the congregation prayed for them and the rest of our children and young people.



Young people playing a 'conversation starter' game during a session

SALE WEST COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

WRITTEN BY CAROL DODGSON

We have been bringing people together in community this year and creating a wonderful 'family feel' in supportive spaces across two venues - The Sale West Community Centre and St Mary's Church. Our people have made new friends, learned new skills, engaged in peer support, volunteered, engaged in church and lived life together.

We aim for an atmosphere of acceptance and care through the various non-faith based activities we run including: creative groups, our Men's Group, bereavement support, a community garden, one-to-one mentoring, holiday family and children's crafts, and through working in partnership with others like Our Sale West, Bluesci, Trafford Conservation Volunteers, St Martin's Church, local schools and Sale Sharks.

Our impact has been life changing for some, with:

- over 380 people benefitting from our activities;
- 93% of people making friends;
- 83% of people feeling more connected with community;
- 46 people volunteering to help run our activities; this includes members of the church/ local community who want to give back, teenagers doing work experience and people from within the groups, who are encouraged to volunteer as a way of feeling more connected and improving self-confidence; and
- 78% of people saying they felt more self-confident as a result of coming to our groups and 81% of people feeling less isolated.

During the course of the year, 20 men engaged in our Men's Group, one gentleman said, "I feel important, I matter." Each person matters to us as we seek to create an environment where people are accepted and acceptable.

35 people were supported after being bereaved by helping them to create a structure and purpose to life.

In May 2023, we took a number of families from the Sale West estate to Quinta for a church weekend away, where we spent an excellent weekend looking at who God is, singing, playing games and eating together. This led on to new families joining the Sale West Community Church and people coming to faith.

In October we had a craft group trip out to Bury Market, and we've made handmade items to sell at our table-top craft sales in May and November, with many volunteering to help run stands and raising money to support the groups. We have also attended community events and offered creative activities in order to engage with people which has been very successful.

"I feel important.
I matter."



Learning new skills at Monday's craft group

We are looking forward to our revitalisation project for the Sale West Community Church which will bring opportunities for growth in numbers and relationships. We have a wonderful team of people and the Myriad training program for church planting they are part of has got off to a good start. We have a great mentor assigned from a similar type of church setting supporting and challenging us this year.

DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITIES

WRITTEN BY ANN MCBURNEY

SMALL GROUPS

Most of our small groups have been together for a while, or what seems like forever. We have recently added a much needed new small group to our Tuesday evening list. This group started small but is already growing just a few weeks in. Autumn of 2023 The Romans series was launched, which from what I have heard was a real boost for church members and small groups alike. The change of format gave groups a nudge to try something different and I know some are continuing to search out video clips and other material along with using ideas from the small group notes.

HUDDLES

We have held our first all huddle meeting, it was wonderful to get together with so many of you and we even started a new huddle at the event. Steve led us through various discussion points, thinking about our huddle's health, what's great and what could be improved, materials we are all using- a wonderful variety and a time of fellowship across all the different huddles within our church family.

If you are interested in hearing more about our Discipleship communities- small groups or huddles please do contact me by emailing ann.mcburney@hotmail.com.

ENGLISH CLASSES

WRITTEN BY CLAIRE CAMPBELL SMITH

St Mary's English Classes have gone from strength to strength since they started in July 2022, led by Amelie Latham in response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in Trafford. We currently have over 50 students and the buzz in the Heartbeat Café, with lots of laughter and conversation, suggests that the classes provide an important social, as well as educational, opportunity.

The classes take place on Thursdays, 10am-12noon, and we're in our 6th term. 8-week terms have stretched to 10, as the demand is so great! Ukrainians have largely been replaced by people from Hong Kong and other parts of China, Iran, Iraq, India, Egypt, Turkey, Spain and Poland. Some are working, some looking for work, some studying and some retired and fulfilling grandparent duties! Some people are referred to us by Trafford Council, whose waiting list for ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages) numbers well over 400!

