



Reading
Gateway
Church

Annual Parochial Church Meeting Report April 2024



Reading Gateway Church
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Charity No. 1128198



Reading Gateway Church Vision and Values Statement

1. Who we are (our Identity as a church)

We are one church made up of three sites at St Agnes with St Paul and St Barnabas who are:

- A united Christian presence across South Reading.
- Passionate about showing God's transforming love, healing, and compassion to all.
- A welcoming, caring, generous, joyful, and inclusive community who do life together.
- A kingdom focused church who reflects their diverse local community.
- A highly relational community with a heart for God's mission.

2. What is our call (Vision)

Our vision is to see 'South Reading experiencing and being transformed by the Good News of Jesus.'

Growing Disciples:

- By being a worshipping and praying community who encounter God through varied and vibrant styles of worship and prayer, led by Word and Spirit.
- Through building relationships, caring for and supporting one and other.
- To be an active Christian presence within the community of South Reading, prioritising children and families, young people, and schools.
- Equipping, enabling, and empowering everyone to be more Christlike in how we live as the people of God.
- Building the confidence of all to share the good news of Jesus.
- Resourcing, developing and growing leaders and encouraging all to use their gifts collaboratively across the parish.

Reaching Out

- To be an active Christian presence within the community of South Reading, prioritising children and families, young people, and schools.
- Through social action projects prioritising the isolated, lonely, poor, needy, elderly, and vulnerable.
- To build on and develop relationships through partnership working with local support agencies, churches, and community organisations across the parish.
- To cultivate and develop missional opportunities and worshipping communities across the parish to extend the kingdom of God.
- To reach out to the local business community and new housing developments.

3. What are our values (Our Character as a church)

- **Prayer and worship** – being at the heart of all we do as a church community.
- **Spirit-led** – a kingdom focused church community led by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Love in action** – a united church whose lives demonstrate God's love and hope to all.
- **Encountering Jesus** – our desire is to see everyone encounter the transforming love & power of Jesus.
- **Being Christ Centred** – in how we live, relate to, and treat others.
- **Inclusive Community** – built on loving relationships where everyone is valued, accepted, involved and able to contribute.
- **Social transformation** – a church community where the gospel principles of generosity, social justice and compassion are put into practise.

Introduction from the Rector, Revd Nick Hill

Welcome to our annual celebration of the life of our Church Family. Our vision is to see 'South Reading experiencing and being transformed by the Good News of Jesus.' I am thrilled to see our vision being outworked and all the new things that God has been doing in and through our church community. We have seen the transformative work of Jesus at work in us as individuals, through our congregations and across South Reading and beyond.

Over the last year as a parish, we have seen significant growth in people joining us and making Reading Gateway Church their spiritual home, although a number have also moved away. We have also had our fair share of challenges, not least: the sudden illness of Richard Winter in February 2023, and his resultant stepping back from his roles as Treasurer and LLM, and also from LLM by his wife, Helen; the resignation of our first Children and Families Minister in summer 2023; the retirement of our Associate Minister, Suzanne Knight, in October 2023; and the resource challenges of running a very large parish with only one fully trained, stipendiary Minister. However, God has been faithful, and we have much to celebrate and give thanks for this past year. God has blessed so many areas of ministry, with answered prayers and lives transformed. We particularly give thanks for the blossoming ministry and pastoral care of our Parish Nurse, Jill Anders, and her team of volunteers. We also received some very generous one-off gifts and grants that have enabled the recruitment of an Operations Manager and an increase in hours for our Parish Nurse, and which will enable the recruitment of a Food Coach to operate as part of our Foodwise Reading mission. More importantly, God has called some new able and faithful people to work with us as employees in our mission: Sam Whaites as our new Children and Families Minister, and Geoff Hassett as our Operations Manager. And we continue to give thanks for the ordained ministries of our Curate, Carol Atkins, and Revd Anika Parker, for our Parish Administrator, Nina Chandler, and for all our volunteers who give up their time to serve God's mission in this parish in so many ways. Together, in our diversity, we are all learning what it means to be part of Christ's Body in this place.

Over the last year we have continued working in partnership with Greyfriars. In addition to the unstinting support of Greyfriars' two ministers, David Walker and Natalie Worsfold, we have benefitted from our partnership with Greyfriars in many ways: their grant to pay for our Children and Families' Minister; the regular support of organists at St. Barnabas; the expertise of Alan Cross, who has stood in as Treasurer for a couple of years, following Richard Winter's unexpected illness; assistance with running Alpha; shared Baptismal services; and the continued prayer support of their intercessors. This is a true partnership, in which we live out and witness to what it means to be One Body in Christ across Reading.

As we look back and give thanks for all that God has done in the last year, please remember that the church exists for the sole purpose of mission – to proclaim the Gospel and to demonstrate the love of Jesus, as we live our lives as His disciples and reach out to those in need across South Reading.

This report is our review of the past year, in terms of our growth as disciples of Jesus, our missional activities, and our stewardship of all that God has given us. We pray for God's wisdom and resources for the continued challenges that lie ahead of us, knowing that with God's help nothing is impossible.

On a personal note, I would like to thank everyone who has faithfully served over the last year. I thank God that each one of you continues to pursue our focus on His mission.

Rector, Reading Gateway Church





The following report is divided into seven sections:

- 1. Reading Gateway Church Vision and where we're going**
- 2. Investing in our Church Family**
- 3. Prayer and Worship**
- 4. Pastoral Care**
- 5. Children and Families' Ministry**
- 6. Mission and Outreach**
- 7. Governance, Fabric and Maintenance**

1. Reading Gateway Church Vision and where we're going

Our Vision and Values statement, as set out on the inside cover, was agreed by the church in February in 2021. Since then, we've made good progress in implementing our objectives, as set out in the sections below.

2. Investing in our Church Family

2.1. The Clergy Team

Our clergy team comprises:

- Nick Hill – Incumbent
- Carol Atkins – Priest, Pioneer Curate
- Anika Parker – Priest, licensed to officiate in our parish, non-stipendiary
- Richard and Helen Winter were licensed as Lay Ministers in November 2023, but are currently unable to minister due to Richard's ill health.

2.2. Welcome and Hospitality

A core part of our vision and values is to be a warm, inclusive, welcoming church community. We work hard to make sure that anyone who comes into our church buildings, whether on a Sunday morning or for mid-week activities, is met with a warm welcome. We have 'welcome' teams at both churches, appointed by the PCC.

Over the last year, we have held 3 joint congregational meals and social gatherings, and our hot beverage stations in both churches encourage people to spend time with each other before and after services. Of particular note were our St Barnabas centenary celebrations. These were attended by over 60 people, including Reading's 'High Sheriff'.



2.3. Teaching and discipleship

To be a Christian is to seek to be changed continually by God, so that we become increasingly Christlike. Teaching is an important part of helping us to grow as a church community. This is provided through sermon series and Connect groups ('small groups').

2.3.1. Preaching

Over the last year we have been really blessed through the ministry of our preaching team. Our sermon series have explored themes of particular relevance to the challenges facing our congregations: for example, teaching on God's gift of life, trusting God's promises and unlikely heroes. These were very well received, and a number of people have commented on how powerful they were, and how God has spoken to them personally.

2.3.2. Connect Groups



As Reading Gateway Church grows, it will become increasingly important that we all have a place to connect with others, beyond meeting on Sundays. Being part of a smaller group allows us to care for each other pastorally, to learn, to share projects and “do life together”.

Simon Hodgson and Sally Mortimore are our Connect group co-ordinators. They write:

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. “Two are better than one, because ... if either of them falls down, one can help the other up. “Consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together.”

We grow in Christ in community. Our celebration and worship services lift us up. Our outreach activities together strengthen our spiritual muscles. But it is in a small group where we often find the most encouragement, challenge, and love. Our vision is that everyone in RGC has the opportunity to belong to a small community which looks out for them, supports them, encourages them to grow as disciples, helps them develop gifts and which feels comfortable to them.

Over the last year, with Nick’s full support, we have encouraged and supported Reading Gateway Church to develop and nurture small groups, which we call our Connect Groups. We don’t have a fixed model for what a group should look like, or do, but they all share the same principles:

- Pastoral: A warm place of belonging and connection, open to all
- Fellowship: creating community, building relationships, and growing disciples
- Missional: outward looking, inviting, hospitable

At the same time our groups are different:

- In the time of day they meet, and whether they are for meeting for the short or long term.
- In their location: homes, church, online, outdoors, etc
- In the types of people: men/women, young/older, deeply committed/just arrived, different interests, etc.
- In the balance of elements; teaching, study, worship, practical projects, prayer, eating, social/fun ...
- In characteristics, styles, and size

We call this model ‘same but different’. What it means for you is simple; **try out the Groups until you find one that suits you!** You are very welcome in all of them.

At this point, Reading Gateway has six groups meeting together:

- Tuesday evening at Chris and Penny Jefferis’ home (7:15pm)
- Monday evenings, meeting in homes and co-ordinated by Graham and Emma Bettes (7:30pm)
- Alternate Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons on Zoom, with Mary Morrey (2-4pm)



- Wednesday Evenings at our St Agnes location, led by Pete and Sarah Horne (7-9pm)
- Wednesday evening on Zoom with Mary Morrey (7-9pm)
- Thursday evening at Simon Hodgson and Sally Mortimore's home (8:30pm).

You can check the full details on the church website:

<https://www.readinggateway.church/connect-groups>

A huge thank you to all the leaders, helpers and contributors behind this important ministry. And if you'd like to get involved, please speak to either of us:

connectgroups@readinggateway.church

2.4. Training

Part of our 'call' is to equip and empower everyone to be more Christlike in how we live as the people of God. We are therefore committed to exploring God's calling on people's lives, and our needs for equipping and training, both for *specific* ministry and volunteering roles (such as safeguarding, health & safety and serving on the PCC), and more *generally* in discipleship, such as New Wine summer festival, Estates' Ministry conferences, and one day individual Christian development courses.

