

# RECTORS REPORT FOR 2024

This is my sixth APCM report as Rector.

Our vision continues to focus on how we are “**Christ centred and Jesus-shaped**” for our communities, that offers a **simpler, humbler, bolder** church to meet the needs of those we serve in our parishes. The 3 focus strands, which sit alongside the 5 Marks of Mission, are:

1. a church of missionary disciples : through prayer, worship and scripture
2. a church where mixed ecology is the norm : through parish, chaplaincy, Fresh Expressions, digital and church planting
3. a younger and more diverse church : multigenerational, all age and looking like the community we serve

As I hope you will read in this report, there is much to celebrate that is happening within our churches and in supporting our wider communities.

## CLERGY

2024 saw a number of changes in our clergy team, with Revd Greg Roberts joining us at the end of January as a full time Associate Priest. He has taken on responsibility for the PCCs of Bradden and Greens Norton. He has also been involved in all aspects of ministry across the benefice. Revd Angela completed her curacy, and she and Chris moved to take up her first incumbency post in the Nar Valley Benefice, Norfolk Diocese. Then during July Revd Nigel Clent and his wife Jayne moved into the Rectory in Greens Norton and so we have a new curate. Alongside these additions to the team Revd Lulu and Ven David continued to support us leading services across the benefice.

Revd Greg, Revd Nigel and myself are very different in our styles and our approaches to ministry and working together we are striving to use our unique gifts for the benefit of all that we serve. It has been a joy to serve alongside them this past year and we continue to look forward to what that means for the future. Greg has been ordained for 15 years and served as an incumbent in two parishes / benefices before joining us in the benefice. He therefore understands the challenges of being ‘in charge’ as well as bringing experience and knowledge from the way he has seen things done elsewhere. Nigel is here as a training post, fresh out of college he brings with him fresh eyes, lots of ‘why’ questions and new approaches to ministry.

As I have said for the past few years, my role as Rector continues to include ‘things they never taught you in theological college’. There is a considerable number of administrative duties, but with Revd Greg taking responsibility for the PCCs of Greens Norton and Bradden I am starting to see more space to be able to focus on other areas of ministry that have not been possible in recent years. The place of prayer, pastoral care, preaching and teaching need equal amounts of my time and attention.

## LAY MINISTER AND OFFICERS

The Ministry Team consists of clergy, licensed lay ministers and our Children and Families Worker. We continue to meet monthly and had one Away Days during the year.

John Booth, Chris Hammett (until they moved) and Jane Jakes regularly led worship and preach both in church and on zoom. Jane Small continued to visit people in their homes taking home communion to them. Dawn Valentine as our Parish Evangelist offered an invaluable ministry to residents at Brook House. Claire Reetz ministry in the benefice has been much reduced this year as her role at Chaplain at Milton Keynes Hospital has been very busy. Although we advertised for the Children and Families Leader to replace Claire from January 2024 it was not until the summer that we successfully appointed Sarah Barnett to the role starting in September. You can read more about Sarah work in her report. Due to

the continued vacancy in 2024, clergy covered the weekly sessions of Tots Own and Little Sprouts, as well as school visits to the church, Collective Worship/Assemblies, and preparing classes for Family Worship.

The benefice office team, Sara and Michelle, continue to support a great deal of administration that goes on behind the scenes. With the Chantry House refurbishment taking longer than planned, it was not until August before they moved back into the office downstairs. The reconfiguration of the office to accommodate two desks and two computers means it offers a professional front of house for those making enquiries.

The churchwardens in 4 parishes continued to serve for 2024, I am incredibly grateful for all our Churchwardens and deputy Churchwardens do to enable the day to day running of our churches including those serving on the PCCs, some in more visible ways and others more hidden but no less vital. At the APCM, Ann Tolley is standing down as Churchwarden at Greens Norton. This means we currently have no Churchwarden, which should be a cause for concern among Electoral Roll Members. In addition to Churchwarden duties Ann has picked up a number of extra duties like organising the rotas – who is willing to take this on? Perhaps you could consider how you might help?

A timely reminder to us all that rather than people grumbling that something is not right or not been done, please can I ask across our churches that I hear you saying “good morning [churchwarden / clergy] how may I help you today?”

Whilst we have a full complement of PCC officers for three of our church, again we have struggled to recruit a treasurer for Greens Norton and therefore we are now using the diocese scheme for our book keeping. As we head to this APCM, Michael Alcock has stepped down as treasurer for Easton Neston and whilst we do have someone willing to fulfil that role it is again with the support of the diocese. In addition to PCC officers we need PCC members as, already noted above, we have a number stepping down this year and a few end of term vacancies in Towcester. Therefore, I ask you to consider stepping forward to assist with the running and decision making of your church.