Levels of English vary greatly. A team of 4 teachers (currently Claire Campbell Smith, Lorna Hitchin, Yorke Menzies and Janine Smith) provide lessons for, broadly speaking, Beginner, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced students, supported by student co-ordinator,

Martin Haywood. They each have a 60-minute lesson plus an hour of informal conversation in the Café with native English speakers from St Mary's, other churches and the wider community, who've formed a committed and enthusiastic group of volunteers. The church supports the classes by providing free hot drinks, kindly served by Cathy and her helpers in the Café.

I think it's true to say that Thursday mornings have become a high point in everyone's week. The atmosphere is so positive and it's been a joy to get to know people from so many different countries and cultures and to see them learning together. It's also been great to see students come along to other activities at St Mary's and some have become part of our congregation. Connections have been made with the All Nations group - we've shared a Christmas lunch for the past 2 years, enjoying an amazing feast of international cuisine - and students and their children have volunteered in the Café or at events such as the Christmas Fair.

Teachers and volunteers pray together before the classes begin; we pray for students who are ill or facing difficult situations and we also pray that students will catch a glimpse of Christ's love while they are with us.

FAITH MATTERS/ALPHA

WRITTEN BY NATHAN GREGORY

Throughout the year we like to regularly offer opportunities for people to come and explore the Christian faith and find out about Jesus. One of the main ways we have done this is through Faith Matters. It is a five week 'course' which focuses on the relationship God is wanting to invite us all into and some of the basics of the Christian faith. It is a joy to have a constant flow of people who are interested in discovering more about Jesus whether it is for the first time, wanting to revisit a dormant faith or even where they may have been a Christian for a while but wanting to deepen their understanding to a God they have already discovered is real.

To complement Faith Matters this last year we ran Alpha in the Autumn term. Alpha is a longer course and enables us to go into greater detail about Jesus, why he died, the work of the Holy Spirit, what is prayer and how to read the Bible amongst other topics.

Over the last year we have seen people take significant steps of faith where faith and their relationship with Jesus has come alive in a new way and those who have discovered faith in Jesus for the first time. I would love to be able to share some of their stories but they are not mine to share and as with all of us the journey of faith is still unfolding. In all of their stories is the common theme of invitation. A friend inviting them to come along and join them on Faith Matters, a neighbour casually mentioning Alpha in a passing conversation, someone who invited them to join them at church on Sunday which turned into them wanting to find out more. It is a simple invitation to hear something more but it is more than that isn't it, it is an invitation to the greatest, most fulfilling relationship, an invitation to discover themselves, their purpose and meaning, an invitation to know God and be with him forever. So do be praying about who God is asking you to invite on Faith Matters and Alpha in the year ahead.

CONNECTIONS

WRITTEN BY MAUREEN CAIN

In September I had some thoughts about starting a new group for friendship in Church. I talked to various people who all seemed to think it would be a great idea and so I then passed it through the people who could enable it to proceed. At this stage I had formulated some ideas of how it would run and my notion was that it would provide an opportunity for people to connect with each other in a warm and friendly place of companionship.

Our first meeting happened in October and I asked the twenty-two people who came if they would provide their contact details and an indication of what they would like to get from the group. I explained that this would be a self-sufficient group, I didn't want the responsibility of organising speakers, trips etc, but if that's what was wanted they could organise themselves. Reading the responses after this first meeting the overwhelming message was that people wanted a place to meet others, chat, develop friendships and enjoy each others' company with a brew and a biscuit.

We meet at 2pm on the first Friday afternoon of the month and now have a good number who come along to each meeting, with new people joining us each month. We seem to have got into a habit of somebody bringing a quiz which always raises a laugh and we have the domino corner and a jigsaw table and anything else that people want to do. Each time we meet people come up with ideas which are then put to the group for approval.

A personal highlight for me was hearing people say what an interesting chat they'd had with someone they knew by sight but had never spoken with. Another is when a lady came in to collect a baking tin from the kitchen and was hailed by people she knew in another context. The following month she arrived with cakes made for us all!

Connections is emerging as a group of loving people who enjoy company and I strongly believe that things will develop in this group and beyond, the likes of which we don't know but trust it will be part of a bigger plan.

MISSION PARTNERS

WRITTEN BY MARY ROBINSON

It's been a full year for the Mission Group! We've had fascinating quarterly meetings looking in depth at the work of our 10 Mission Partners; their ministry, organisation, financial and specific needs, thinking how we should support them as a church.

