



**The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Axminster
Incorporating Holy Cross Church, Woodbury Lane**

Registered Charity No: 1127655

**Annual Report and Financial Statements
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended
31st December 2022**

Rector:
The Reverend Clive Sedgewick
The Rectory, Church Street, Axminster EX13 5AQ

Bankers:

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Independent Examiner:

Sharon Smith, 16 Ilex Close, Exeter, EX4 9JZ.

Our website : www.axevmc.com

The Parochial Church Council of St. Mary the Virgin, Axminster

Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2022

Aim and Purpose

St. Mary the Virgin's Parochial Church Council (the PCC) incorporating Holy Cross Church, Woodbury, has the responsibility of cooperating with the Incumbent, the Reverend Clive Sedgewick, in promoting the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. As well as the church itself, which is a grade II* Listed Building, the PCC is also responsible for the Church Room between the church and the Rectory together with the church building known as Holy Cross Church in Woodbury Lane, Axminster although their day-to-day running is governed by its own separate Committee.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church, and to become part of our parish family. When planning our activities, the PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. We try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our parish family through:

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

To facilitate this work, it is vital that we maintain the fabric of both the church and the church room.

Achievements and Performance

During 2022 the Minster Church worked hard to recover and rebuild from the issues created by the covid-19 pandemic and to meet the challenges of the rise in fuel and heating costs and the cost of living issues faced by everyone in the community.

The impact of covid restrictions and protection of the most vulnerable reduced our regular congregational numbers during 2022. Pre-pandemic we regularly enjoyed average congregations of above 40. However, over the last two years a significant number of those who supported the Minster over the years have died, become less firm and struggle to attend and have moved away from the area. We have been pleased to welcome new members to the church but sadly, not to the same extent as we have lost them. During 2022 congregational numbers generally averaged 34. In spite of our reduced attendance, we have seen the Minster continue to flourish financially and for this we are grateful to all who continue to support the work of the church and PCC.

We were pleased to return to a full year of weekly services and activities in 2022. We were able to offer a 10.30 service every Sunday apart from those 'fifth Sundays' of the month where we joined with the other churches of the Axe Valley Mission Community (AVMC) to celebrate team communion services.

In an attempt to attract and serve families and new members we introduced a service of 'Morning Worship' on the second Sunday of each month instead of the Holy Communion Service. Rev'd Shuna George led on this initiative along with others. The services did not attract many new people and we did lose some of the regular attenders on those Sundays though overall we saw numbers growing a little by the end of the year.

The 'Focal Ministers' for the Minster remained Rev'd Clive Sedgewick, Rector; Rev'd Shuna George, Associate Priest and Su Clark, Licensed Reader. The 'focal ministry' approach introduced at the end of 2021 has continued and people at the Minster were very secure with their focal minister relationships. This system will continue to develop but is quite secure in Axminster.

In the autumn the Minster returned to the 'shared chalice' for Holy Communion. Due to the Covid risk assessments priestly intinction had been the method of sharing communion but along with many churches the return to the chalice was welcomed by many and the Minster was encouraged to do so. (Holy Cross chose to retain communion by priestly intinction for the present).

During the year the Minster electoral roll stood at 56 (Holy Cross 31) with the PCC total 87.

The provision of the weekly news sheet, 'Pews News', continued to be a positive vehicle of communication and to be a good link for all eight of our churches to share and receive information. During the year Louise Collard, AVMC Administrator, continued to improve and develop this important publication and to distribute it electronically and in physical format.

2022 saw the establishment of a very successful 'Stay and Play' group for toddlers and carers on Wednesday mornings. Led by Rev'd Shuna and her team, we regularly saw 20+ toddlers and similar numbers of adult carers enjoying friendship, play and discussion in church. Over the year more than 40 children and 35 adults joined in these very successful sessions. It was very clear that the group were meeting an important need within the community.