During 2024 we have seen a number of people step forward and volunteer to help on rotas and other roles – thank you for doing that. There are still some roles, like sacristan in Greens Norton and servers in Towcester, where we could do with a few more volunteers.

## **WORSHIP**

Our regular worship pattern has settled into one that offers both in church and online worship. Sunday worship includes communion, informal and lay led services for which we are heavily reliant on our lay leader, John Booth, Jane Jakes, Sarah Barnett and Jaki Howard. We continue to offer service from Common Worship (in both traditional and modern language) as well as Book of Common Prayer Communion.

Our Sunday attendance figures continue to fluctuate, though this is not due to a lack of communication or advertising. As you will see from the Children and Families Worker report, Family Worship in both Greens Norton and Towcester attendance is promising. This is largely down to baptism families and our work with our church schools but we also have a small core of families who are beginning to attend every month. We have worked harder on this to develop an intergenerational model and now our focus also turns to increasing regular attendance to these services during 2025.

During 2024 we introduced Family Communion in Towcester, with Our Voices our Children's Choir being involved in singing at that. This also is showing signs of promise which we will continue to develop as we consider how we involve whole families in supporting all areas of worship – including reading and leading intercessions.

We also have a lovely and regular zoom congregation, there is a good core number and others who dip in and out depending on where they are and what they are doing. The worship and fellowship that this group offers should not be underestimated. If you know anyone who can't continue to attend church and would like to keep connect then please speak with a member of clergy.

I am delighted to see more people willing to travel to other churches when there is no preferred service at their own church on a particular Sunday. Please don't tell me "the clergy are not visible enough" if you are not prepared to travel to another church on a Sunday morning or willing to make the effort to attend a benefice service that is not in your church.

As I mentioned in last year's report outside of Sunday worship there is a considerable amount of other 'leading worship' that takes place. As you will see from the occasional office figures we continue to take a large number of baptisms, weddings and funerals each year. This not only provides income to the parishes, which in turn helps us pay our parish share, but also generates pastoral opportunities.

I am grateful to the small and dedicated team of volunteers who act as welcomers at services – please can we remind you that everyone whether they are a regular or a visitor should receive the same warm welcome. We have already spoken about the importance of welcome at Family Worship, but we need to work on this some more. Revd Greg has just started leading on a review looking at Pastoral Care (which includes welcoming) and how we can do this more effectively.

Alongside occasional offices there is also our leading worship / assemblies in all four primary schools, both in school and in church. Again, these are a great opportunity to welcome parents and carers into church to share with them the gospel. I was encouraged at both Harvest and Christmas with the numbers of people who offered to verge for the schools services – this really does make a difference. Thank you!

Family Worship (what was Family Service and Family Praise) has continued to be something we have worked harder on to develop as an intergenerational model.

Remembrance Season started with All Saints and All Souls services; thanks are extended to Revd Greg and Revd Lulu who supported me in the leading of these. Remembrance Sunday saw well attend events and once again we saw a number of younger veterans within our congregations.

Christmas on the whole also saw good turnouts of congregations with the carols services in both Towcester and Greens Norton seeing more families attending. This was partly due to Our Voices being involved alongside the benefice choir who came together for both Advent and Christmas Carol services, thanks to all involved in preparing music and readings. Carols in the pub before the 11pm service is in its third year and we saw a few more following us up to church for the Christmas Communion. We held services in church for 3 of our 4 Primary Schools and for year 7 from Sponne. We visited Marie Weller lead a Christmas Assembly there. All four ecumenical churches were represented at the Churches Together Carols in the Square here was a good number and the atmosphere was positive and cheerful.

## **LEARNING AND PRAYER**

Throughout the year John Booth has led a Bible Study group which meets in person at the Chantry House. Our Lent course was led by Jane Jakes and we offered Christianity Explored which led us into offering, later in the year, a confirmation course which resulted in 7 candidates being confirmed by Bishop John in November. In Advent, we explored the themes of Narnia, which was an extension of the Prayer Space we had in three of our four churches. As our clergy team has grown, discipleship became a focus in the later part of 2024. We are keen to encourage more people to attend the groups we put on and also to see more groups develop.

Morning Prayer continues to be said via Zoom from Monday to Saturday at 9 am, except on the first Tuesday of the month when there is a 9 am communion service at St Lawrence. Faithfully the Greens Norton Wednesday Prayer Group still meets at 3:30pm in church – we are looking at how this might evolve moving forward.