THE HIGHLIGHT has been to see one of our church families, Simon and Amelie Latham going out in Mission together with their children Zara, Heloise, and Sophie. They left in June to work on the Mercy Ships in Sierra Leone providing skilled surgical and medical care for so many in need. Follow them on their Facebook page, (www.facebook.com/lathamsonthemove)

Many of our partners shared about their ministries at the May mission stalls Sunday.

We continue the monthly Mission Focus in St Mary's morning services with updates on each partner in turn. They are a regular part of the weekly intercessions. We've a bright Mission Display Board by the side door (do have a look!). Danielle has done a great job upgrading our Mission Website. Find the latest news from our all our Mission Partners by visiting the church website, www.stmarysaom.org/mission

Fund Raising Events included Trafford Youth for Christ, Philippines Outreach and Burundi Herridge Trust. More are planned for this year! Thank you for your prayers and practical support for all our Mission Partners.

'Lift up your eyes and look unto the fields ripe unto Harvest' Matthew 9:37.

RAMBLERS

WRITTEN BY JANET TURNBULL

This group was started so long ago by myself and Margaret Baker that the exact date is lost in the mists of time and failing memory, but suffice to say our children were at St Mary's primary school and Jim Innes was the vicar, so that puts it well before 1990.

Over the years we have gained and lost many members, and our walks have been getting rather shorter and less challenging than they were in the early days.

I always intended the Ramblers to be a kind of outreach group, where people could join in on equal terms, get to know St Mary's folk and feel safe with them. I don't know if that approach worked, but it does appear to have been a matchmaker for at least two couples!

Over the past year we managed 11 Saturday rambles and 7 midweek 'Meanders'. 12 of us also enjoyed a 5-day walking holiday at Scargill in September; the weather was glorious, the walks were stunning and the welcome at Scargill was as warm as ever, making us feel like old friends.

Since the pandemic we have never quite found our feet again and the walks were fixed on a very ad hoc basis, never knowing what we were

going to do until it became imperative to get the information to the church office in time for the relevant Contact. I am greatly indebted to Steve Thurston for advertising them on the pre-service overheads. I'm also deeply grateful to those who led walks, and especially to Joan Heys and Maura Baker for partnering me on so many recess and offering to drive as well!

The rambles varied in length from 6 to 8 miles; the meanders were all less than 5 miles. Our average speed never got above 1.4 miles per hour for either, but that can be attributed to lunch stops and a certain photographer who couldn't pass by a mushroom without recording it.

In 2022 we tried an experiment of finishing the Meanders at a pub in time for lunch, with the idea that the rest of the day would be free, but in reality we tended to sit there until teatime before reluctantly going home so last year we reverted to packed lunches!

Following our very enjoyable AGM/social/bring-and-share supper on 10th February we have put together a programme of sorts, but it may be the last year with me at the helm. The Ramblers have given me many years of pleasure but I feel it is time to hang up my boots.

COME FLY WITH ME WRITTEN BY FIONA PALMER

We have had a really exciting time at Come Fly With Me over the last year. We met on zoom on the first Thursday evening of the month during term time from 7:30pm to 8:45pm. We have welcomed folk from all four services and since we meet on zoom it has enabled several people from other churches to join us too.

We believe that our Lord speaks and that all Christians can hear from God in different ways. The aim of each evening is to enable us all to practice hearing in a safe space and hence grow in confidence to hear from God both for ourselves and others.

Each session has a short teaching slot with a different theme each month. A recent theme

was 'Seasons.' After the teaching we listened to the Lord for His guidance and will for each person for the coming season in small breakout groups guided by an experienced leader. As usual, at feedback, we heard of some amazing words that were so accurate the recipient couldn't doubt that the Lord was speaking to them through a member of their group.

Everyone is most welcome at CFWM. Please come and join us, for a no obligation taster session, to weigh it up for yourself and to see if this is an experience and opportunity in the prophetic with which you would like to engage.

HEARTBEAT CAFE WRITTEN BY CATHY SNOWDON

Another busy year at the Heartbeat Café! We have been blessed by the continuous support from our regular customers... from Pictor School, a Pilates group, Butterflies, and small groups, to name a few, who have all enjoyed toasties, soup or homemade cakes.