This year we have continued our commitment to training and development and have again increased our investment. We want all those who volunteer, or we employ for roles within our church family, to receive both statutory and additional training to ensure they are equipped and feel confident to fulfil these roles. For example, we have trained staff on the Parish administration course – UCAN, and volunteers on first aid, health & safety, and food safety courses. We also want to further enable those who struggle with access to our 'online life' together to have both the tools and training they need to benefit from the internet.

I am excited that a few members of our congregation are feeling called into ordained ministry and have started the discernment process with the Diocese: this is so amazing. This includes Sally Mortimore who hopes to start her formal training in September 2024.

2.5. Keeping People Safe

The discovery of past abuses by the Church of England has focused attention on the need for parishes to have formal procedures for ensuring people's physical and mental safety. We have reviewed and renewed all our safeguarding and health & safety-related policies, procedures and risk assessments. This ensures we are compliant with best practice and the law. Following the procedures also informs training needs and raises awareness, for all our church members, of appropriate behaviours and how to identify risks and to respond to suspected abuse.

2.5.1. Safeguarding

Safeguarding primarily covers any work with children and vulnerable adults who attend our churches or halls. The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), Becca Romanovsky, works together with our Safeguarding Team at identifying risks, and looking towards prevention of incidents as far as possible. The PSO reports regularly to the PCC. Safeguarding is on all PCC meeting agendas, so any concerns can be raised. The PSO and safeguarding team also review policies and procedures relating to all safeguarding areas, and determine whether these policies and procedures are being followed.

Appropriate DBS checks (basic or enhanced criminal record checks) for persons in current roles with children & youth work and vulnerable adults, and all PCC members, have been completed. In addition, all PCC members and those in relevant roles have received appropriate training and access to relevant resources.

Over the last year we have been reviewing the training of all our existing volunteers and are working to ensure they have clear role descriptions. Staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults have also been issued with a 'safeguarding contact and information' card which they can keep on them when on duty.

2.5.2. Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Officer, Pete Horne, continues to maintain oversight of our buildings and sites, our health and safety policy, procedures, risk assessments, and appropriate training required for our employed staff and volunteers. He reports directly to PCC, and Health & Safety is on every PCC agenda.

3. Prayer & Worship

3.1. Prayer

As a church community we are passionate about Spirit-led prayer and worship being at the heart of everything we do. Through our prayer and worship, we want to point people to Jesus who is the focus of our worship and the only one who brings life-changing transformation. We often have a time of sharing during the St Agnes service where people give testimony about what God has been doing in their lives.

During the last year we have continued meeting three times a week to hold short informal prayer meetings at St Agnes', St Barnabas' and St Paul's sites. Once a month, we hold an evening midweek 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer and praise evening. We also have a weekly intercessory prayer meeting via zoom.

Our dedicated prayer ministry team are available during our family service at St Agnes and our email prayer address is always available to anyone to contact. Our Connect Groups engage in regular prayer.

3.2. Worship

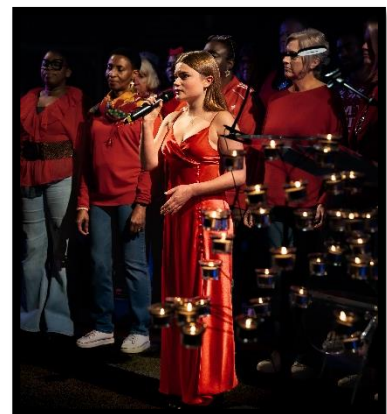
We recognise that different styles of worship suit different groups of people and different occasions. We are therefore keen to establish a range of service formats at Reading Gateway Church, where we can celebrate our unity in diversity, and encounter God in the ways that are helpful to each of us.

Our corporate worship currently consists of a weekly liturgical service of Holy Communion at our St Barnabas site and a more informal family service with Kids' Church at our St Agnes site. It is our intention, in the coming year, to explore setting up a new congregation aimed at families on a Sunday afternoon at our St Barnabas site.

Our Christmas Services in 2023 were attended by over 1711 people.

We also had several services in our churches over the 2024 Easter period with over 643 people attending either online or in-person, which is something to be celebrated.

Over the last year we have continued to see growth across the parish with a number of new people making Reading Gateway Church their spiritual home. Much of this growth has been due to the ministry of our Parish Nurse, local people returning to church, Alpha, and our Children and Families' work in schools and within our community. Those who have joined us have become active members of the church, serving in all areas of our church ministry.



4. Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is an integral part of our ongoing vision at Reading Gateway Church. Pastoral care happens in several ways within our church community: through our Connect Group leaders, children and families' work, the Ministry team, Parish Nurse and pastoral volunteers.

Our Pastoral Care Team keeps in contact, through phone calls and visits, with those who are less able to take an active part in the life of the church. Holy Communion can be administered in someone's home if they are not able to come to a Communion service. We wish to grow and train more pastoral team members over the next year. A number of new Connect Groups have started over the year and pastoral care is an integral part of these.

It is vitally important that, as we grow as church community, we remember that we are members of the Body of Christ. We all have a God-given responsibility to look out for, and care for, each other in order to maintain a Christ-centred, loving relationship with each other.

Over the last year we have very sadly lost 1 congregation member, David Ramsden.

5. Children and Families' Ministry

Since starting in October, I have been able to see that there are incredible things happening in and through the children and families at Reading Gateway Church: it has been such a joy to begin to get to know and partner with these children and families. We have built on the foundations that were set last year – continuing the weekly children's group and increasing the provision for the youth of our church. We are rebuilding and starting to build relationships with the local schools doing assemblies every week and meeting with schools to see how we can partner with them.



Over the Christmas period alone we were able to reach 764 children across both St Barnabas and St Agnes through Reinspired events, Christmas Unwrapped and our Christmas services. It has been such a privilege to be able to welcome the children in and show them the good news of Jesus in a fun and exciting way.

There have already been some incredible moments. For example, we include as many youth and children as we could in the running of our Mothering Sunday service, with one of our youth co-leading and one of the children reading. This was not only an incredible stand-alone service where we got to see the children and youth shine, but it has also opened the door for more children and youth to want to get involved and lead as well. This is such great news and will allow our intergenerational church and worship to really flourish.



5.1. Kids' Church

RG Kids is the space for our kids to build a firm foundation, to freely explore what a relationship with Jesus looks like and to encounter God for themselves. Our focus for RG Kids since the summer has been building foundations. We began this by learning about important people of the Old Testament leading up to Jesus and then after Christmas we focused on who Jesus was and what he did. During this time, we noticed that the kids were not confident with a physical bible and were unable to navigate the bible. By sticking with a paper bible and by making sure that every week we open the bible and find

the passage together we are already starting to make huge progress and are seeing the children help each other to find the right passage.

We really want to see the children equipped to make their faith their own and in order to do this we have decided to do a series on a Christian toolbox where we will be looking at the bible and some of the spiritual disciplines that we can practice.



We have been having so much fun on a Sunday morning, navigating obstacle courses, using clay, and exploring bible stories in a new and creative ways. We know the importance of keeping a Sunday morning both fun and Bible-filled as this is the best way for the children to enjoy coming and take in what we are teaching them.

We are already building a community and seeing the kids grow in friendships and in confidence. As well as helping lead our Mother's Day service, we have seen more kids be willing to be involved in services, to step out of their comfort zones and get involved with the wider church. We would love to see more and more kids involved in the service especially in all age services and really open the door for a more intergenerational church.

5.2. Parents and Toddlers

Parents & Toddlers is a group that we run on a Wednesday morning for parents and guardians of children under 5. This is a fun community-based toddler group where everyone is welcome. We restarted toddlers on the 10th January and since then have run 11 sessions, we have reached over 40 families through our toddler group and on average get about 14 children a week, and this has been steadily growing in the recent weeks! We have continued to not charge for Toddlers and to leave it as a space with no barriers where we can bless the community. During our relatively short time of running, we have had many almost brand-new toys donated which have helped us to serve our community better.

We have started to form a lovely core group who come every week and are starting to develop relationships with the families that come. We are also seeing those who come develop relationships with each other, with group jokes forming especially during the singing of 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes', as inevitably someone makes a mistake!

Through these relationships we have been able to invite the families to our special events and saw many of our toddlers join us for our Easter egg hunt. We have also had a parent express a wish to attend church, which is really exciting, and we are looking forward to being able to get them plugged in.

Our relationships with the parents and guardians have also led to some very important conversations: we have been able to stand alongside families and signpost them to the relevant organisations after job loss and listen to parents and guardians as they go through life and go through the challenges of raising a toddler.





As a team we love running each session and getting to stand beside those in our community and bless them.

5.3. Special events

This year we have run one special event and partnered with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) in order to run a second special event. Over Christmas we partnered with WBC in order to run a Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) event in St Barnabas Hall. This involved inviting children from the local community to the hall in order to enjoy a free hot meal, crafts and a pantomime. This was such an incredible time of meeting with the community and building relationships with parents and with the Council as well. The HAF events were changed for Easter, so instead of running multiple smaller events they ran a bigger event out of the University. While this is unfortunate, it paved the way for us to run our Easter Egg hunt.

During the Easter period we ran an Easter Egg hunt with provisions for both under and over 5s. This was extremely successful: we had over 168 people, including children, visit and join in finding the eggs. We had a wonderful team of volunteers, and it was a fun day for everyone involved. This was an incredible way to bless the community and to get to know those who live around St Barnabas. Even better, many of those who came were not known to us! The majority of people were ones who had not previously been to Reading Gateway Church in any capacity. This was a great day for the whole church family!

5.4. Youth

We relaunched 'Youth' in October. Our young people meet on the second and fourth Sunday of every month in the small office at St Agnes during the church service. We have between 2-7 young people each time. We drink hot chocolate, eat pastries, play a game and tuck into a Bible passage or topic. Some of the group have also attended the last two Reading-wide youth events. It has been a joy getting to know the young people and hearing their thoughts on God and the Bible. It would be good to have some Friday night events so the young people can build friendships and invite friends along, but at the moment we don't have a team. Please pray for workers for the harvest.