It was a joy to see many of these children and families take part in our Christingle Service in Advent – and again thanks go to Rev'd Shuna for her organisation and for building up strong relationships to bring about this success.

We remain very grateful to all who worked with PCC, church and wider community during the year. Their efforts, care and commitment are much appreciated during another challenging year.

We are pleased that the fortnightly Bible Study group continued to meet in the Church Rooms throughout the year. Numbers increased significantly and were frequently in double figures. It is good to see the focus that we have upon study and the understanding of scripture. Our thanks continue go to Dr. Sugan Govender for his leadership, vision and commitment here.

The 9.00am 'Breakfast Together Service' on the first Sunday continued through the year and offered an informal opportunity for prayer and worship before the main service at 10.30.

2022 included significant 'Civic' events and services. In particular we enjoyed an exceptional Platinum Jubilee for the Queen with two hundred or so joining the service in the Minster followed by a 'cream tea' in the Guildhall. Thanks go particularly to Mervyn and Jacqui Symes for all their work in making this a wonderful community success.

Sadly, we also commemorated the death of the Queen and again the support, involvement, and contributions from all in the community were wonderful at a time of national mourning. The Minster was open throughout the official period of mourning with a book of condolences. This book, with hundreds of signatures and messages has been lodged with the Devon Archives and records the sense of loss felt by all.

The Remembrance Sunday service led by the Royal British Legion beside the War Memorial on the Minster Green was particularly well attended with 300+ people and was a fine tribute to the fallen and all who serve.

Mission and Evangelism

Besides the very successful 'Stay and Play' toddler group we were able to offer a full season of Thursday lunchtime concerts again in 2022. We were able to hold 26 concerts in the Minster. Numbers attending were not up to pre-pandemic levels but were significantly improved on the half season of 2021. The decision was taken not to serve food or refreshments at concerts which greatly reduced the work for the wonderful team of volunteers who made the concerts possible and this did not appear to impact negatively on the donations received with over £3000 raised. Our thanks go to all the artists who gave their time and skills, and to all who worked so hard to organise and arrange the season.

We were able to hold the Minster Christmas Tree Festival in 2022 and it brought such joy to so many. Again, many visitors came for the Festival and some wonderful conversations were held. Our thanks go to Mervyn & Jacqui Symes for making the event happen and for their generosity throughout, and to all who volunteered and provided the trees. It was a joy to have such a sense of the purpose of the season during the Christmas period.

The Christingle was well supported, and a donation made to the 'Children's Society'.

Carol singing on the Minster Green on Market Day just before Christmas was much appreciated, well supported and reported on television with filming taking place outside the Minster.

Volunteers

During 2022 we very much appreciated our many voluntary activities and the work of individuals which maintained the life of the church. We record our thanks to all who contributed to the life of the church in any way during 2022.

Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod three met times in 2022.

Jean Ray and Nicola Russell were the PCC Deanery Synod Reps.

Church Fabric

The new energy efficient lighting fitted in the autumn 2021 was completed in February 2022. The new lighting has been transformational and brightens up the whole church.

The Fabric Committee drew up a response and maintenance programme following the receipt of the 2021 Quinquennial Inspection Report, and this is being delivered in a phased programme.

Safeguarding Report

As a PCC we remain committed to the statement:

“The PCC has and will continue to comply with the duty to have due regard to the House of Bishop’s Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults as set out under S5 of the Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure 2016”.

During 2022 there were no reported incidents of a safeguarding nature.

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The council comprises the Incumbent, the Churchwardens, a representative of the Readers, those elected to the Deanery Synod, and other members who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, by those on the Electoral Roll including representatives of Holy Cross. Members of the congregation are always encouraged to join the Electoral Roll, and to stand for election to the PCC. The PCC members are responsible for making the decisions on all matters of general concern and importance in the parish, and for all financial matters. The full PCC met six times during the year.