But there have also been new groups using the church centre and gradually coming into the café before 'singing' or 'art appreciation'. It has been lovely to have the opportunity to chat with these people who may not regularly go to church.

Also a number of 'walk-in' customers who appreciate the café and return. It would be good to see more of the congregation from our church using the café.

A huge thank you to the volunteers, some new ones, some longstanding, others finding commitments elsewhere. Thank you to Diane who started with me from the beginning but has now moved on. New volunteers are still very much welcomed and needed, no matter how often. We have some very busy times,

particularly the 'conversation class' on Thursday mornings when more volunteers are appreciated to serve drinks to the students where English is their second language.

The monthly afternoon teas have been popular and I intend to continue with them this coming year.

The Christmas Fair opening of the Heartbeat Café was well attended and the volunteers worked hard to create a smooth, friendly environment.

Also a new venture was to open on the afternoon session of the clothes swap in January. 'Swappers' browsed and enjoyed homemade goodies and

drinks.

The Kindness Coffee board has blessed many and is ongoing.

We pray that the customers continue to feel blessed and valued and that more of the wider community will also come to 'Taste and see that the Lord is good' Psalm 34:8.



The Kindness Coffee board ready for action

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARY MAGDALENE,
ASHTON-ON-MERSEY WITH SALE WEST COMMUNITY CHURCH,
CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIOCESE OF CHESTER**

Registered Charity No. 1133105

Year ended 31 December 2023

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF THE TRUSTEES ANNUAL
REPORT AND THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Under charity law, the trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report and the financial statements for each financial year which properly present the state of affairs of the charity and of the excess of income over expenditure for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, generally accepted accounting practice entails that the trustees:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements comply with the trust deed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.

The trustees are required to act in accordance with the trust deed of the charity, within the framework of trust law. They are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, sufficient to disclose at any time, with reasonable accuracy, the financial position of the charity at that time, and to enable the trustees to ensure that, where any statements of accounts are prepared by them under section 132(1) of the Charities Act 2011, as amended by the Charities Act 2022, those statements of accounts comply with the requirements of regulations under that provision. They have general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the charity and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the PCC



Revd Nathan Gregory

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARY MAGDALENE, ASHTON-ON-MERSEY WITH SALE WEST COMMUNITY CHURCH

Year ended 31 December 2023

I report to the PCC on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 December 2023 set out on pages 23 to 30.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND BASIS OF REPORT

As the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with Section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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



Mrs Susan Suchoparek FCA

27th March 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ended 31 December 2023

There were no restricted funds in 2023.

	Note	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES	2		
Voluntary income (direct giving)		310,435	288,893
Other voluntary income		18,469	2,634
Gross income from events and activities		128,537	138,573
Other ordinary income		21,038	10,316
Income from trading		46,204	41,542
Income from investment		3,907	971
Other income		-	347
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		£528,591	£483,276
RESOURCES USED	3		
Grants		39,212	35,005
Support costs		49,453	40,088
Directly relating to the work of the church		378,191	368,836
Fund raising and publicity		425	295
Church management/administration		65,452	61,589
TOTAL RESOURCES USED		£532,733	£505,812
Net incoming resources before gains/(losses) on investments		-4,142	-22,536
Net gain/(losses) on investments:		-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		-£4,142	-£22,536
Balances brought forward at 1 January		£584,123	£606,659
Transfer between funds			
Balances carried forward at 31 December		£579,980	£584,123

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	2023	2022
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible fixed assets	5	437,128	437,128
		£437,128	£437,128
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	7	11,834	7,543
Short term deposits		97,422	74,820
Cash at bank and in hand		35,123	66,304
		£144,379	£148,667
LIABILITIES			
Amounts falling due within one year	8	-1,527	-1,672
NET CURRENT ASSETS	6	£142,852	£146,995
NET ASSETS		£579,980	£584,123
FUNDS			
Unrestricted	9	579,980	584,123
Restricted		-	-
		£579,980	£584,123

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 25th March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



The Revd Nathan Gregory (Chairman)



Ms Lorna Hitchin (Vice Chair)