5.5. Our Dreams for next year

Looking forward to next year there are a few big dreams that we have. We would love for the kids that come on a Sunday morning to have a firm foundation: to understand more about prayer and reading the Bible; to see and embrace the space on a Sunday morning for themselves and take a sense of ownership over it. We want to grow a space that helps everyone and uplifts everyone in the group. As this happens, and as we grow the group we already have, we also want to continue to welcome the new families we are frequently getting, to build a welcoming community within RG kids for new children.

After the success of the special events we have done, we don't want to lose that momentum. We would love to build on what we have done already and continue to reach those in our community. In order to do this, we are thinking about what other events we can host.

We'd also love to start another Toddler group, at our St Barnabas site. This, along with our toddler group at St Agnes and Blooming Tots at St Paul, will mean we are hosting a toddler group all across the parish, helping to bless the community and build relationships. We would appreciate your prayers as we look at what this new toddler group will look like.

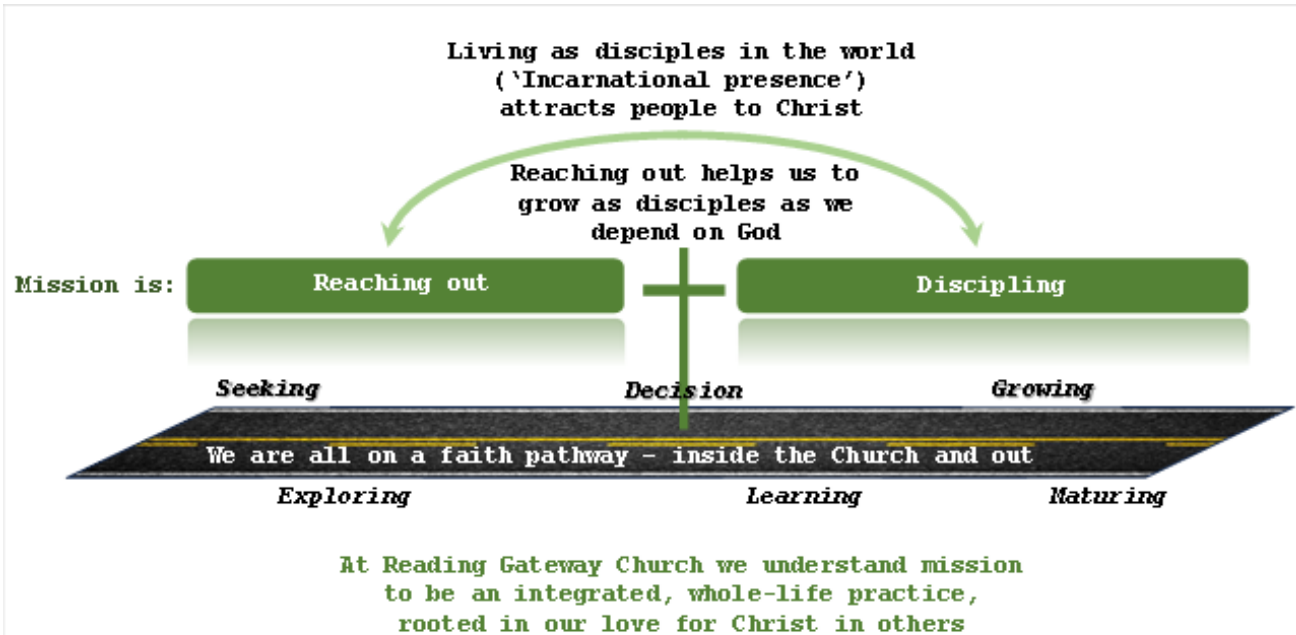
6. Mission & Outreach

Our Vision & Values statement identifies mission / outreach as one of our two key 'calls' as a church community. (The other is growing discipleship.) This means that we recognise that

mission is a core part of who we are as Christians: it is part of the ‘DNA’ of who we are and how we work out God’s call on our lives at Reading Gateway Church. As a church community we have always focused outwards, and we have been serving and supporting in our local community for many years. We want to continue to commit to working out our vision and to helping the poor, needy, and marginalized across the Parish.

6.1. Our mission and outreach strategy

We recognise that mission is not just evangelism but the whole mission of God: us partnering with God in everything we do. It is outreach by the whole church, not just by the few; it is for the long term; and it must be in partnership with those we are called to serve. PCC spent a day away together exploring what mission is and how we are being called to be missional. We recognised that mission and developing as disciples are like two sides of the same coin: we cannot do one without the other, and God continuously calls us and challenges us to do both. The diagram expresses the understanding we reached.



As a church, we commit one-tenth (our ‘tithe’) of all our income (giving, hall hire, interest) to mission work. PCC feels that God is particularly calling us to mission that enables those on the margins to have their own voice and choice, and to be involved in decisions that affect them (what we term ‘enabling mission’). We have therefore taken decisions to redirect much of our tithe money towards local mission and reaching out: supporting Torch, the Parish Nurse, Foodwise Reading, Stepping Stones, St Barnabas Rainbows, St Paul’s Scouts, and Reach. We also collect food donations for Readifood and clothes and other items for Cowshed.

Internationally, we donated the Christingle collection to the Middle East Emergency Appeal and continued to support Embrace the Middle East (until the end of 2023). However, in line with our renewed understanding of the link between mission and growing as Christians, PCC has decided to redirect our tithe giving for international organisations to those with whom we can fully partner, so that by engaging in mission, we grow as disciples, and, by growing, our faith and hearts are increasingly motivated towards mission.

We have now agreed to partner with missionaries associated with the Church Mission Society (CMS) in the Czech Republic and Tanzania for 5 years, and with the Mission

Aviation Fellowship in Chad for 2 years. Expect to hear more about how these partnerships will engage our whole congregations during the year!

For more information on all our missional activities, check out our 'Reaching Out' webpage. <https://www.readinggateway.church/reaching-out/>

6.1.1. Parish Nurse



Jill Anders, our Parish Nurse writes:

When I look back over the past year I am simply amazed at:

- how God has worked within the Parish nursing ministry.
- how prayer has been answered with every door that we push opening
- how receptive our clients are to our visits.
- how the agencies working in and around Reading have responded and are so willing to work collaboratively
- 5 Parish Nurse volunteers giving up their time to support this ministry.

Weekly Chair Exercise Groups

The parish nurse ministry continues to grow. Our Monday chair-based exercise group has an average weekly attendance of 25+, with 36 people registered. We have a fantastic relationship with all our attendees and take prayer requests, spending the last few minutes of our relaxation in prayer each week. Meaningful conversations are held and one lady from Chair exercise, who we visited at the end of her life, allowed us to help plan her funeral and arrange for the Rev. Keith Dolding to officiate the funeral. It was a joy to sit with her and share Psalm 23 in her last days.



5th April saw the start of our new chair-based exercise class at St Barnabas Hall on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month, followed by free refreshments.

Our once-a-month 'homemade soup and roll' proves very popular again with 30+ attending. Words of encouragement or a poem are shared. Again this allows us to share our values and beliefs. We have visiting speakers which included Blandiah from Rest days, Nina Chandler, Social Prescribers, and a local homecare provider. These visits also provide an opportunity to share news of our work and forge relationships to work together going forward.

We had our planned Easter lunch for the 2nd April where Joan Walker spoke about the message of Easter. What an amazing opportunity to speak to 30 plus individuals, with the majority of them non church attendees!

In a recent feedback exercise 100% attendees agreed that having a Parish Nurse who can deliver simple health advice and checks plus spiritual intervention as required was positive and reduced visits to their GP.

Peaceful Beginnings

The new afternoon group (Peaceful Beginnings) continues to grow. Here, crafts are offered including painting, card making, sewing and seasonal crafts, alongside board games and jigsaws. 98% said it helped with breaking down the barriers of isolation with having made new friends and having a place they felt cared for. Free refreshments are served throughout with the help of voluntary donations and our Co-op grant which enables us to replenish our stocks without relying on church funds. We have been very blessed by receiving grants from the Co-op and Creative lives. These grants will also enable us to purchase our craft materials and maintain our communal gardening project.



The area alongside St Paul's Hall was cleared by our Parish Nurse volunteers and we had Freely Fruity come to build wheelchair accessible and raised planters. Fruit bushes have been planted and our afternoon group will be planting vegetable seeds. The group have been painting and varnishing bird boxes and bug houses as well as garden gnomes. We managed to secure 6 lovely wooden garden chairs and, when hearing of our project, the gentleman added two beautiful plant pots. Negotiations are still taking place with local garden centres for seating. This is very much a work in progress, but one that has excited our group, and I am sure will bless them and the local community richly.



Home Visits

Our home visits continue with referrals coming from Social prescribers, social services, GPs community OTs and physios, friends and families and the church. It is a real privilege to be invited into these homes where trust is built, relationships are formed, and we can share the good news of Jesus. Some of these people, for whatever reason, have not and probably will never be able to attend church. We are constantly reminded of Mark 16:15 to go out into the world and preach.

Practical help is given empowering individuals to make life changing choices. Collaborative working is essential, and it is simply amazing to go on visits with individuals to GPs or with Social services and the local fire brigade, to hear how amazed they are at the work of the church in areas where others have given up. A recent referral came through from Social services to visit a lady who has asked for spiritual intervention at the age of 101, having not been able to go outside the home for 20 years due to immobility. Praise God that these services are recognizing the work of the Parish Nurse ministry and feel they can refer to us for that intervention.

We have been able to work with Reading Family church on two projects, one where we redecorated 3 bedrooms including plastering walls, hanging curtains and revamping the garden. What a joy to see the children's faces on their return to their home. The other, by clearing an overgrown garden where the homeowner had not been able to see out of their downstairs bedroom window for years: their face when the light came in was amazing.



Our work with the social prescribers from the GPs in South Reading is growing and we are beginning to get more referrals. Feedback from the Social prescriber at *UMG* was *"wow what on earth did you do, I have just put down the phone on ***** and she is a completely different person: she is happy, has hope and feels for the first time she is cared for"*.

This is just one example of the many feedback comments we get. God is at work in our community and His light is beginning to shine. We are very conscious this is His work, and He is very much at the centre working through us.