The Minster Church

Financial Review

Total receipts for the year totalled £118,642. This was made up of payments into the unrestricted General fund totalled £110,507, Designated fund totalled £3721 and the receipts to the Restricted fund totalled £4,412. Payments into the General Fund were up £14,963 from the previous year. Payments out of this General fund totalled £66,830 which is a decrease of £8,322 on the previous year. This was due to limited further expenditure relating to the re-ordering work and completion of the lighting project. This leaves an excess of receipts over payments in the General fund of £30,105. The expenditure from Designated funds and Restricted funds totalled £1,342. This leaves a total excess of Income over Expenditure of £43,677.

Income from tax efficient planned giving at £15,286 was up £1,455 on the previous year. We are extremely grateful that our many of our regular donors were able to maintain their giving despite the other financial pressures they may have been under. Collections at services £3,594 had increased by £723, a slow but positive move in the right direction.

We were able to fully pay our Common Fund commitment of £37,44. The Minster paying £25,012 and £12,429 being paid by Holy Cross Church. All other financial commitments were paid in full.

A Gift Aid claim for Quarter 4 of 2022 totalling £6,321.44 will be made in January 2023.

Reserves Policy

The PCC has resolved to maintain a balance on our General (unrestricted) Fund which equates to at least three months' unrestricted payments (approximately £16,000). Over the year, the average balance of the General Fund has been considerably over this figure. There are substantial reserves for the upkeep of the Church buildings.

This year's General fund surplus of £43,677 and brought forward General funds now total £59,847. Designated funds total £40,966 and Restricted funds total £14,374. A total of £115,118.

A designated amount of £8,460 remains towards repairs identified in a previous Quinquennial Report. A budget of £25,000 was previously agreed for work on the wall paintings to preserve and display them of which £22,332 remains.

Our major challenge is to greatly increase the amount of money we receive from planned giving during the forthcoming year, so that we can more easily budget our expenditure and pay our way in the knowledge that we have sufficient regular funds coming in. We have many givers who already donate through standing order. We have also now registered with the Parish Giving scheme to offer an additional, easy process of regular giving. To enable easier ways to give, we have also purchased a card reader so that card and contactless donations can be accepted in the Minster.

Holy Cross Church - Review of 2022

Aim and Purpose

Holy Cross is one of eight churches in the Axe Valley Mission Community (AVMC). It is situated in Woodbury Lane, Axminster and comes under the auspices of The Minster PCC, although the day to day running and upkeep of the church are governed by its own separate committee.

Holy Cross has a gathered congregation from the town and surrounding villages including Raymonds Hill, Charmouth and Lyme Regis.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and Prayer

Holy Cross held 49 weekly services in 2022 with an average of 25 attendees. There has been an increase in the numbers attending, especially during the second half of the year. Our electoral roll stands at 31.

The Church was closed for one week in January to complete repairs on the floor following the October 2021 flood.

Since July, Evensong has been introduced where there is a fifth Sunday in the month and these services have been well attended.

Three funerals took place, two of them for longstanding members of the congregation and we were delighted to have four baptisms.

Holy Cross Headlines, our email group has grown again and keeps everyone in touch with our own news as well as AVMC events.

Church Fabric

The insurance claim from the October 2021 flood was finalised and the repairs to the floor completed. The Quinquennial Inspection took place, along with the five-year electrical testing and required updates were made.

New LED lighting was installed, a small contribution to the Church of England carbon net zero 2030 initiative. Half of the cost was paid by a generous legacy from a former member of the congregation.

Mission and Evangelism

Holy Cross has a long-standing relationship with our neighbours Woodbury Hall, and it was good to be able to hold several fellowship events there this year. This included a "Welcome Back" Tea Party in March, and Platinum Jubilee Celebration in June.

A Harvest Celebration was held in September to raise funds, by serving lunches and teas from the Hall and holding a Songs of Praise in Church on the Sunday.

A Memorial Service was held in October to remember those who have been part of the Holy Cross community over the years, and it was lovely to welcome back some of their families.

