

## **Whitefriars Church, Rushden (Charity Number 1130312): Trustees' Annual Report for 2023**

### **Background**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Whitefriars Church, Rushden, has the responsibility of promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical in the parish. It became a registered charity during 2009, with the PCC members being registered as its trustees. It has complied with its duty of 'promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church', and in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit, guidance published by the Charity Commission.

### **Review of activities in 2023**

This is an outline summary of the activities of the church.

During 2023, the Church has returned to meeting together for worship and for meetings, though some of the smaller committee meetings are still held using Zoom as committee members live and work at some distance and Zoom meetings reduce the negative effects of travel on the environment.

The Church has also become involved in the Greener Church project looking at ways in which members of the church collectively and individually can make small changes to their live-style that can have a beneficial long-term impact on the environment. The Bronze Award has already been achieved.

A small group has continued the monthly worship services in two of the town's residential care homes, though occasional outbreaks of Covid still intervene from time to time. These services follow a range of themes as well as the major festivals and are attended by a good proportion of the residents in each home.

The PCC met six times during 2023. The sub-committees met several times between PCC meetings. Areas of PCC discussion and action during 2023 included a review of the church's safeguarding policy and appropriate training for those holding DBS clearances, updates on the church's children's and youth work and its staffing and funding. All the relevant church policies have now been updated. Some have to be reviewed every year: others are revisited every three years. PCC meetings also included active monitoring of church finances, and consideration of issues from the wider church, through reports from Deanery, Diocesan and General Synods and the Rushden & Higham Council of Churches.

The vicar, Revd. Chris Youngman, decided that he would retire during the summer: this coincided with the need for surgery and would provide him with the time to recuperate afterwards. Our curate, Revd. Josh Thorne, also secured a living of his own during the summer months. We held a celebratory service and shared lunch at the end of August to wish them both well.

The work of our employees: Emma Croxon has continued to develop as Children and Families Minister, working with pre-school children and those at primary school; Lizzie Moesbauer, who joined us as a youth work apprentice in September 2018, completed her degree course at Ridley College: her work focuses on teenagers and youth. Sara Owst has continued to provide administrative support for the vicar and staff team on a part time basis.

**UK GDPR:** there have been no reported breaches of data and the church continues to function within the guidelines laid out in the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulations. The continued use of Church Suite has been invaluable in enabling safe communication with members of the church within the UK GDPR guidelines.

**Safeguarding** has always had a high priority within the church. Our Safeguarding Policy has been updated in line with the new guidelines laid down by the National Safeguarding Team and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors. All members of the church are encouraged to complete a basic safeguarding

training programme that takes about 30 minutes. All those who have contact with children and/or adults at risk also hold current DBS certificates and have completed higher levels of safeguarding training that is appropriate to their role within the church. The church has a nominated Parish Safeguarding Officer and an Assistant Safeguarding Officer: the assistant is also a Diocesan Safeguarding Trainer and Recruiter. There have been no major safeguarding issues reported. The church has continued to keep contact with those who are house-bound or who are unsure about meeting in public following the pandemic.

**PCC membership**

At the annual meeting of 2023, the following were either serving or elected to the PCC.

<i>Vicar</i>	Revd. Chris Youngman	
<i>Curate</i>	Revd. Josh Thorne	
<b>Wardens</b>	<b>Richard Holley</b> [Vacancy]	
<i>Diocesan Synod members</i>	Andrew Presland	(General synod)
<i>Deanery Synod representatives</i>	Richard Holley Steve Holman Rosie Benn	
<i>Elected members</i>	Melvyn Hunter (to 2024) Matt Croxon (to 2024) Jeremy Smith (to 2024) Hannah Barker (to 2025) Celia Underwood (to 2025) Ken Owst (to 2025) Ally Gibson (to 2026) Lynda King (to 2026) Nisha Slater (to 2026)	(PCC secretary)     (Treasurer)  (Safeguarding)

**PCC committees and groups**

*Standing and Resources Committee:* transacts business as required between PCC meetings, including overseeing the finances of Whitefriars Church, drafting the annual budget, monitoring income and expenditure and promoting planned giving.