Our continued partnership with Faith Christian group is invaluable. With the support of Andy Dickens, we are able to visit clients who they feel need more than just food. This works extremely well and we meet once a month and carry out a Readifood round. At Christmas we were able to work with the 'toys and teens' appeal and provide a sack of presents each for 13 children of all different ages and genders. How emotional it gets when you hear these children, who otherwise would not have received a present, send you messages of thanks with squeals of delight.

Parish Nurse Events Planned For 2024

20th April sees us hosting our second Men's breakfast, where again the Parish Nurse volunteers will be serving a good English breakfast and the men will have a chance to join in some chair-based exercises and relaxation plus simple health checks, and have the opportunity to discuss health and a talk on **'Are you ready?'**

During the summer we will hold another Parish Nurse afternoon tea in the grounds of St Barnabas, which proved very popular last year.

We have now managed to get on to 'The Joy' platform which is an interactive marketplace for all the charities, agencies and health services in Reading to see our services and refer if needed. I have a feeling it's going to be another very busy year!

God's Provision

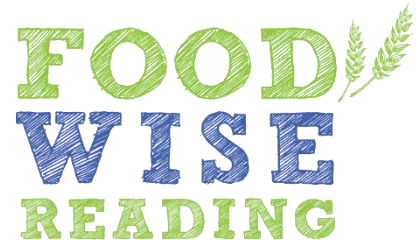
I am always amazed at God's provision:

- My new office space converted from an old storeroom at St Pauls.
- a place where people can come in complete privacy,
- 5 volunteers who work tirelessly to support the ministry,
- Joan Walker for being there on the many occasions where I have just needed to offload or get valuable advice,
- for the provision of donations and 4 new grants amounting to £25k
- for Rev Nick for allowing me the freedom to see where God takes us, but also gently guiding and steering.
- for Rev Nick also accompanying me on end-of-life visits when things get so tough
- a husband (Geoff) and family who completely understand that it's going to be another late one.

As always it is a privilege to be called to do this work, to make a difference in the lives of the many people we come across, to see real results that hadn't seemed possible at the outset. God is at work, and looking back over the last year we can see His hand and planning. It does get tough and sad: 3 deaths of people we have grown to love; outcomes that don't go the way we thought they would; at times feeling completely overwhelmed by the number of people who are struggling here in our community. As our number of contacts grow, we pray the love of Jesus will shine through and more people will come to realise that real hope and happiness can only come through knowing Him as their Saviour.

6.1.2. Foodwise Reading

We are working towards employing a part-time food coach for three years, to assist families in our parish struggling with the rising costs of food and we are pleased to say we now have the required £20k of funding. We have agreed to partner with Foodwise to help us recruit, employ, train, and support the food coach. We plan to get this up and running early summer.



The Food Coach will train local families how to budget, shop, and cook nutritious food ('life skills' training). We are also looking to partner with Readifood's foodbank to provide the food for the training of the local families, so that they are able to use the food from foodbanks and to budget better. This is a service which is desperately needed across the parish.

6.2. Schools work

Over these past few months, we have been rebuilding relationships with schools after a period where we were not frequently going in to schools, along with starting to build relationships with schools we have no history of going into.

6.2.1 Whitley Park Primary School (WPP) and Geoffrey Field Junior (GFJ)

We have partnered with REinspired to provide fun and interactive RE lessons to different years in both WPP and GFJ.

We have also partnered with Reach and had WPP and GFJ come to our St. Agnes site for Christmas Unwrapped and Easter Cracked. Both of these have a strong Christian input. In Easter Cracked we gave the kids the opportunity to think and decide for themselves what happened on Easter Sunday, with a large number of them deciding that Jesus died and rose again for them.

We welcomed WPP into our St. Agnes site to host their Christmas Song concert. We were able to welcome and bless WPP and invite them to all of our Christmas services. We have also had conversations with GFJ about going in and doing assemblies for them especially for the Christmas and Easter Period.

6.2.2 Whiteknights primary school

We have been running a bi-weekly coffee morning for parents of children at Whiteknights school. The coffee morning ran during the autumn and spring terms but has now stopped as we were not getting sufficient attendance to carry on.

We have also partnered with REinspired to provide RE lessons in Whiteknights primary school.

6.2.3 The Ridgeway

We currently go into The Ridgeway Primary School every Wednesday and provide an assembly. So far, we have gone through the parables that Jesus told as well as looking at the Easter Story and Palm Sunday.



This has been a really fun time where we have got children up to the front and acting out the stories and has also allowed us to share the good news of Jesus with over 400 children weekly! The children very much recognise us now and we even saw some of them at our Easter Egg Hunt

6.2.4 Crosfields School

We are currently in conversations with Crosfield's school about what a partnership would look like. So far, they have visited our St. Barnabas site and asked some incredible questions. Hopefully this relationship will grow and flourish in the coming year.

6.3. Alpha 2024

At the start of this year, we ran our third Alpha, supported by a wonderful team who hosted the evenings: praying, setting up, cooking, serving and leading the groups' discussions. We had 12 guests who joined us over the 12 weeks. A highlight for everyone who came was the Holy Spirit away day with Greyfriars where many asked to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Some of the Alpha guests regularly attend St Agnes on a Sunday morning and are starting to serve in different ways, and 3 guests are being baptised in May.

We plan to run another Alpha again in early 2025.

7 Governance, Fabric and Maintenance

The Parish is led by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) working in partnership with a Ministry Team comprising the clergy, the Children's and Families' minister and key leadership volunteers and staff.

The principal purpose of the PCC is to work with the Rector to 'promote in the parish the whole mission of the Church'. Each parish is a charity and, as such, PCC members are trustees and subject to the requirements of the Charities Commission. We are also subject to the legislation governing the Church of England and the requirements set out by the Diocese. PCC members are therefore responsible for ensuring all legislation and requirements are followed.

8.1 PCC Membership

Since the last APCM, the PCC has held six planned meetings All meetings were held in person. The membership of PCC was as follows (date elected representatives stand down is in brackets):

Ex Officio

Rector:	The Revd Nick Hill
Pioneer Curate:	The Revd Carol Atkins
Licenced Lay Ministers:	Richard Winter (from 28th November 2023) Helen Winter (from 28th November 2023)
Church Wardens:	Sue Gash Shaun Langley (until 7th June 2023) Sarah Simmons Simon Vaney (from 30 th April 2023)
Diocesan Synod Member:	Joan Walker
Elected Deanery Synod Members:	Sue Gash Mary Morrey (from 30 th April 2023)
Elected PCC Members:	Jane Griffiths (until 28 th November 2023) Jackie Vaney (Secretary) (2025) Pat Nash (2025)



Mary Morrey (Lay Chair) (2025)

Graham Bettes (2026)

Simon Hodgson (2025)

Pete Horne (2026)

Becca Romanovsky (2024)

Sarah Simmons (2024)

Non-voting Officers: Chris Jefferis (Acting Treasurer 23rd May–28th November 2023)
 Alan Cross (Acting Treasurer from 28th November 2023)

8.2 Activities of the PCC in the past year

PCC is responsible for appointing officers to key roles. Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and Electoral Roll Officer have their own sections in this report. The Treasurer, Secretary and Lay Chair appointments are indicated in the membership list above. Other members of the Treasurer's team are listed under the 'Finance Report' section. Chris Jefferis deserves particular thanks for standing in at short notice as Acting Treasurer, until Alan Cross kindly volunteered to take on this role for up to two years, while we find a longer-term solution. Members of the Standing Committee elected were: Nick Hill; Sue Gash, Sarah Simmons and Simon Vaney as Churchwardens, Mary Morrey as Lay Chair; Jackie Vaney as Secretary, and Chris Jefferis/Alan Cross as Acting Treasurer.

PCC also appointed members of the Welcome Team as follows:

Lorna Collisson, Sedge Gooding, Tracy Godwin, Patricia Harman, Debbie Langley, Shaun Langley, Jamie Pinches, Tony Pinches, Jackie Vaney, Simon Vaney, Marian Beck, Sue Gash, Pat Nash, Sarah Simmons.

The Parish Vision has continued to be at the forefront of the PCC's thinking and actions this year. Our discussions on tithe-funded mission have been reported earlier. This section outlines other missional activities PCC has discussed.

- Green Park & Estates' Ministry. Following encouragement from Deanery Synod, PCC explored with the Oxford Diocese the possibility of obtaining funding for an Associate Minister, to replace Suzanne Knight, so that we could expand our mission to Green Park. This is a growing part of our parish that we currently do not have the resources to serve. For various reasons, this has not yet come to fruition, and so PCC turned its attention instead to engaging with General Synod's call for a renewed focus on Estates' Ministry. With so many social housing estates in our parish, we feel this is an area where we are called to develop and model new ways of outreach that are relevant to the lives of people living on estates, and also to enable those from estates to develop in Christian ministry. We are currently working with the Diocese of Oxford's 'Estates' Lead and the national church's Estates Evangelism Task Group to put on an 'Estates' Ministry conference in Oxford in the autumn, to raise awareness of the issues 'Estates' Parishes' face.
- Following the resignation of our first Children and Families Minister, PCC discussed how to go forward with this ministry. We recognised it as a priority, but were aware that, of the 3-year funding grant originally obtained, we only had 14 month's salary remaining. After prayerful discussion, we agreed to step out in faith and advertise the post as permanent. We are aware this will require increased giving by the congregation to cover the new Children and Families Minister's salary in future, but we feel that this post is an essential part of our Parish Vision, and so we should trust and encourage the congregation to rise to the financial challenge.
- St Barnabas refurbishment. During the year, PCC has been encouraged by how the Parish Nurse's activities at the St Paul's site have reached a large number of people

living close to the site who are lonely or in need of support and advice. Recognising the need is equally great around the St Barnabas site, PCC has been exploring how we might extend our missional activities there, by creating a 'Community Hub' in the church building. We remain committed to the liturgical shared celebration of Christ's love in the Eucharist on Sunday mornings at St Barnabas, but we would also like to open the church on weekdays to be a place where we share the love and presence of Jesus in practical, as well as prayerful, ways. For example, running a youth facility, toddler group, hosting a food bank, providing a social space for the lonely and isolated. PCC has therefore agreed, in principle, a major refurbishment programme for St. Barnabas, which will include replacing the pews with chairs, refurbishing the floor, replacing the boiler and lighting, creating a bespoke café area and fitting solar panels. In the coming year, we will be seeking Diocesan approval for these changes, and significant grant funding to enable them.