The Benefice Mothers Union group continues to meet for worship, fellowship and guest speakers. We are grateful for their loyal support of our work with families.

## **OCCASIONAL OFFICES**

During 2024 the clergy and lay ministers officiated at 23 baptism, 6 weddings and 38 funerals. Compared to 2023 when it was 30 baptism, 4 weddings and 32 funerals; 2022 when it was 41 baptisms, 5 weddings, and 41 funerals; and in 2021 when it was 19 baptisms, 14 weddings, and 40 funerals.

## **PASTORAL CARE**

I have already mention under worship about the review Revd Greg is undertaking. If you feel you have a heart and a calling for this area of ministry please do speak with Greg.

Much of this work goes unnoticed, and rightly so, but should not be unaccounted for. This should not be something that just the clergy do, but something that we all share in. I am grateful to those who do keep in regular contact with one another - that is a real blessing. The clergy are not in the same church week after week so please if you see someone has not been for a few weeks or you hear that they are unwell please mention it to a member of the ministry team who will pass that information on to myself or Revd Greg.

During 2024 we continued to take services in our local residential and nursing homes. On a monthly basis we visit Brook House, The Lakes and Duncote Hall. These are a mixture of communion and hymn sandwich services. Thanks to Kim Proctor, and Chris Williams who support the Ministry Team every month and to Jane Jakes, Jane Small and Dawn who help out occasionally, we have added in early 2025 some new people to this ministry as well.

Coffee mornings continue in Towcester on a Friday and Greens Norton on Saturdays. It is good to also be sharing coffee (& tea) after services and an opportunity to get to speak to one another. If you see a new person please do invite them to stay for tea and coffee after the service.

## **CHARITABLE GIVING**

Whilst this section says a lot about the collection type stewardship undertaken, let us not forget the many members of our benefice who give freely of their time – thank you to each and every one of you.

During 2024 we continued to be involved in humanitarian aid provision for the Ukrainian War – fewer trips this year, but we have continued to be a collection point for items that have then been passed on mainly to a charity called BAME MK based in Milton Keynes.

While it sometimes looks a little untidy at the back of the church, this is because we serve as collection points for both Towcester Foodbank and Baby Basics. Many people from across the benefice support as trustees or with their time helping with sessions for the Foodbank, please know that this does not go unnoticed. During October (Harvest) we had a particular focus on the Foodbank with collections of items at services across the benefice. Baby Basics provide Moses' baskets filled with essential items for new born babies and their mothers. They come and collect items gathered about once every 6 weeks.

We supported the Royal British Legion through our Remembrance Sunday collection and the Children's Society with Christingle Service collections. Unfortunately, we were unable to offer our Christmas Day meal deliver this last Christmas – if anyone is passionate about helping those who are isolated at Christmas time people do speak with the clergy team and we can discuss how this might look going forward. Churches Together Carols in the Square collection supported the Time to Talk and Embrace.

Mental Wellbeing has been identified by PCCs as an area for focus, within the Chantry House we have hosted for many years 'Time 2 Talk'. In addition to their one to one counselling session they set up at the beginning of 2023 a wellbeing drop in café (for young people and parents). A number of members from across the benefice are actively involved in the Renew Café.

For many years, Friday Coffee Mornings in Towcester have supported the Delhi Brotherhood's work with children on the street and this continues with 50% of takings going towards this vital ministry.

## **SOCIAL AND OUTREACH**

2024 saw many activities take place across the benefice some of these had a fundraising focus, some a more outreach and social focus. Once again, each church undertook events based on their own capacity. I don't want to list everything because I am bound to miss something or someone. From our fete type events in Towcester and Greens Norton and a whole host of concerts and groups. Through to the social events at Harvest and Lent. Coffee mornings are mentioned above in terms of charitable giving, but they also provide an important avenue for fellowship.

During the later part of 2024 Towcester started some welcome lunches in the Chantry House, the plan is there will be four per year and a mixture of new people, existing members and PCC members are invited to all four lunches. The challenge is we can't invite everyone in one go so if you have not had an invite yet, fear not for you may well get one later this year.

## LOOKING FORWARD

I am excited by what is in store for us in 2025. We have an ambitious benefice plan, which we are working on and have already produced and printed new Welcome Booklets which are available in all churches. Have been working on History Booklets to replace some that are over 50 years old!!

In 2025, the focus will be on discipleship groups, which, as you will have read, will be offered on Tuesdays. We know that is not ideally for everyone, but hope to offer alternative for those who cannot meet in person. This has started with the Prayer Course in Lent and we have a year's worth of study groups planned for different stages of faith.