Our annual Carol Service took place in December with over 50 people enjoying mulled wine and food after the service.

Financial Review (2021 figures in brackets)

General income for the year was £22,682 (2021: £19,467) and expenditure £21,553 (2021: £19,182) giving a surplus for the year of £1,129 (2021: £285).

Thanks to everyone generously maintaining their giving and our Harvest fundraiser, all commitments including £12,429 contribution to the Axminster Parish common fund, were paid in full.

Charitable donations of £685 were made to the DEC appeals for Ukraine and the floods in Pakistan.

A donation of £1,000 was made to Woodbury Hall towards car park repairs.

A total of £11,878 was spent on repairs and maintenance, the quinquennial inspection and five-year electrical inspection.

We end the year with funds significantly reduced, however we have completed major repairs and maintenance and met all our commitments.

Fund balances carried forward are £7,655 (2021: £7,099) in general funds, and £790 (2021: £6,562) in restricted funds, giving a total of £8,445 (2021:£13,661).

Administrative Information

St Mary the Virgin (Minster Church) is situated in the centre of Axminster and is in the Honiton deanery in the Diocese of Exeter. The correspondence address is The Rectory, Church Street, Axminster EX13 5AQ. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, and the Church Representation Rules 2006) and a Registered Charity No.1127655

PCC Members who have served from the 1st January 2022 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio

The Incumbent	The Rev'd Clive Sedgewick - Chair
Curate	Rev'd Tracey Voysey
Licensed Minister	Rev'd Shuna George
Reader	Ms Su Clark
Churchwardens	Mrs Jean Ray Mrs Amanda Loveridge
Deanery Synod reps	Miss Nicola Russell (Holy Cross) Mrs Jean Ray
Safeguarding Officer	Ms Su Clark (until July 2022) Rev'd Tracey Voysey (from July 2022)
Minute Secretary	Mrs Jennifer Pyle

Elected Members	From 5th May 2022 Mrs Emily Govender Dr Sugendran Govender Mrs Pamela Macfarlane (Holy Cross Rep) Mrs Jennifer Pyle - Minute Secretary Miss Nicola Russell (Holy Cross Rep) Mr Peter Parshall Mr Peter Simpson (until September 2022) Mrs Jacqui Symes (until 20 th July 2022) Mr Mervyn Symes (until 20 th July 2022) Mrs Margaret Peirce (from 21 st September 2022)
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Treasurer to the PCC Mrs Melissa Kirkby

Approved by the PCC on 16th March 2023 and signed on its behalf by

Rev'd Clive Sedgewick
Chair



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CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees of	The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Axminster		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December, 2022	Charity no (if any)	1127655
Set out on pages	5 - 11		

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's statement

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

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:

Date: 07.03.2023

Name:

Sharon Smith

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

Address:

16 Ilex Close, Exeter, EX4 9JZ

CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNTS FOR THE MINSTER AND HOLY CROSS

	Note	Unrestricted General fund £	Designated fund £	Restricted fund £	TOTAL 2022 £	TOTAL 2021 £
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS						
RECEIPTS						
Donations and legacies						
Regular giving	1	106,414	0	1,641	108,055	102,253
Other voluntary receipts	2	13,030	0	2,830	15,860	12,610
Income from church activities	3	10,010	3,722	0	13,732	7,759
Other trading activities	4	3,465	0	493	3,958	1,780
Investments	5	271	0	0	271	7
Other receipts	6	0	0	6,336	6,336	0
Total receipts		133,190	3,722	11,300	148,212	124,409
PAYMENTS						
Cost of raising funds	7	993	0	0	993	1,261
Church activities	8	100,963	2,696	11,878	115,537	109,360
Other costs	9	0	0	0	0	2,247
Total payments		101,956	2,696	11,878	116,530	112,868
Excess of receipts over payments		31,234	1,026	(578)	31,682	11,541
TRANSFERS						
Transfers between funds		(25,717)	21,197	4,520	0	0
Debtors - payments in advance (at 1 January)					0	0
Liabilities - Receipts in advance & agency accounts (at 1 January)					0	0
Liabilities - Receipts in advance & agency accounts					0	(4,216)
Excess of receipts over payments (after transfers)		5,517	22,223	3,942	31,682	7,325
Net movement in funds		19,089	9,371	4,738	33,198	7,325
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS						
Total funds at 1 January		48,413	31,595	10,423	90,431	82,028
Total funds at 31 December		67,502	40,966	15,161	123,629	90,431