- Other matters discussed by PCC have included agreeing to reinstate an option of drinking from the 'Common Cup' at Holy Communion, for those who wish to witness to the symbolism of a shared cup, and, a decision to contribute more than the minimum we are required for our Parish Share, in recognition that parish giving is now higher than in previous years, when the Deanery granted us a subsidy.

8.3 St Paul's Redevelopment Project

This past year, together with Dr Akif, our NHS partner, we have had to take the hard decision to withdraw our planning application for the site, because it has proved not possible for Dr Akif to raise the funding needed for the Health Centre. We have decided to take time out to pray further and await God's guiding for the future for this site.

In the meantime, God's provision has been astonishing! A local businessman has rented No.1 Whitley Wood Lane from us at a reduced rent for 3 years, in return for completely renovating it. At the same time, following the discovery of a long term mains water leak under No.3 which was causing serious damp problems, we have now renovated this house using insurance monies. This means that the two houses on the site are both occupied and in better condition than for many years.



For many years, our consistent vision for St Paul's site has been for it to be a place of sanctuary, a place of inclusion and welcome, and a place of refreshment. Under the ministry of our Parish Nurse, this is now becoming a reality. The Exercise Class, Peaceful Beginnings sessions and the new garden, described above in Section 6.1.1, are all important steps towards fulfilling this vision – and all achieved through God's blessing without any expenditure on new buildings. How amazing that the apparent 'failure' of a missional project has resulted in so much blessing and growth!

8.4 Finance Report

The formal 2023 church accounts can be found in the Statement of Financial Affairs 2023, available separately. However this is a complex document that has been prepared in accordance with accounting rules.



For our day to day church activities we budgeted for a net loss of just over £10,000. By the end of the year we actually had a surplus of almost £25,000 on these activities! This was partly due to increased giving, but also because we held off replacing the boiler at St. Barnabas, both for financial reasons and whilst we developed our future plans for that church building, as reported in Section 8.2 above.

You will notice, however, that the accounts report a loss of £100k. The reason for this difference is that in recent years we have been working on the St Paul's re-development project, on which we had spent £153k. We had expected to recoup that money, but when, in the autumn of 2023 we had to abandon the project (see Section 8.3 above), the accounting rules required us to write off all the expenditure we had incurred. We first used the St Paul's restricted fund but this was not enough and the remaining £117k came from the general fund. This turned the £25k surplus into a £100k loss. To help with the project we also had a loan of £80,000 from the Oxford Diocese (which remains outstanding).

The consolidated accounts across all funds for 2023 show a total income of £380,000, an expenditure of £420,000, and a gain on investments of £4,000, giving an overall deficit of £36,000. The deficit is largely due to the write-off of St Paul's re-development costs, as explained above.

The budget for 2024 shows a planned deficit for the General Fund of £11,100. Because our finances are tight, we will defer major expenditures to later in the year where possible. However, it is important that all members of the church recognise that our mission comes at a cost. We are grateful for all the time people are giving voluntarily, but leading this work requires paid staff. Whilst we seek to obtain grants where we can, ultimately, if we want our missional work to thrive and grow, we all need to consider increasing our giving. PCC is therefore asking both itself and all church members to review their giving to enable the church to end the year with a surplus. If you are not already giving regularly, we would ask you to consider giving as generously as you can to support our shared ministry and mission by setting up a Direct Debit with the Parish Giving Scheme. Please click the following link for the PGS page for Reading Gateway Church:

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/reading-gateway-church-reading/>

As noted elsewhere, first Chris Jefferis and then Alan Cross have stepped in to serve as our Treasurer, following Richard Winter's need to step down. We are enormously grateful for all their work, not only in managing our accounts, but also in transitioning us to a new accounting system, new banking arrangements and simpler, streamlined financial processes. We also thank them for establishing our new relationship with Rachel Belshaw as our Independent Examiner.

Last year, recognising that our payroll has grown and involves increasingly complex activities, we contracted a payroll company to administer staff salaries and pensions. This contract is working well, and has taken significant pressure off our Treasurer team and Parish Administrator. We advised last year that we might need to pay for the services of a Treasurer too. So far, this has been avoided by the generosity of Chris and Alan, as they share the tasks between them. Whilst the treasurer role needs someone with accounting knowledge, most of the day to day work, processing our payments and checking our bank account and our accounting records, do not require accountancy training: it would be good for another person in the church to help as part of their Christian service. If anyone reading this would be interested in joining the team, even in a small way, please speak to Nick.



Mary Morrey continues as Gift Aid Officer. If you wish to make a one-off gift to the church and you pay any level of income tax, please do ask for a gift-aid form – it increases your gift by 25% at no cost to yourself.

8.5 Fabric & Buildings Report

Over this last year we have continued to minimise our expenditure on fabric and buildings works, focusing on health & safety maintenance across the parish to ensure our buildings are safe and welcoming.

In the past year we have built new cupboards in St Agnes Hall and repaired part of the ceiling in the south aisle in St Agnes. We have also reorganised the vestry at St Barnabas, to ensure it provides a safe second emergency exit to the building. We have refurbished our Children and Families' Minister's house at St Paul's site (under insurance) following the damp damage caused by a long-term mains water leak. Following a car accident, we have re-built part of the perimeter wall to St Barnabas site, again under insurance.

Since the start of 2024, our attention has turned to the need to refurbish St Barnabas church: we urgently need to replace our aging boiler, to move towards 'net zero' energy consumption, and to be enabled to use the internal space more flexibly, as a community hub, as part of our mission to the surrounding estates. Most of this work will require 'faculty' approval from the Diocese, not to mention the raising of significant funds. Preparatory work on costs has been undertaken and discussions held with the Diocese, so that the necessary faculty and grant applications can be made in the coming months.

Our next quinquennial review was due in Nov 2023. However, together with many other churches, we have not been able to find an architectural firm willing to carry out this work. We are working with the Deanery to try to resolve this.

8.6 Electoral Roll

The parish electoral roll officer, appointed by PCC, is Nina Chandler. There are 99 people on our Electoral Roll, up 3 from 2023. 14 names have been removed: 1 has died, 6 have moved from the area, 4 have not attended in last year and 3 had been erroneously included in previous years. The people who have joined since APCM 2023 are:

Joanne Blake, Kyndal Whitfield-Eylott, Norma Denny, Jackie Creed, James Darvall, Olena Liasenko, Maks Liashenko, Richard Rhoden, Marjorie Small-Rhodin, Helen Wright, Penny Jefferis, Lynn Toogood, Ben Eylott, Lorna Collinson, Peace Iioh-Obianwu, Elly Burrows and Sam Whaites.

This means APCM may elect up to 3 members to PCC.

8.7 Synods

8.7.1 Diocesan synod

Diocesan Synod met in June and November 2023 and March 2024. The main areas of work addressed are those listed below.

A Summit held in Kimberley & Kuruman (South Africa) – a Link Mission Diocese established longer term working together under the following five headings: Environmental: b) Education: c) Training: d) Gender-based Violence: e) Young people.

Young People – considered separately as a Diocesan matter - the need to be more inclusive in involving young people in church life across the Diocese, as there are 0.5 million in the Diocese. 60,000 being educated in our church schools and many churches now employing youth workers.



A Learning Hub has been established, designed as a learning tool for all: a) bite size, about 3-4 hours each: b) a deeper level, of around 15 hours and c) study groups which are more suited to those thinking about or undertaking Lay Readership training.

‘Living in Love and Faith’ together with ‘Prayers of Love and Faith and Services’ continues to be addressed by Synod re-acting to the decisions of General Synod. More concrete decisions are expected later in 2024. It was affirmed that when appointing Bishops there would be open-mindedness regarding holding traditional/historic viewpoints or those with more modern outlooks. Also the same open mindedness to apply when appointing volunteer Chaplains.

Motions from Deaneries and Members were passed in regard to funding of churches and church structure to enable growth and development: agreeing mutual support for poorer parishes.

Environmental work continues to be a high priority, with emphasis on reducing emissions and travel across churches, offices and schools - conserving energy and upgrading heating and lighting systems to meet energy targets.

The method of Election of Representatives from Deanery to Diocesan Synod was amended to a first past the post system.

Racial justice, disability and deaf issues – it is recognized that meeting legal obligations is not enough. Being genuine, welcoming, contemplative, compassionate and courageous in reflecting the communities served is essential, acknowledging that radical cultural change is needed in the recognition, approach, attitude, treatment of all of the above.

Safeguarding – the management of safeguarding in the Diocese is under review.

Employment of staff – although more realistic salaries are being offered, e.g. Youth Workers, the question of housing provision is anticipated as being a problem for the foreseeable future.

8.7.2 Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod meetings in 2023/24 have focused on two main issues: the Parish Share, particularly the increasing problems for a number of churches regarding future payment; and, opportunities and challenges for parishes. It is clear that, whilst Deanery churches are committed to mission in a variety of ways, some feel isolated and many are struggling to raise the money needed to thrive and engage in mission more fully. We heard about the Diocesan initiative to train and place more children’s and youth workers, but, unless these posts are funded for an extended period of time, it is unclear how their impact will achieve a lasting difference.

There is a growing sense that the Deanery needs to be more aware of itself as ‘One Body’, rather than a large number of separate parishes. We need to explore how both to support and to challenge one another, so that the limited resources available to us are used as effectively as possible. It seems likely that this will become a major focus in 2024 and 2025.



SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT: PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on 29th March 2022

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people, and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people, and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the front page of the parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Team if we use an alternative DBS Umbrella Body to APCS and if we receive any DBS Disclosures that contain information.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

Becca Romanovsky is the **Parish Safeguarding Officer**.