Whilst what we see or perceive on Sunday morning as dwindling congregations this does not really show the true and full nature of the life across our benefice. We see glimpses of God at work in the most surprising of place if we just take time to look. We are seeing a growing number of people asking questions about faith and joining us for worship. We are seeing church members supporting the life of our churches, our communities and much wider afield, with their time and their talents. Let's not forget that the growth of the Kingdom of God is not limited to the boundaries of the Tove Benefice. Even on those days when it feels like it's an uphill struggle, God is good.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to the Ministry Team, Benefice Office staff, Churchwardens and PCC members for the care and support they continue to show me. I continue to be excited about the future and believe that God does indeed have a plan for the churches and communities of the Tove Benefice.

**Towcester St Lawrence**  
**Parochial Church Council**

**Statements of Financial Activity**

**Treasurer's Report**

**For the financial year ending  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

## Treasurer's Report

### 1. Summary

The table below gives an overview account of all funds and activities. It can be seen that each fund (General, Designated and Restricted) fell in value during the year but performed better than their approved budgets.

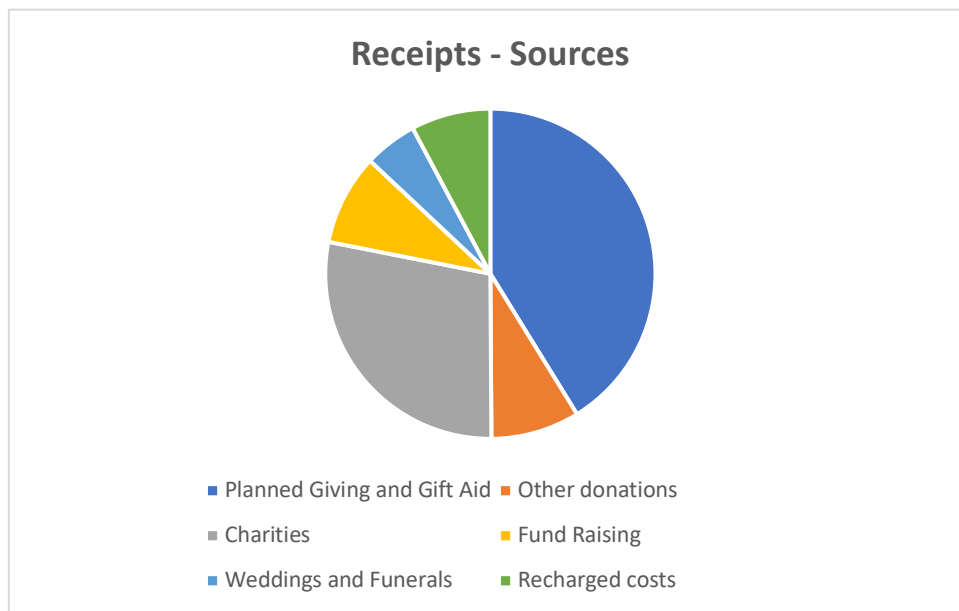
	Year end £	Budget £	2023 £
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>			
<b>Receipts from:</b>			
Donations, Grants and Other	88469.08	90834.58	96924.80
Activities for Generating Income	9915.00	9750.00	10814.81
Church Activities	5740.00	4200.00	4272.00
Office and heating costs - contributions	8837.60	7372.00	9251.47
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b> (Note 1)	<b>112961.68</b>	<b>112156.58</b>	<b>121263.08</b>
<b>Payments on:</b>			
Parish Share	(65099.00)	(65099.00)	(63265.68)
Property Costs - Church	(15391.42)	(15984.58)	(13993.52)
Church Activities - fees & expenses	(7936.88)	(6750.00)	(4730.16)
Cost of Fund Raising	(64.29)	(60.00)	(58.45)
Administration	(27059.84)	(27700.00)	(23672.28)
Other including Donations	(330.00)	(310.00)	(370.00)
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b> (Note 2)	<b>(115881.43)</b>	<b>(115903.58)</b>	<b>(106090.09)</b>
<b>General Fund Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(2919.75)</b>	<b>(3747.00)</b>	<b>15172.99</b>
<b>DESIGNATED FUNDS</b> (Note 3)			
Income - Chantry Committee	19245.75	16000.00	15401.50
Expenditure - Chantry Committee	(24389.69)	(25591.50)	(10052.98)
<b>Designated Funds Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(5143.94)</b>	<b>(9591.50)</b>	<b>5348.52</b>
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b> (Note 4)			
	Close	Movement	Open
	12255.80	(14322.02)	26577.82



## 2. Receipts (*Note 1*)

A detailed analysis of receipts for 2024 is:

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>2023</u>
	£	£	£	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
<b>Donations and Grants</b>				
Planned Giving	35358.04		38000.00	36960.00
Tax Recovered	11090.13		11000.00	10944.00
Other Giving	9716.92		10000.00	10132.33
Deposit a/c interest	327.70		0.00	0.00
Hicks Charity	28045.00		28000.00	31793.00
Combined Charity	3734.58		3734.58	3630.23
Grants/Other	196.71		100.00	3465.24
Sub total		<b>88469.08</b>	<b>90834.58</b>	<b>96924.80</b>
<b>Activities for Generating Income</b>				
Magazine & copying	249.55			385.16
Grand Draw	1530.46			2092.86
Vicarage Fete	4577.12			4858.69
Sales (Cloths recycle)	860.00			872.00
Garage Sale	316.94			441.21
Long Peal donation	1000.00			0.00
Concerts	0.00			582.19
Christmas Tree Festival	458.64			188.23
Pimm's and Prosecco	338.23			114.47
Furniture sold	250.00			420.00
History tours	334.06			860.00
Subtotal		<b>9915.00</b>	<b>9750.00</b>	<b>10814.81</b>
<b>Church Activities</b>				
Wedding fees	2240.00		1000.00	1096.00
Funeral fees	3500.00		3200.00	3176.00
Subtotal		<b>5740.00</b>	<b>4200.00</b>	<b>4272.00</b>
<b>Other</b>				
Other Parishes -				
Contributions	7470.00		6272.00	7738.00
Heating/Grants	716.00		500.00	896.00
Friday coffee mornings	562.10		600.00	617.47
Miscellaneous receipts	89.50			
Subtotal		<b>8837.60</b>	<b>7372.00</b>	<b>9251.47</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>112961.68</b>		<b>112156.58</b>	<b>121263.08</b>



The chart above shows:

- receipts from Planned Giving and the linked Gift Aid recovered amounted to only 41.2% of total income; and
- the dependence on local (Richard Hicks and the Combined) charities for (28.2%) in managing to meet commitments. We must be grateful to the Trustees of these charities for their ongoing support.

Other donations (8.7%), Fund raising activities (8.9%), Weddings and Funerals (5.2%) and recharged costs (7.8%) make up the balance of income.

An important feature worthy of some concern is the fall in Planned Giving. Since 2018, the number of people making donations to the Church has fallen from 61 to 49 participants; the value of those donations has fallen by 6.5% from £37825 to £35358, during which time costs have increased by 10.3%.

Fund raising continues to play a significant part in the PCC's budgetary control and a huge thank you is, again, given to all those who lead and volunteer to support these activities.

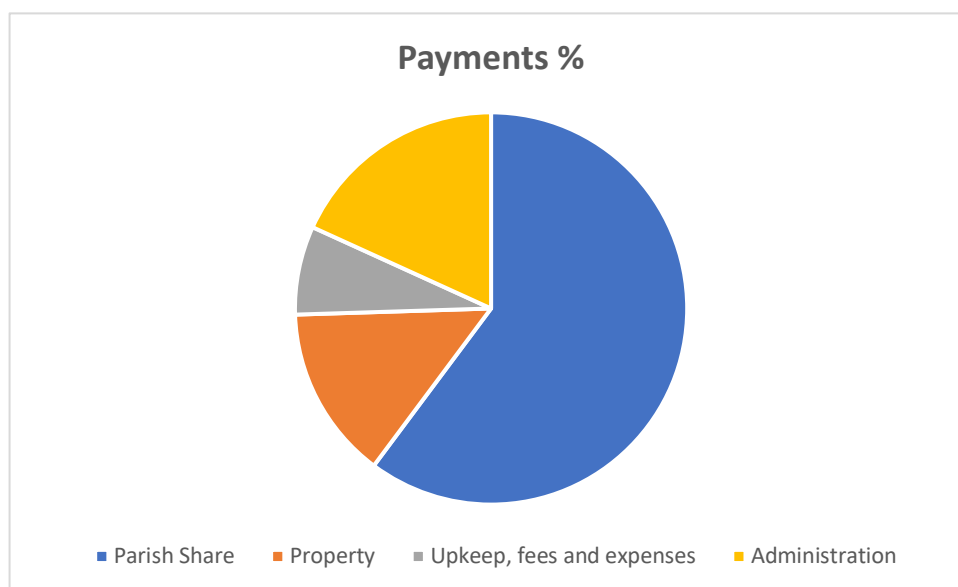
### 3. Payments (Note 2)

A detailed analysis of payments for 2024 is:

<b>PAYMENTS</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Parish Share	(65099.00)		(65099.00)	(63265.68)
<b>Property Costs</b>				
Utilities	(8453.35)		(8500.00)	(6935.81)
Insurance	(3734.58)		(3734.58)	(3630.23)
Cleaning	(1092.16)		(1350.00)	(1216.39)
Maintenance	(2111.33)		(2400.00)	(2211.09)
		<b>(15391.42)</b>	<b>(15984.58)</b>	<b>(13993.52)</b>
<b>Church Activities Fees &amp; Expenses</b>				
Cost of Upkeep	(776.34)		(600.00)	(579.06)
Clergy expenses & Training	(3291.56)		(3000.00)	(2302.63)
Organist & Choir fees	(2912.00)		(2400.00)	(1266.31)
Licences	(572.23)		(550.00)	(547.16)
Other	(384.75)		(200.00)	(35.00)
		<b>(7936.88)</b>	<b>(6750.00)</b>	<b>(4730.16)</b>
<b>Cost of Fundraising</b>				
FWO	(64.29)		(60.00)	(58.45)
Other				
		<b>(64.29)</b>	<b>(60.00)</b>	<b>(58.45)</b>
<b>Administration</b>				
Salaries	(16367.00)		(18000.00)	(14970.18)
Printing & Stationery	(4404.45)		(6000.00)	(5667.03)
Telephone & Broadband	(5381.39)		(3000.00)	(2335.45)
Website	(651.00)		(650.00)	(633.00)
Treasurer's costs	(22.00)		(50.00)	(66.62)
Maintenance	(234.00)			
<b>Other costs</b>		<b>(27059.84)</b>	<b>(27700.00)</b>	<b>(23672.28)</b>
Donations	(330.00)		(310.00)	(370.00)
		<b>(330.00)</b>	<b>(310.00)</b>	<b>(370.00)</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>(115881.43)</b>		<b>(115903.58)</b>	<b>(106090.09)</b>
<b>Receipts less Payments</b>	<b>(2919.75)</b>		<b>(3747.00)</b>	<b>15172.99</b>

Whilst payments were almost in line with the budget, the table does show an increase in costs of 8.5% over 2023. The bottom line does not reflect some meaningful over and under budget spends on separate lines of expenditure.

(Please note that in the chart below the cost of Administration has been adjusted to reflect the contributions made by other PCCs to the running of the Benefice Office.)



In line with the PCC's stated Policy, Parish Share of £65099, representing 60.2% of total payments, was paid in full and on time.

Other noteworthy matters are:

- Penalties were incurred for early termination of a problematic contract for telecoms and broadband. However, a local, more reliable and cost-effective full fibre service provider has been engaged, which will have a beneficial effect on the 2025 budget.
- At full term, we moved to a local supplier for the Benefice Office printer contract, again with cost benefits for 2025,
- Energy costs were in line with the budget but reflect the increased costs of keeping the Church as warm as is financially possible.

Administration (18.2%), Property (14.3%) and Upkeep, fees and clergy expenses (7.3%) make up the operating cost for the PCC.

#### 4. Designated Funds (Note 3)

The only Designated Fund, as of the year end, is that overseen by the Chantry Committee and relates to the receipts and payments associated with the Chantry House and 42 St Lawrence Road South, shown below:

	2024 £	Revised £	Budget £	2023 £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
<b>Chantry House</b>				
Hire fees	6320.00	5400.00	4500.00	4326.50
Sale of furniture	400.00			
Donations	150.00	150.00	150.00	
Grants/Interest	1500.00	1500.00		
<b>42 St Lawrence Road South</b>				
Lettings	11145.00	9970.00	11350.00	11075.00
Other	(269.25)			
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>19245.75</b>	<b>17020.00</b>	<b>16000.00</b>	<b>15401.50</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
<b>Chantry House</b>				
Heating and Lighting	(5165.89)	(5000.00)	(5000.00)	(3413.22)
Insurance	(914.11)	(920.00)	(920.00)	(1015.19)
General Maintenance	(1241.20)	(1500.00)	(1000.00)	(1153.26)
Long term Maintenance	(5797.75)	(8000.00)	(11500.00)	(806.20)
Cleaning costs	(2101.01)	(2100.00)	(2100.00)	(1859.01)
Fixtures and Fittings	(682.33)	(1800.00)	(300.00)	55.00
Administration/other	0.00			(40.00)
<b>42 St Lawrence Road South</b>				
Managing Agent Fees	(1238.40)	(1050.00)	(1021.50)	(1196.10)
Maintenance Costs	(7249.00)	(7250.00)	(3750.00)	(625.00)
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>(24389.69)</b>	<b>(27620.00)</b>	<b>(25591.50)</b>	<b>(10052.98)</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(5143.94)</b>	<b>(10600.00)</b>	<b>(9591.50)</b>	<b>5348.52</b>

A Revised Budget was introduced in September following a significant change in circumstances when longstanding tenants vacated 42 St Lawrence Road South and commitments to replace carpets and redecorate the house were made in anticipation of letting the property to a Ukrainian family. This resulted in, following a delay in the family acquiring the necessary Visa, a loss of receipts and additional, unbudgeted expenditure.