*Bridge Management and Minibus Management:* carry out routine checks on the state of the Bridge and ensure that safety checks and routine maintenance are carried out; ensure that the minibus is correctly maintained and insured.

*Mission Committee:* promotes a range of mission and outreach activities including mission support, both in this country and overseas. Much of this is promoted to the congregation through the vicar’s bulletin.

Each of these committees has a chair whose responsibilities include ensuring that sub-committees within each meet regularly, that meetings are properly minuted and reports returned to the PCC, management of the budget allocation, ensuring that expenditure is kept within the amounts allocated.

Melvyn Hunter - PCC Secretary  
2024

## Churchwarden's report April 2024

Have you noticed any differences in the last 12 months?

From one perspective there have been some massive changes – Rev Chris retired last summer, closely followed by our curate Josh Thorne when he moved to Northampton. Then Lizzie felt that God was calling her to move to Lymington in February, together with her husband Mikey who was leading the Youth Band.

But have you noticed any significant difference? Of course we miss those that have left for pastures new, but Whitefriars has continued to do well, despite losing our leaders - and this is due to the magnificent effort of our remaining staff and a whole host of volunteers who continue to step up and do their best to keep the church operating and moving forward.

There are too many people to thank individually, but I would personally like to thank everyone who turn up faithfully and make Whitefriars the best church in town that also has an impact in the local community and schools. There is one person I will mention, however, and that is Melvyn. He carries out some of the tasks normally done by the churchwardens and I am not sure how I would have survived without him.

The guys that I bring from Recovery House are very positive about coming to Whitefriars because you are very welcoming and friendly - and it has been lovely to see 3 of them continue on their faith journey this year, despite being free to not go to church. You should all be proud of yourselves, so keep on looking out for newcomers. There is a distinct possibility that we may get some teenagers and their parents because of the Illuminate outreach events recently. At the time of writing, 322 children have done the 3 steps of faith on the AAA pass and 86 have booked a ticket for the AAA series. These potential newcomers may be people that do not know how we behave in church, what language we use, or our normal procedures – so please continue to be welcoming, friendly and gracious towards them.

One of Chris Youngman's major priorities was that we become disciples of Christ who make other disciples. He also said that all our small groups should put as much emphasis on outreach as we do our relationships with God and each other. How are we doing with that? Are we still asking the 2 Discipleship Questions, or has your group regressed into its comfort zone of doing bible studies with no outward focus? If you are not a member of a Discipleship group, please consider joining one so that we can all consider some important spiritual issues facing the church.

After a lot of work by the PCC on the Parish Profile and adverts for our vicar's post it was disappointing that there were no applicants. There does seem to be a shortage of vicars across the country, and it seems that Evangelicals in particular, are reluctant to move currently because of the controversial proposals coming out of General Synod. All the recent local vacancies for incumbents have taken a considerable time to fill, so maybe I shouldn't have been surprised. I see this as a test of our faith but am convinced that God will bring the right person to us if we pray and remain faithful.

There was some discontent from a few people about some of the words in the Parish Profile. The PCC has listened to this and made a few changes to the profile and an advert, but we are aware that we cannot please all of the people, all of the time. Some others have been upset because we have made the changes. Remember that the PCC are elected by you to use our best judgement, rather than to carry out a referendum every time we need to make decisions about the church. At the end of the day I want to please God, not please people, when there is a conflict of interests.

Looking forward, the vicar's post will continue to be advertised until Ally Gibson and I feel we have a suitable candidate that is willing to come and lead us. Also, the new Bishop of Peterborough, Rt Rev Debbie Sellin, has offered to come to preach at Whitefriars in July this year.

Please take every opportunity to continue to pray for our church – both locally for God's choice of a new leader and that we can continue to glorify God through our witness in the community - and for God's church in England generally that we get strong leadership in accordance with God's wishes.


## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S CERTIFICATE

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

### Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Acthave not been met;
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

  
**John Eldred**  
6 Nightingale way  
Higham Ferrers  
NN10 8PR

Date: 23-03-24

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**Statement of Financial Activities**

**For the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023**

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>						
Donations and legacies	103,957.13	—	15,321.41	—	119,278.54	118,216.74
Income from charitable activities	3,408.00	5,312.61	31,057.18	—	39,777.79	4,947.16
Other income	891.00	—	1,674.11	—	2,565.11	2,671.67
<b>Total income</b>	<b>108,256.13</b>	<b>5,312.61</b>	<b>48,052.70</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>161,621.44</b>	<b>125,835.57</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>						
Expenditure on charitable activities	100,238.20	4,693.91	24,411.74	—	129,343.85	120,287.40
Other expenditure	988.31	3,817.23	668.96	—	5,474.50	3,984.43
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>101,226.51</b>	<b>8,511.14</b>	<b>25,080.70</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>134,818.35</b>	<b>124,271.83</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer</b>	<b>7,029.62</b>	<b>(3,198.53)</b>	<b>22,972.00</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>26,803.09</b>	<b>1,563.74</b>
<b>Transfers</b>						
Gross transfers between funds - in	—	—	5,000.00	—	5,000.00	1,128.77
Gross transfers between funds - out	(5,000.00)	—	—	—	(5,000.00)	(1,128.77)
<b>Other recognised gains / losses</b>						
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>2,029.62</b>	<b>(3,198.53)</b>	<b>27,972.00</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>26,803.09</b>	<b>1,563.74</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>19,247.89</b>	<b>32,276.78</b>	<b>3,772.15</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>55,296.82</b>	<b>53,733.08</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>21,277.51</b>	<b>29,078.25</b>	<b>31,744.15</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>82,099.91</b>	<b>55,296.82</b>
<b>Represented by</b>						
Unrestricted						
General fund	21,277.51	—	—	—	21,277.51	19,247.89
Designated						
Bridge Reserve	—	2,960.16	—	—	2,960.16	6,512.16
Mini Bus	—	3,996.39	—	—	3,996.39	2,501.01
Mission Fund	—	20,925.80	—	—	20,925.80	22,067.71
PA Fund	—	1,120.54	—	—	1,120.54	1,120.54
Vicarage Reserve	—	75.36	—	—	75.36	75.36
Restricted						
Children's & Youth Fund	—	—	1,419.64	—	1,419.64	2,812.16
Compassion	—	—	28.75	—	28.75	(157.45)
LZ7 Mission	—	—	30,202.02	—	30,202.02	—
Youth Residentials	—	—	93.74	—	93.74	1,117.44

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Balance sheet (Church of England)

As at: 31 December 2023

	As at 31/12/2023	As at 31/12/2022
	£	£
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	82,099.91	55,296.82
	<u>82,099.91</u>	<u>55,296.82</u>
<b>Net current assets less current liabilities</b>	<u>82,099.91</u>	<u>55,296.82</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<u>82,099.91</u>	<u>55,296.82</u>
<b>Total net assets less liabilities</b>	<u>82,099.91</u>	<u>55,296.82</u>
<b>Represented by</b>		
<b>Unrestricted</b>		
Unrestricted - General fund	21,277.51	19,247.89
<b>Designated</b>		
Designated - Bridge Reserve	2,960.16	6,512.16
Designated - Bridge management	—	—
Designated - Mini Bus	3,996.39	2,501.01
Designated - Mission Fund	20,925.80	22,067.71
Designated - PA Fund	1,120.54	1,120.54
Designated - Vicarage Reserve	75.36	75.36
<b>Restricted</b>		
Restricted - Constance Travis	—	—
Restricted - Youth Residentials	93.74	1,117.44
Restricted - Compassion	28.75	(157.45)
Restricted - Diocesan Mission Fund	—	—
Restricted - Families in Need	—	—
Restricted - Hope Beyond	—	—
Restricted - Heritage Lottery Fund	—	—
Restricted - LZ7 Mission	30,202.02	—
Restricted - Restricted Purposes	—	—
Restricted - Children's & Youth Fund	1,419.64	2,812.16
<b>Funds of the church</b>	<u>82,099.91</u>	<u>55,296.82</u>