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Investments

0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0

0	0	0	0	0
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Monetary assets

Bank current account (CAF)

35,584 0 (2,130) 33,454 16,935

Bank current account (NatWest)

19,399 0 0 19,399 12,699

Bank deposit account CAF/Natwest

11,739 40,966 14,918 67,623 60,350

Petty cash

779 0 588 1,367 448

67,501 40,966 13,376 121,843 90,432

Debtors

Accounts Receivable

0 0 0 0 0

Gift aid claim (for previous year)

6,247 0 75 6,322 0

Refund of VAT

0 0 0 0 0

6,247 0 75 6,322 0

Liabilities

Accounts Payable

0 0 0 0 0

Agency Accounts

0 0 (1,788) (1,788) (4,216)

0 0 (1,788) (1,788) (4,216)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Regular giving					
Tax efficient planned giving	24,121	0	1,155	25,276	25,277
Other planned giving	1,800	0	0	1,800	1,544
Collections at services	8,139	0	0	8,139	4,321
Other recurring donations	49,500	0	0	49,500	51,738
Income tax recovered	22,854	0	486	23,340	19,373
	106,414	0	1,641	108,055	102,253
2. Other voluntary receipts					
Grants	6,926	0	1,510	8,436	5,054
Legacies	0	0	500	500	275
Non-recurring donations and appeals	6,104	0	820	6,924	7,281
	13,030	0	2,830	15,860	12,610
3. Income from church activities					
Statutory fees - weddings, funerals, etc.	3,972	0	0	3,972	2,481
Gross income (Church magazine)	0	0	0	0	0
Gross income (Letting of Church Buildings)	1,125	1,035	0	2,160	842
Gross income (Fund raising activities)	4,913	2,687	0	7,600	4,436
Adverts (Church magazine)	0	0	0	0	0
	10,010	3,722	0	13,732	7,759
4. Other trading activities					
Trading Income	3,465	0	493	3,958	1,780
	3,465	0	493	3,958	1,780
5. Income from investments					
Dividends	0	0	0	0	0
Interest received	271	0	0	271	7
Rent received	0	0	0	0	0
	271	0	0	271	7
6. Other receipts					
Insurance claim and sale of equipment	0	0	6,336	6,336	0
	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	6,336	6,336	0
7. Fund raising costs					
Costs of fund raising	993	0	0	993	1,261
	993	0	0	993	1,261
8. Charitable activities					
Mission giving and donations	1,239	1,000	0	2,239	1,038
Diocesan parish share	37,440	0	0	37,440	36,437
Salary costs (verger, organist, choir, etc.)	7,695	0	0	7,695	5,995
Clergy and staff expenses	5,988	0	0	5,988	6,436
Church expenses: mission and evangelism	1,230	0	0	1,230	327
Church running expenses	17,053	537	20	17,610	11,967
Examination of annual accounts/Governance	727	0	0	727	953
Church utility costs	4,714	1,159	0	5,873	3,150
Expenses on parish magazine	0	0	0	0	0
Cost of Trading	0	0	0	0	47
Major repairs to the church building	24,877	0	11,858	36,735	43,010
Major repairs to the church hall	0	0	0	0	0
	100,963	2,696	11,878	115,537	109,360
9. Other costs	0	0	0	0	2,247
Other payments	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	2,247