The maintenance costs of the investment asset (42 St Lawrence Road South) of £7249 include a replacement boiler, redecoration and replacing the carpets. This has significantly reduced the return available to the PCC compared with that available through a market investment.

This experience of dealing with the house, which is now about 50 years old, between tenancies, and the increasing financial burden of maintaining it in a satisfactory condition to meet both reasonable and legal requirements of a landlord, has highlighted the need to review the viability of holding it as an investment property. A review will be undertaken during 2025 for Trustees to form an opinion on the future of holding such an asset.

The refurbishment of the Chantry House was completed. With one invoice still outstanding for approximately £2,000, the total spend to date is £47021.32 compared with an initial budget of £45000.

Over two financial years, work has been funded by: West Northamptonshire - Section 106 Grant (£30000); Chantry House Appeal (£4560.41); Chantry Maintenance Budget (£6875.95); and Listed Place of Worship VAT reclaim (£5584.96).

It can be seen that the final outcome is far more favourable than anticipated. The growing attractiveness of the Chantry House is reflected in the hire receipts, which are well above budget.

The cost of electricity for the Chantry House is 51.5% higher than in 2023. This is because the heating has been on to enable the drying out of new plasterwork and the end of a 4 years' supply contract late in 2023.

## 5. Restricted Funds (Note 4)

Details of the funds are *shown* below:

<b><u>Restricted Funds 2024</u></b>				
<b>Fund</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Close</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Christmas meal	1263.68	0.00	(498.99)	764.69
"Little Sprouts"	712.24	50.00	(129.56)	632.68
Fabric Committee	5915.95	146.09	(876.56)	5185.48
Chantry Section 106	14227.00	0.00	(14227.00)	0.00
Chantry - Appeal	0.00	4560.41	(4560.41)	0.00
Events (Tesco)	372.40	0.00	(155.48)	216.92
Churchyard Facilities	550.00	0.00	0.00	550.00
Rector's Fund (Waitrose)	0.00	1000.00	0.00	1000.00
Bellringers	3536.55	1316.99	(947.51)	3906.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>26577.82</b>	<b>7073.49</b>	<b>(21395.51)</b>	<b>12255.80</b>

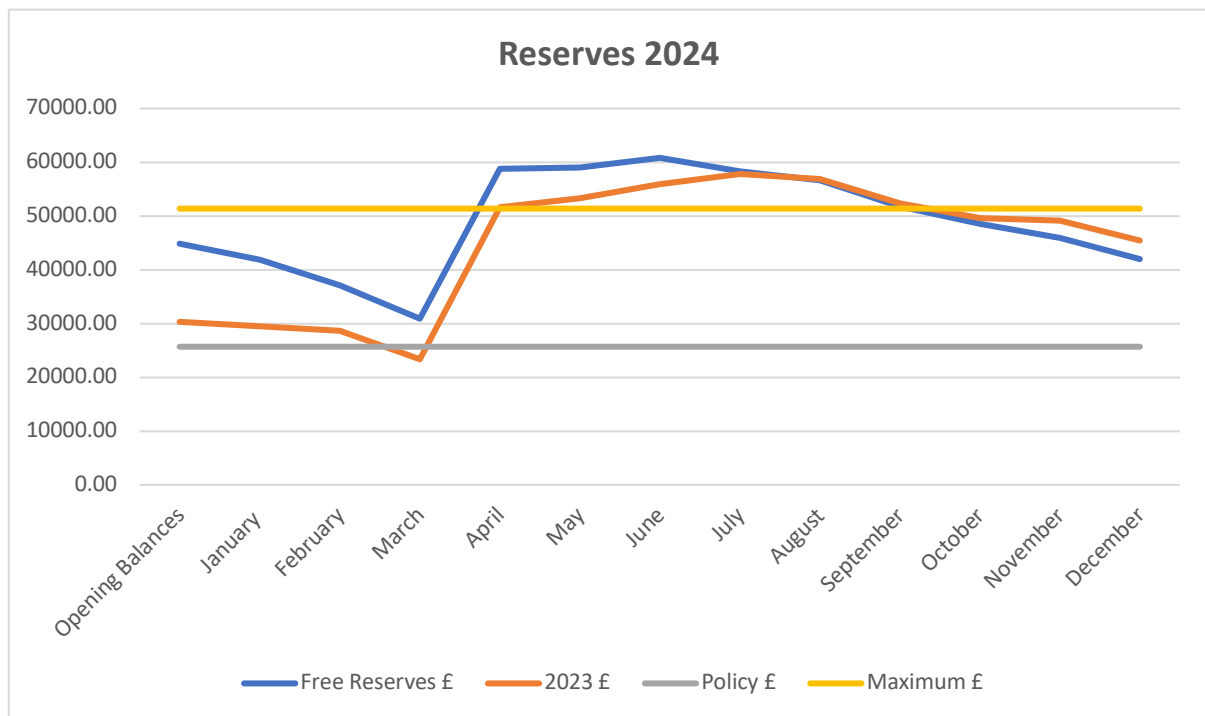
At the moment there is insufficient money in the Fabric Fund to meet the cost of priority Quinquennial report work and essential repairs to the roof. A grant of £7500 has been awarded by Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust, which along with matched funding (net of VAT) up to £10000 agreed by the Richard Hicks Charity, and the balance coming from the Maintenance Budget, will enable the work to proceed.