The notes on pages 26-30 form part of these accounts

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Deficit/(Surplus) for the year	-4,142	-22,536
Adjustments for:		
Interest receivable and similar income	-3,907	-971
Interest payable and similar charges	-	-
Increase (-) / decrease (+) in other debtors	-4,291	-1,640
Increase (+) / decrease (-) in other creditors	-145	+504
Net cash from operating activities	-£12,485	-£24,643
Cash flows from investing activities	3,907	971
Net cash from investing activities	£3,907	£971
Cash flows from financing activities (Interest paid)	-	-
Net cash from financing activities	-	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	-8,578	-23,672
Cash and cash equivalents as at 1 January	141,123	164,795
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December	£132,545	£141,123

ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash at bank and in hand	35,123	66,303
Short term deposits	97,422	74,820
Total cash and cash equivalents	£132,545	£141,123

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 December 2023

NOTE 1 - ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations together with Charities Statement of Recommended Practice Financial Reporting Standards 102 (SORP FRS102).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

Funds

Unrestricted funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use and are available for application on the general purposes of the PCC. These include funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC.

The purpose of any restricted funds is noted in the accounts.

The accounts include transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe an affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

Incoming Resources*Voluntary income and capital sources*

Collections are recognised when made.

Amounts receivable under covenant are recognised only when honoured by the covenanter.

Income tax recoverable on covenanted or gift aid donations is recognised when claimable.

Grants and legacies to the PCC are accounted for as soon as the PCC is notified of its entitlement and the amount due.

Funds raised by a church fair, garden party and similar events are accounted for gross.

Sales from the church bookstalls, Cafe, or other activities are accounted for gross.

Other ordinary income

Rental income from the letting of church premises is accounted for when earned.

Parochial fees due to the PCC for weddings, funerals etc are accounted for on an event by event basis.

Income from investment - Dividends and interest are accounted for when due. Tax recoverable on such income is accrued for on the same basis.

Investment gains and losses - Realised gains or losses are recognised when investments are sold. Unrealised gains or losses are accounted for on revaluation of investments at 31 December.

Application of Resources

Grants - Grants and donations are accounted for when paid.

Fixed assets*Consecrated land and buildings and movable church furnishings*

Consecrated and beneficed property is excluded from the accounts by s.10(2)(a) of the Charities Act 2011.

No value is placed on movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal since the PCC considers this to be an inalienable property. All expenditure incurred during the year on consecrated or beneficed buildings and movable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvement, is written off.

Other land and buildings - Other land and buildings held on behalf of the PCC for its own purposes is valued at cost. No depreciation is charged against such properties but any expenditure on maintenance or minor improvement is written off as incurred. Improvement expenditure in excess of £40,000 is capitalised.

Other fixtures, fitting and office equipment - Individual items with a purchase price of £5,000 or less are written off in the period in which the asset is acquired. Equipment with a purchase price of more than £5,000 is depreciated on a straight line basis over 4 years.

Current assets

Amounts owing to the PCC at 31 December in respect of fees, rents or other income are shown as debtors less any provision for amounts that may prove uncollectable.

Short-term deposits include cash held on deposit either with the Central Board of Finance or at the bank

NOTE 2 - INCOMING RESOURCES

There were no restricted funds in 2023

	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
2(a) Voluntary income (direct giving)		
Planned giving	234,659	218,547
Income tax recovered on Gift Aid	52,587	48,161
Giving received gross of Income Tax	14,790	13,535
Collections (open plate) other than planned giving	8,399	8,649
	<u>310,435</u>	<u>288,893</u>
2(b) Other voluntary income		
Fund raising income	3,410	836
Donations, appeals	15,059	812
Legacies	-	-
Grants received	-	986
	<u>18,469</u>	<u>2,634</u>
2(c) Gross income from events and activities		
Church Bookstalls	-	26
Pre-School Group	113,778	125,697
Flower Fund	769	125
Social Fund	240	585
Café	11,873	10,062
Caterpillars	1,877	1,370
Off Limits	-	708
	<u>128,537</u>	<u>138,573</u>
2(d) Other ordinary income		
Service fees	2,608	2,716
Administration service charges	400	400
VAT recovered	-	-
Rent received	7,200	7,200
Insurance claims	10,830	-
	<u>21,038</u>	<u>10,316</u>
2(e) Income from trading		
Church Centre lettings	46,204	41,542
	<u>46,204</u>	<u>41,542</u>
2(f) Income from investment		
Interest received	3,907	971
	<u>3,907</u>	<u>971</u>
2(g) Other income		
Job Retention Scheme	-	347
	<u>-</u>	<u>347</u>
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	<u>£528,591</u>	<u>£483,276</u>