Email: besafe@readinggateway.church



APCM Agenda

The Parish of Reading Gateway Church
(St Agnes with St Paul and St Barnabas)
Sunday 21st April 2024 at 12:15
in St Agnes Church, Northumberland Avenue, RG2 8DE

Vestry Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Appointment of Clerk to the Vestry and Annual Parochial Church Meetings
3. Election of Church Wardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church meeting held on Sunday 30th April 2023
Agreed by correspondence, and available on request from the Parish Administrator
3. Matters arising
4. Presentation of report booklet
5. Rector's look ahead
6. Presentation of Electoral Roll
7. Election of Parochial Church Council members
8. Presentation of the Financial Report for 2022
9. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts
10. Proposals from, and issues raised by, members.
11. Close

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF
READING GATEWAY CHURCH**

**Annual Report & Financial Statements
for the year ended 31st December 2023**

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LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Parish is in the Reading Deanery of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. It is managed by the Parochial Church Council, which is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2011) and is a Charity registered with the Charity Commission. Members of the PCC are trustees of the Charity.

Registered Charity Number: 1128198

Registered Address & Church Office: Reading Gateway Church, 292 Northumberland Avenue, Reading RG2 8DE

Telephone: 0118 987 4448

Website: www.readinggateway.church

Trustees and Members of the Parochial Church Council during the year: 2023

Ex Officio Members	The Revd Nick Hill	Rector (PCC Chair)
	The Revd Suzanne Knight	Associate Minister until 6 th October 2023
	The Revd Carol Atkins	Curate
	Richard Winter	Licenced Lay Minister from 28 th November
	Helen Winter	Licenced Lay Minister from 28 th November
Church Wardens	Shaun Langley	Until 7 th June 2023
	Simon Vaney	From 30 th April 2023
	Sue Gash	
	Sarah Simmons	
Diocesan Synod Member	Joan Walker	
Elected Deanery Synod Members	Sue Gash	
	Pat Nash	Until 30 th April 2023
	Mary Morrey	From 30 th April 2023 (PCC Vice Chair)
Elected Members	Jackie Vaney	PCC Secretary
	Pat Nash	
	Mary Morrey	PCC Vice Chair
	Richard Winter	Treasurer until 28 th March 2023
	Jane Griffiths	Until 28 th November 2023
	Graham Bettes	From 30 th April 2023
	Simon Hodgson	From 30 th April 2023
	Pete Horne	Health & Safety Officer from 30 th April 2023
	Becca Romanovsky	Safeguarding Officer from 30 th April 2023
Co-Opted PCC Member	Pete Horne	Until April 30 th 2023
Officers: Non-voting members	Chris Jefferis	Acting Treasurer 23 rd May – 28 th November
Of the PCC	Alan Cross	Acting Treasurer from 28 th November 2023
Officers: Not on PCC	Becca Romanovsky	Safeguarding Officer until 30 th April 2023

Independent Examiner: Rachel Belshaw, Hilltop Accounting Ltd, Hill Cottage Church Lane, Ufton Nervet, Reading, RG7 4HQ

Bankers: Nat West Bank, Reading Oracle Branch, Reading RG1 2AG
 Metro Bank, Reading Branch, 201 Broad St, Reading RG1 7QA
 CCLA: One Angel Lane, London, EC4R 3AB

TRUSTEES REPORT

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Recruitment and Induction of Trustees

Most Trustees (members of the PCC) are either ex officio or are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the governing document (Church Representation Rules). Others are co-opted for specific purposes. The APCM and elections of PCC members took place on 30th April 2023. New Trustees receive an induction on their role and responsibilities from the Secretary of the PCC and should read any relevant documents and guidelines, in addition to a general induction from the Meeting Chair (normally the PCC Vice Chair) during the first meeting of the year following each APCM.

Responsibilities of the Parochial Church Council (The Trustees)

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, 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 in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees oversee and support the Leadership Team, the staff and the members of Reading Gateway Church in their various areas of ministry and are responsible for ensuring that a representative (usually the Chair) reports back to the Church members annually at the APCM along with other ministry leaders. This meeting also includes the election of new Trustees and is open to all to attend, but only those named on the Electoral Roll or living in the Parish may vote in this matter. A detailed report of ministry activities for the previous twelve months is made available at this meeting, along with copies of the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

Public benefit

The Trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers and duties. Examples of this public benefit can be found in the other parts of this Report.

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

Structure and operating procedures

The Trustees met eight times during 2023. During these meetings, the Trustees discussed and prayed about a wide variety of matters including vision, governance, policies, buildings and infrastructure as well as receiving regular reports on financial performance and staffing. Key strategic topics considered by the Trustees during the year were:

- Change of Parish name, as a unifying measure between what were previously two parishes
- Mission
- Setting up a Hardship fund.

- Approval of 2022 Annual Accounts and budget setting for 2023.
- Strengthening of financial governance, including changing bank account to one requiring two signatures.
- Appointment of Parish Nurse, Children and Families Minister, Operations Manager and HR Representative.
- Decision to withdraw planning application for St Paul's, and to lease one of the houses on the site
- Safeguarding and Health & Safety.
- Overhaul of hall hire arrangements.

Copies of the minutes of these meetings are kept by the Secretary to the PCC and may be read by any members of the Electoral Roll upon request. The Trustees delegate some matters to Committees, which meet between the full meetings of the PCC.

In 2023, there were two PCC sub-committees: the Standing Committee and the Safeguarding Team. The role of the Standing Committee is to conduct urgent business between PCC meetings, and to oversee the remuneration of paid staff. The Safeguarding team oversees day-to-day safeguarding matters and reports any issues to PCC. In addition, the parish has a Ministry Team, comprising Clergy and licensed Lay Ministers, Church Wardens and others with responsibilities within the church, who work with the PCC to administer the parish on a day-to-day basis. The PCC and Ministry Team shared an Away Day to explore mission within the parish.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The PCC is exposed to risks associated with finance, safeguarding, legislative compliance, buildings and infrastructure, and pastoral oversight. Each area has been reviewed by the Trustees during the year and plans put in place to manage the risks.

- The majority of our income comes from regular financial donations from members of the congregation. The annual budget for the 2024 year was approved by the PCC on 30th January 2024. Performance against budget is reviewed at each meeting of the PCC, and between meetings by the Rector and the Treasurer. During the year the PCC upgraded the accounting system to provide more effective internal controls and is currently in the process of changing banks to give better security for the processing of payments and receipts. The PCC has a policy that funding must be in place for at least two years, before recruiting new staff for roles to be funded from any of the Designated Funds.
- The PCC has a Safeguarding Policy and the Trustees appoint a Safeguarding Officer who act as the focal point for concerns. All key staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults are recruited using Safer Recruitment principles and are checked with the Disclosure Barring Service. Clergy receive regular Safeguarding training through the Diocese of Oxford and other staff, volunteers and Trustees also undertake the required Diocesan Safeguarding training. The Trustees receive an annual report on Safeguarding and review the Safeguarding Policy. The Trustees have complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).
- Our buildings are insured and maintained regularly to ensure that they are safe and fit for purpose. Key improvements in 2023 have included: general maintenance due to wear and tear and age, including addressing health & safety issues across all three sites; refurbishment of leased house for ministry, following water damage; roof repairs at all three sites due to storm damage; installation of new sound and visuals, and Wi-Fi at St Barnabas. The PCC is preparing for a quinquennial review in 2024.
- Pastoral care is provided by clergy and lay members of the church. Volunteers are carefully selected for key roles such as prayer ministry or leading Small Groups. Training is provided for these volunteers, and they are supported and accountable to senior clergy. Pastoral encounters are recorded in a manner that protects confidentiality whilst giving protection to those working in pastoral roles.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the PCC to keep 3 months of reserves in the General Fund to cover the costs of running the Parish. Based on the 2023 expenditure for the General Fund, excluding one-off and other non-cash items, 3 months of expenses amount to £39k. The balance on the General Fund is £46k. Total cash resources available to the Parish amounted to £203k. Short-term loans can be advanced from Designated and Restricted Funds to the General Fund if required. In the opinion of the PCC, this provides adequate cover for the Reserves Policy and enables these accounts to be prepared on a going-concern basis.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Reading Gateway Church Vision and Values Statement

Who we are:

We are one church made up of three sites at St Agnes with St Paul and St Barnabas who are:

- A united Christian presence across South Reading.
- Passionate about showing God's transforming love, healing, and compassion to all.
- A welcoming, caring, generous, joyful, and inclusive community who do life together.
- A kingdom-focused church that reflects its diverse local community.
- A highly relational community with a heart for God's mission.

What is our call (Vision):

Our vision is to see 'South Reading experiencing and being transformed by the Good News of Jesus.'

By Growing Disciples:

- By being a worshipping and praying community that encounters God through varied and vibrant styles of worship and prayer, led by the Word and Spirit.
- Through building relationships, caring for and supporting one another.
- To be an active Christian presence within the community of South Reading, prioritising, children and families, young people, and schools. Equipping, enabling, and empowering everyone to be more Christ-like in how we live as the people of God.
- Building the confidence of all to share the good news of Jesus.
- Resourcing, developing growing leaders and encouraging all to use their gifts collaboratively across the parish.

By Reaching Out:

- To be an active Christian presence within the community of South Reading, prioritising, children and families, young people, and schools.
- Through social action projects prioritising the isolated, lonely, poor, needy, elderly, and vulnerable.
- To build on and develop relationships through partnership working with local support agencies, churches, and community organisations across the parish.
- To cultivate and develop missional opportunities and worshipping communities across the parish to extend the kingdom of God.
- To reach out to the local business community and new housing developments.

Objectives of our Parish Ministry

The uses of the financial resources of the parish are tested against this vision. From a financial point of view, the PCC provides funding for places of worship, ministry and mission, and parish halls for the use of the community and outreach. The PCC aims to distribute a 'Tithe' of 10% of all undesignated income, including all voluntary giving and gift aid and letting income from all three Church Halls to appropriate charitable purposes. During 2023, the PCC supported a number of local and international charities. In addition, a separate 'hardship

fund' was set up using specific monetary gifts, to support those known to the church facing particular hardship during the 'cost of living crisis'.