## 6. Reserves Policy

The PCC operates within an approved Reserves Policy, which essentially means we need to maintain a minimum General Fund reserve equivalent to 3 months' operating expenses. The graph below shows how the reserve tracks over the year, reaching a peak in the summer after the transfer of the charities' contributions to costs and the proceeds of the big fund-raising activities are banked.

It can be seen that the track for 2024 is following the same route as 2023 but likely to fall under the approved minimum sometime in early Spring of 2025. As dictated by the Policy, reserve levels are reported to PCC at each meeting when, should there be unexpected shortfalls in funding, Trustees will be asked to consider their spending priorities.

The General Fund Reserve at the year-end amounted to £41990.88.



## 7. Reconciliation

The table below demonstrates a reconciliation between the movement of the fund accounts and the various bank accounts held.

	Balance b/f £	Movement £	Balance c/f £
General Fund	44910.63	(2919.75)	41990.88
Designated Fund	16570.57	(5143.94)	11426.63
Restricted	26577.82	(14322.02)	12255.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>88059.02</b>	<b>(22385.71)</b>	<b>65673.31</b>

Represented by:

St Lawrence PCC - Lloyds current	84512.02	(58072.44)	26439.58
St Lawrence PCC - Lloyds deposit	0.00	35327.70	35327.70
Cash in hand	10.45	(10.45)	0.00
Bellringers - HSBC	3536.55	369.48	3906.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>88059.02</b>	<b>(22385.71)</b>	<b>65673.31</b>



## 8. Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

	31/12/2024		31/12/2023
	£	£	Note
<b>Liquid</b>			
Bank balances	65673.31	88059.02	
<b>Investment Assets</b>			
42 St Lawrence Road South	23000.00	23000.00	<b>1</b>
Shares in Traidcraft	1.00	1.00	<b>2</b>
<b>Assets retained for Church use</b>			
The Chantry House	60000.00	60000.00	<b>3</b>

### Note 1

In line with accounting regulations and the Charities Act 2011, the property – 42 St Lawrence Road South, owned by the PCC, is shown as an investment asset and valued at the time of acquisition.

### Note 2

Shares in Traidcraft were purchased in 2011 for £532.50. Although operating as a going concern, shares are no longer traded. A figure of £1 is given to recognise the ownership of the shares; should trading recommence their value will be reviewed.

### Note 3

The Chantry House was bequeathed in a Will dated December 1982 as a dwelling for a curate. In 1985 it was decided to convert the house into a Church centre to accommodate the, now, Benefice Office and as a Church and community meeting place.

The above Statements of Financial Activity and Assets and Liabilities have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using a Receipts and Payments method and in compliance with the Charities Act 2011.

Peter Morris – Treasurer, Towcester St Lawrence PCC and Chantry Committee



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A

### Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

*Charity name*  
The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of  
St Lawrence, Towcester

On accounts for the year  
ended

31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Charity no  
(if any)

1130077

Set out on pages

*(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)*

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above  
charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2024.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the  
accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011  
("the Act").

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

Independent  
examiner's statement

~~[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to  
undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of  
applicable listed body]]. Delete [ ] if not applicable.~~

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have  
come to my attention in connection with the examination (~~other than that  
disclosed below \*~~) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material  
respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130  
of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with 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.

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

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

3<sup>RD</sup> February 2025

Name:

Brian W.J.Manning