NOTE 3 - RESOURCES USED

There were no restricted funds in 2023

	TOTAL 2023 £	TOTAL 2022 £
3(a) Grants		
Overseas missionary societies	12,009	12,300
Overseas relief and development agencies	2,450	3,263
Home missions and other church societies	17,353	11,651
Secular charities	7,400	7,791
	<hr/> 39,212	<hr/> 35,005
3(b) Support costs		
Parish training and mission	3,856	2,930
Junior Church/Youth	2,865	2,542
Children's Pastor	27,855	23,454
Youth Pastor	14,066	10,290
Equip Interns	811	873
	<hr/> 49,453	<hr/> 40,088
3(c) Directly relating to the work of the Church		
Parish Share	136,338	132,367
Clergy expenses	3,694	2,579
Clergy housing costs	7,098	8,230
Church & Services costs	14,992	13,356
Church Utilities	7,657	6,508
Church Centre running costs	24,326	21,862
Church Bookstalls costs	-	-
Pre-School Group costs	131,923	129,564
Social Fund costs	172	501
Flower Fund costs	423	56
Café costs	12,077	10,807
Caterpillars costs	1,162	1,115
Administration	7,913	6,571
Major repairs	30,416	35,322
	<hr/> 378,191	<hr/> 368,836
3(d) Fund raising and publicity		
Cost of stewardship/fundraising	425	295
	<hr/> 425	<hr/> 295
3(e) Church management and administration		
Secretarial/administration salaries	63,539	59,964
Employer pension costs	1,913	1,625
	<hr/> 65,452	<hr/> 61,589
TOTAL RESOURCES USED	<hr/> £532,733	<hr/> £505,812

NOTE 4 - STAFF COSTS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages, Salaries, National Insurance and Pensions	212,461	198,165

During the year the PCC employed a Children's Pastor, Children's Assistant, Youth Worker, Pre-School Group Manager and Assistants, Café Manager, Head of Operations, Parish Finance Officer, two Receptionist & Parish Administrators and two Cleaners, none of whom earned £60,000 p.a. or more. Procedures set out in our Conflicts of Interest Policy have been followed in any matter involving a related party to a trustee.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme claim	-	347

This is shown under "Other Income"

NOTE 5 - FIXED ASSETS FOR USE BY THE PCC

	2023	2022
	£	£
Freehold land and buildings – balance at 31 December	437,128	437,128

The freehold land and buildings as at 31 December 2023 comprise the houses located at 23 Rydal Avenue, Sale, and 109 Ascot Avenue, Sale.

NOTE 6 - ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BY FUND

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Fixed Assets	437,128	-	437,128
Current assets	142,852	-	142,852
Fund balance	£579,980	-	£579,980

NOTE 7 - DEBTORS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Debtors	11,834	7,543

NOTE 8 - LIABILITIES: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accruals	200	-
Accrued Income	-	-
Accrued Agency	1,327	1,672
	<u>1,527</u>	<u>1,672</u>

NOTE 9 - UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Balance brought forward at 1 January	584,123	606,659
(Deficit)/surplus in year	-4,142	-22,536
Balance carried forward at 31 December	<u>£579,981</u>	<u>£584,123</u>

NOTE 10 - LINKED CHARITY

The PCC is the trustee of an unregistered charity called the All Saints Church of England School, known as the Glebelands Trust. The charity owns a piece of land and property on Glebelands Road Sale which is rented out. Net income is applied at the discretion of the PCC. Total reserves as at 31 December 2023 were £177,623 (£139,077 at 31 December 2022).

To find out more about St Mary's and Sale West Community Church, find us online:

stmarysaom.org
[@stmarysaom](https://www.instagram.com/stmarysaom)

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