Activities

Key charitable activities during the year have included:

- Instigation of a Parish Nurse service to operate within the parish.
- Further development of our Children & Families work.
- Further development of our outreach into schools.
- Running an 'Alpha' course for those seeking to understand more about Christianity.
- Setting up a Hardship fund, to enable support to be provided promptly to those in urgent need.
- Christian services and events are designed to be accessible and meet the needs of those in the community who are not regular church-goers, as well as those who are.

Parish Halls

There are halls associated with each of the three churches; the hall at St. Agnes is attached to the church whereas the halls for St. Paul and St. Barnabas are separate buildings.

The halls are used by the church congregations as well as being let for a variety of community functions. The letting rates are kept under regular review.

Children's and Families Work

This past year has seen a continued expansion of our children's and families' work.

We have continued 3 weekly church groups and have launched work within 5 different schools.

We have built partnerships with other churches and organisations and have been in front of, and shared faith with, over 800 kids and their families, as a ministry. This has been done through a mix of schoolwork, events, weekly sessions, Kids Church and working within the community.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Summary

Income during 2023 was £380k [2022: £237k], of which £177k was received for various specific purposes. Following a review, various funds were treated as restricted, rather than designated as all, or the majority of money paid into them could only be used in line with the fund's specific purpose. Expenditure was £420k [2022: £233k] and a gain of £4k was recorded on the Church's investments. This resulted in an overall deficit of £36k [2022: £4k surplus]. The deficit is largely due to the write-off of expenses incurred in prior years for the St Paul's development project, which had previously been recorded as an asset (see note 3 below). There were significant grants and donations received in the year for various projects which will be used to support the mission of the church in the coming years. See note 1 for more details of how these funds will be used.

The principal sources of funding are the sacrificial giving of the congregation together with some external grants.

Expenditure is targeted at achieving the key objectives of Reading Gateway Church, with supporting overheads kept to a reasonable minimum.

At each meeting, the PCC receives a financial report and considers the financial position of the church. We are thankful for God's faithful and abundant provision for our needs throughout the year.

Fundraising Activities

The PCC encourages members to support the church by regular giving, preferably monthly using the Parish Giving Scheme. Teaching on the subject of giving is delivered sensitively, to ensure that no one feels under pressure to give, or to give more than they can afford.

The PCC does not use professional fundraisers or involve commercial participators and no complaints were received about fundraising during the year.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

PCC plans to continue and develop its current missional activities and to encourage and empower church members to grow in mission-mindedness and discipleship. In addition, following extensive planning in 2023, we aim to employ a part-time Food Coach to assist families in our parish struggling with the rising costs of food. We are aiming to raise ongoing funds to enable us to increase the provision of our Parish Nursing by an additional day per week. We are also planning to introduce a new family-friendly service at our St Barnabas site on Sunday afternoons.

Approved by the Trustees on 26th March 2024



Revd Nicholas Hill

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PCC OF READING GATEWAY CHURCH

I report to the trustees and members of The Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Reading Gateway (charity number 1128198) on the accounts for the year to 31st December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act'). You are satisfied that the accounts are not required by charity law to be audited and have chosen instead to have an independent examination.

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

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the accounts. The planning and conduct of an audit goes beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently, I express no opinion as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view, and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

Independent Examiner's Statement

Since the combined gross income of the charities exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below) in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. Accounting records, with respect to the charities, were not kept as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the 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; or
4. The accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I confirm that there are no other matters to which your attention should be drawn to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: *Rachel Belshaw*

Dated 02 April 2024

Rachel Belshaw, MA ACA CTA

Hill Top Accounting Ltd, Hill Cottage, Church Lane, Upton Nervet, Reading, RG7 4HQ

DISCLOSURE

The Charity SORP requires that charities must provide an aggregate disclosure of the total amount of donations from related parties (including trustees) received without conditions. The Trustees have decided not to disclose this figure in the accounts.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2023
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF READING GATEWAY CHURCH
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

	Note	2023			2022	
		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted	Total Funds	
		General	Designated	Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		£	£	£	£	£
INCOME						
Donations and legacies	2(a)	142,652	78,985	68,000	289,637	154,510
Income from investments	2(b)	3,458	0	0	3,458	(3,636)
Income from charitable activities	2(c)	49,537	0	0	49,537	80,550
Other income	2(d)	7,192	30,493	0	37,685	5,094
TOTAL INCOME		202,839	109,478	68,000	380,317	236,518
EXPENDITURE						
Grants Payable	3(a)	100	4,471	0	4,571	5,550
Charitable activities	3(b)	168,762	90,028	0	258,790	225,217
Governance Costs	3(c)	3,447	0	0	3,447	2,211
Other	3(d)	116,776	0	36,257	153,033	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		289,085	94,499	36,257	419,841	232,978
Net Gains/(Losses) on investments		3,881	0	0	3,881	0
NET INCOME		(82,365)	14,979	31,743	(35,643)	3,540
Transfer Between Funds		(18,073)	(73,774)	91,847	0	0
Net Movement in Funds		(100,438)	(58,795)	123,590	(35,643)	3,540
FUND BALANCES B/FWD 1 JANUARY		146,846	99,600	44,470	290,916	287,376
FUND BALANCES C/FWD 31 DECEMBER		46,408	40,805	168,060	255,273	290,916

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF READING GATEWAY CHURCH
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed Assets			
Equipment and furniture	4	71,136	76,707
Investments	5	45,419	40,318
		<u>116,555</u>	<u>117,025</u>
Current Assets			
Debtors	6	24,336	162,098
Short Term Deposits	5	29,769	28,844
Cash at bank and in hand		172,860	71,866
		<u>226,965</u>	<u>262,808</u>
Creditors: amounts due within one year	7	(8,247)	(8,917)
Net current assets		<u>218,718</u>	<u>253,891</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>335,273</u>	<u>370,916</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	8	(80,000)	(80,000)
NET ASSETS	9	<u>255,273</u>	<u>290,916</u>
FUNDS			
Unrestricted			
General	10	46,408	146,846
Designated	10	40,805	99,600
		<u>87,213</u>	<u>246,446</u>
Restricted	10	168,060	44,470
		<u>255,273</u>	<u>290,916</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 26th March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr Alan Cross, CPFA (PCC Treasurer)



Rev Nicholas Hill (PCC Chair)

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF READING GATEWAY CHURCH
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

		2023	2022
	Note	£	£
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	13	106,806	73,759
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Dividends, interest and rent from investments		3,458	(3,636)
Purchase of investments		(1,220)	0
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(7,125)	(63,280)
Net cash used in investing activities		(4,887)	(66,916)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		101,919	6,843
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		100,710	93,866
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	13	202,629	100,709

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Accounting Policies

The PCC is a public benefit entity within the meaning of FRS102. The financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 governing the individual accounts of PCCs, and with the Regulations' "true and fair view" provisions and they have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS102).

The financial statements have been prepared under the accruals accounting convention. The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

At the time of approving the accounts, the PCC and trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. As such, the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the accounts.

Income

Collections are recognised when received by or on behalf of the PCC. Planned giving receivable under Gift Aid is recognised only when received. Income tax recoverable on Gift Aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised.

Grants and legacies to the PCC are accounted for as soon as the PCC is notified of its legal entitlement and the amount due is quantifiable and its ultimate receipt by the PCC is probable.

Rental income from the letting of church premises is recognised when the rental is due.

Dividends are accounted for when due and payable. Interest is accounted for when received.

Assets

Tangible fixed assets costing over £1,000, with a useful life of over one year, are capitalised. They are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accelerated write-offs. Fixed Assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the length of their expected useful life as follows:

- Land – Nil
- Fixtures & Fittings – 10 years
- Audio-visual equipment – 5 years
- Computers – 3 years

An impairment review is carried out at each year-end and any resultant loss identified is included in expenditure for the year.

The total assets of the parish include the following capital assets which the parish owns: St. Agnes Church Hall, St. Paul's Church Hall, St. Barnabas Church Hall. The church buildings are not PCC assets and are therefore not valued in the accounts. This is because consecrated and benefice property is excluded from the accounts by section 10(2) 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 inalienable property. All expenditure incurred during the year on consecrated or benefice buildings and movable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvement, is written off in the SOFA and separately disclosed.

Investments

Investments quoted on a recognised stock exchange or whose value derives from them are valued at market value at the year end. The investment is held in Income Shares of the CBF Church of England Investment Fund.

Short term deposits

These are the cash held on deposit either with the CCLA or at the bank.

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are held on specific trust under charity law. The trusts establish the purpose for which the PCC can lawfully use these restricted funds. The restricted funds of the PCC are income funds and will be spent or applied within a reasonable period from their receipt.

The Restricted Funds operated by the PCC are:

1. **St. Barnabas Building Fund.** This fund is to be used towards improvements for the St Barnabas church and hall, and additionally, this fund could be used to support a part-time member of clergy with primary responsibility for St Barnabas
2. **St Barnabas (Anon).** Donations for St Barnabas were received from an anonymous donor; the fund is to be used at the discretion of the incumbent.
3. **Children's and Families' Minister.** Reading Greyfriars Church had previously agreed to support the work of the parish by making a series of grants over a three-year period to enable the church to employ a Children's and Families Minister
4. **Operations Manager.** A significant and generous donation made in 2023 was received to fund the position of a part-time operations manager for the church for approximately 3 years.
5. **Foodwise.** Specific funds are being raised to link with Foodwise Reading to establish a Food Coach service to those in need in the parish.
6. **Parish Nurse.** This fund is to support the Parish Nurse (appointed in January 2023) and has received income specifically for this purpose.
7. **St Barnabas Legacy 2023.** A donation was received for St Barnabas; the fund is to be used at the discretion of the incumbent.

Designated Funds

These funds are available to be used in furtherance of the general objectives of the Parish and there are no other restrictions on how they may be used. The main unrestricted fund operated by the PCC is the Parish General Fund. In addition to the General Fund, part of the unrestricted funds are set aside into Designated Funds, to be used for particular projects or commitments, which are detailed below.

The Designated Funds operated by the PCC are:

1. **St. Barnabas Lady Chapel Fund.** The purpose of this fund is to provide improved facilities in St Barnabas Church.
2. **Associate Vicar.** This funded a part-time clergy post with a focus on St Barnabas. The position is not currently filled, and the year-end fund balance is zero.
3. **Children's and Families Minister.** See above. Reclassified by the PCC to a Restricted Fund. The year-end fund balance is zero.
4. **Parish Nurse.** See above. Reclassified by the PCC to a Restricted Fund. The year-end fund balance is zero.
5. **Foodwise.** See above. Reclassified by the PCC to a Restricted Fund. The year-end fund balance is zero.
6. **Hardship.** This fund has been established to show the income donated to meet special hardship needs.

7. **Tithe.** This fund is used to designate the annual tithe from the General Fund and record all payments made to charitable organisations from this tithe, or to transfer to other funds to carry out local mission activities as agreed by the PCC.
8. **St Agnes AV.** This fund has been used on an upgrade to the Audio/Visual equipment at St Agnes church. The project is complete and the balance on the fund will cover the remaining depreciation.
9. **No. 3 Whitley Wood Lane.** This fund was used to manage the income and expenses for the repair of water damage at No.3 Whitley Wood Lane. The project is complete and the balance on the fund is now zero.
10. **St Pauls Houses.** The church recently entered into an agreement to rent the property at No. 1 Whitley Wood Lane. This income has been designated by the PCC to contribute to costs associated with developing the St Paul's site.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF READING GATEWAY CHURCH
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023
2. Income

		2023			2022
		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	
		General	Designated	Funds	Total Funds
		£	£	£	£
2(a)	Donations and legacies				
	Planned giving	81,581	545	0	82,126
	Collections	2,411	400	0	2,811
	Sundry donations	18,116	15,000	66,000	99,116
	Grants	0	63,040	0	63,040
	Income tax recoverable	40,544	0	0	40,544
	Legacies	0	0	2,000	2,000
		142,652	78,985	68,000	289,637
2(b)	Income from investments				
	Interest	2,238	0	0	2,238
	Dividends	1,220	0	0	1,220
		3,458	0	0	(3,636)
2(c)	Income from charitable activities				
	Hiring fees	46,125	0	0	46,125
	Fees for services	2,725	0	0	2,725
	Other charitable activities	687	0	0	687
		49,537	0	0	80,550
2(d)	Other income				
	Commercial lettings	2,580	1,400	0	3,980
	Insurance claims	4,612	29,093	0	33,705
		7,192	30,493	0	5,094
	TOTAL INCOME	202,839	109,478	68,000	380,317
					236,518

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF READING GATEWAY CHURCH
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023
3. Expenditure

	2023				2022
	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted	Total Funds	Total Funds
	General	Designated	Funds		
	£	£	£	£	£
3(a) Charitable Grants					
International mission partners	0	2,400	0	2,400	2,400
Local mission partners	100	2,071	0	2,171	3,150
Total Grants	100	4,471	0	4,571	5,550
3(b) Support costs for charitable activities					
Parish share	37,875	0	0	37,875	37,700
Staff costs. See note 3(e)	28,036	57,578	0	85,614	75,897
Church activities	23,233	993	0	24,226	43,147
Property costs	59,818	28,177	0	87,995	52,598
Depreciation	12,453	244	0	12,697	11,706
Administration	3,417	0	0	3,417	4,169
Professional fees	3,930	3,036	0	6,966	0
	168,762	90,028	0	258,790	225,217
3(c) Governance Costs					
Audit fees	250	0	0	250	50
Bank charges and interest	1,931	0	0	1,931	1,874
Other governance expenses	1,266	0	0	1,266	287
	3,447	0	0	3,447	2,211
3(d) Other (income)/expenses					
Provision for doubtful account	165	0	0	165	0
Other	116,611	0	36,257	152,868	0
	116,776	0	36,257	153,033	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	289,085	94,499	36,257	419,841	232,978

Other expenses of £152,868 represent the write-off of costs incurred in previous years on a project to develop the St Paul's site. In prior years this has been reported as an asset, reflecting the opinion of the PCC at the time that completion of the project was probable. In 2023, the party with whom the PCC had been collaborating were unable to secure the funding needed and therefore the project, in its original scope, cannot be pursued any further. These costs were financed by a loan of £80,000 from the Oxford Diocese (which remains outstanding), income received into the St Paul's Restricted Fund with the balance from the unrestricted cash assets of the PCC.

	Note	2023			2022
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
		£	£	£	£
3(e) Staff costs					
Salaries		73,285	0	73,285	68,784
National Insurance		589	0	589	N/A
Pension contributions	11	4,088	0	4,088	N/A
Expenses		7,499	0	7,499	7,113
Other staff costs		153	0	153	N/A
		<u>85,614</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>85,614</u>	<u>75,897</u>

No employee earned in excess of £60,000. No member of the PCC received any remuneration for their work on the PCC. The clergy, who are ex officio members, do receive a stipend or equivalent salary but are not remunerated for their service on the PCC. Members of the PCC were reimbursed £25,523 for ministry expenses during the year.

The average number of staff employed in the year was 7.

Volunteers contribute significantly to the work of the church, running children's work, outreach events, pastoring and leading church worship.

4. Fixed Assets

	Equipment	Total
	£	£
Cost		
At start of period	89,702	89,702
Additions	7,126	7,126
Disposals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At end of period	<u>96,828</u>	<u>96,828</u>
Depreciation		
At start of period	12,996	12,996
Charge for the year	12,696	12,696
Disposals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
At end of period	<u>25,692</u>	<u>25,692</u>
Net Book Value		
At start of period	<u>76,706</u>	<u>76,706</u>
At end of period	<u>71,136</u>	<u>71,136</u>

The PCC of Reading Gateway Church – Annual Report & Financial Statements 2023

5. Investments

The CBF Church of England Investment Fund Inc	
	£
Market Value at 1st January 2023	40,318
Investments Purchased	1,220
(Decrease)/Increase in value during the year	3,881
Market Value at 31st December 2023	45,419

6. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade debtors	18,482	6,597
Loans receivable	3,833	0
Other prepayments	2,021	155,501
	<u>24,336</u>	<u>162,098</u>

7. Liabilities due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	2,017	5,913
Accruals and other creditors	6,230	3,004
	<u>8,247</u>	<u>8,917</u>

8. Creditors: amounts falling due after one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Diocese loan	80,000	80,000
	<u>80,000</u>	<u>80,000</u>

This loan was arranged in 2019 with the Diocese of Oxford to assist the parish with costs incurred in working with a partner on the development of the St Paul's site. The PCC has agreed annual repayments of at least £2,500 from 2024 and interest at base rate, with a review after 2 years.

9. Analysis of net assets by fund

	2023			2022
	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	General	Designated	Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	111,957	4,598	0	116,555
Net current assets/(liabilities)	(65,549)	36,207	168,060	173,891
Fund Balance	<u>46,408</u>	<u>40,805</u>	<u>168,060</u>	<u>290,916</u>

10. Analysis of movement in reserves

	Balance at start of year	Income for the year	Expenditure	Transfers between funds	Balance at end of year
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted - General Fund	146,846	202,839	(285,204)	(18,073)	46,408
Unrestricted - Designated Funds					
St Barnabas Lady Chapel	6,990	0	0	0	6,990
Associate Vicar	22,869	0	(14,706)	(8,163)	0
Children and Family Minister (Designated)	23,914	24,320	(23,783)	(24,451)	0
Parish Nurse (Designated)	16,784	26,520	(20,404)	(22,900)	0
Foodwise (Designated)	7,137	22,200	0	(29,337)	0
Hardship	6,066	945	(1,411)	0	5,600
Tithe	15,840	0	(3,060)	11,077	23,857
St Agnes AV	0	5,000	(369)	0	4,631
No 3 Whitley Wood Lane Repairs	0	29,093	(27,730)	(1,363)	0
St Pauls Houses	0	1,400	(3,036)	1,363	(273)
Total designated funds	<u>99,600</u>	<u>109,478</u>	<u>(94,499)</u>	<u>(73,774)</u>	<u>40,805</u>
Restricted funds					
St Barnabas Building Fund	6,886	0	0	0	6,886
St Barnabas (Anon)	1,327	1,000	0	0	2,327
St Barnabas (Legacy 2023)	0	2,000	0	0	2,000
Childrens and Families Minister	0	0	0	32,614	32,614
Operations Manager	0	65,000	0	0	65,000
Foodwise	0	0	0	32,337	32,337
Parish Nurse	0	0	0	26,896	26,896
St Paul's Redevelopment	36,257	0	(36,257)	0	0
Total restricted funds	<u>44,470</u>	<u>68,000</u>	<u>(36,257)</u>	<u>91,847</u>	<u>168,060</u>
Total Funds	<u>290,916</u>	<u>380,317</u>	<u>(415,960)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>255,273</u>

The Tithe Fund represent the balance of monies allocated by the PCC for giving to outside charities, which has not yet been committed. The PCC adopts a policy of allocating 10% of all undesignated giving income for tithing, and a proportion of this is paid out during the year.

11. Pensions

The PCC operates a defined contribution pension scheme through 'The Peoples Pension'. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the PCC in an independently administered fund. The pension charge represents contributions payable by the PCC to this scheme.

12. Related Party Transactions

As is normal in churches, the trustees make voluntary donations to the work of Reading Gateway Church. The PCC holds the view that each trustee's individual donations and those of PCC members as a whole are confidential (and a matter between the PCC member and God), and that there is no value in disclosing any details of these donations (or those made by spouses and related parties). There is no specific connection between any individual donation and any policy the PCC has adopted.

13. Note to the Statement of Cash Flows

Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities	2023	2022
	£	£
Net income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(35,643)	3,540
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	12,697	11,706
Unrealised (Gains)/losses on investments	(3,881)	0
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(3,458)	3,636
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors	137,762	51,176
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	(671)	3,701
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>106,806</u>	<u>73,759</u>
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents		
Cash in hand	172,860	71,866
CBF Church of England Deposit Fund	<u>29,769</u>	<u>28,844</u>
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>202,629</u>	<u>100,710</u>

