

Annual Report

2022



St Mary's Eaton Socon

THE CHURCH ON THE GREEN

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Vicar's Welcome

Welcome to St Mary's Eaton Socon 2022 Annual Report.

At a speech given at the Guildhall in the City of London in late November 1992, Queen Elizabeth II said: *1992 is not a year on which I shall look back with undiluted pleasure. In the words of one of my more sympathetic correspondents, it has turned out to be an 'Annus Horribilis'. I suspect that I am not alone in thinking it so.*

As I look back on 2022, I too would borrow the phrase 'Annus Horribilis' from the Queen to describe some of its events. Yes there have been some good things that have happened, including the gradual use of the kitchen; the appointment of my new PA, Jane Gill; the refurbishment of the Church Hall; the arrival of our new curate Christopher Scott, and the recent Christmas season of services and events. For these and other things, we have so much to be thankful for.

Yet, in the midst of these good things, some of our relationships with each other have been under pressure, resulting in disaffection and disunity. One of the contributing factors has been the message we heard repeatedly through Covid – a message ‘to look to one’s own interests.’

Whilst this may have been the right message for the country at that time, the Christian church has always been called to be a place that looks to and demonstrates an equal concern for every member of the community.

Thank-you to those who have shared this journey with me through 2022 – whilst there is still more rebuilding of relationships to be done, it is encouraging to share in both relationships that are the stronger for having been rebuilt and seeing the church reorientating its view that looks to the interests of each other and the needs of the whole church.

As the Theologian Dr Julie Robb once said: *The church family can only be the community God desires if every member and every gift are valued.*

This is the community we are called to be. So what are we waiting for? Let us all use 2023 to build up God's family here at St Mary's and in the wider community.

With every blessing

Tim



PCC Report

The PCC met 8 times during the year on a Thursday evening. The meetings take the same format, starting with prayer and a short reflection led by one of the members. This is followed by a short time of story sharing. Depending on the amount to be discussed, the meeting usually concludes around 10pm. During the year two people resigned which left the group short on numbers.

FINANCE

The Treasurer, Roy Notley, presents a full review of the accounts at each meeting for general, designated, and restricted funds. Constant reviews of likely finance outcome for the year were discussed, especially towards the later months as it became clear that financing of general fund was going to need extreme monitoring.

During the year the PCC sanctioned several expends on equipment and improvement projects, all funded where possible from grants, designated reserves or restricted accounts.

The 2023 budget was discussed and revised many times again due to the Uncertainties of what 2023 would bring, especially the steep rise in energy costs.

Purchase of a SumUp Card Reader at a cost of £79 was approved to enhance cash-free giving.

MINISTRY

Our new Curate, Christopher Scott, was welcomed on 3rd July and is proving to be a valuable asset to the life of St Mary's.

Initial discussions about starting up a Pilot Eldership Group (PEG) took place to prayerfully shape ideas which will enhance the life of the Church. This is still ongoing.

Administration of Holy Communion following Covid restrictions was considered. It was agreed that we must offer people Communion options that they feel safe with and that changes would be actioned as 'stepping stones' process back to normality from July and to be reviewed in the Spring of 2023.

A Lunch Club proposal offering an opportunity for adults to come together for physical, mental, relational and spiritual nourishment in a warm space was approved. This would be held monthly on the last Thursday.

YOUTH

The PCC reviewed and discussed issues raised by Liz Faulkner, our Children's Worker, concerning current Sunday School problems. A Focus Group was formed to address this issue and Liz attended the PCC meeting in December where an action plan was agreed. This would involve the use and development of the vestry for the older children, leaving the hall free for the creche. Parents would be encouraged to stay with their children as they would be able to follow the service as it would be streamed to the hall TV screen.

A proposal for a Youth Café starting mid-February 2023 in the Church Hall on Monday afternoons was approved.

PCC Report (continued)

FABRIC

The quiet area in the Church yard was completed in the first quarter of the year.

The Church hall refurbishment project was started, including installation of hall AV system, hall redecoration and new carpet and curtains, with a view to completion by August. This was completed mid-summer and is a big improvement. Provision of new chairs was deferred due to the extra cost.

A grant was received from HDC of £6000 in 2021 and the PCC agreed four projects to be resourced by this grant. These were the hall carpet, the Church platform wood panel replacement, safeguarding laptop and iPad for PTZ camera use.

The existing Wi-Fi access points needed to be replaced as they were no longer being supported by the manufacturer due to the technology being out of date. This was approved with the cost being taken out of the general budget.

A PA amplifier was on loan to the Church. This was returned to the owner and the purchase of a replacement, funded from designated funds, was approved by the Standing Committee.

A lighting proposal was agreed to replace the existing lighting with more economic LED lights and fitments. This project has been started.

ADMIN

It was agreed that a person needed to be in place to take over the production of the Church rotas. There is still no one in place to do this important job. The task has temporarily been covered by two PCC members. A paper seeking the way forward was presented to the PCC in January 2023. This matter is ongoing.

Due to it's age the laptop for Liz Faulkner needed to be replaced. This was approved.

PCC minutes are written up and, once ratified, they are displayed with the Treasurer's Report in the South Porch.

My thanks go to the Trustees of the Eaton Socon PCC for all their work during the year, to Denis Rimmer and Corrie Verduyn, the Churchwardens, to the Assistant Churchwardens, to Ed Jarvis for taking the minutes at each meeting, to all the staff, to Christopher Scott and especially to Rev'd Timothy Robb.

Brenda Notley



Treasurer's Report

YEAR ENDING 31.12.2022

CHURCH GENERAL ACCOUNT

This was yet another difficult year as we continued to return towards pre-pandemic days. Planned giving income fell by £1581, cash collections and sundry income were up by £4521. In addition, lump sum pledges including gift aid were £4719. There was no gift day in 2021. With increased hall lettings but fewer occasional services, other income was up by £1082 including £581 more from interest on deposit account. Overall, total income for the year was up by £5733 after taking out furlough grants of £3008 received in 2021.

Expenditure too was up by £5666. Parish Share £1899, staff expenses £2593 and energy costs £3966 were the highest, but building related costs were down by £2019 from last year and mission giving down by £4218 to 5% of planned giving income.

Many donations were received in November and December towards the high increase in energy costs perceived for 2023. All of these, amounting to £5006, have been deferred to 2023 to help offset those costs in that year. Similarly, there were a few expense items provided for within 2022 but deferred to 2023 amounting to £1792. The general fund remarkably ended the year with a gross surplus of £130! We should all be so grateful for God's endless provision.

DESIGNATED FUND

Fundraising events in 2022 raised £3434 to the designated fund created for major one-off costs involving buildings and/or equipment. This fund, including an HDC grant in 2021, stood at £19813 at start of year. The PCC sanctioned the go ahead for several projects falling under this category. These amounted to £19930 in all, thus reducing the fund to £3317 at end of year. A listing of these items will be included in the published accounts for 2022. Other designated funds are held for catering, Little Stars and Café on the Green. Funds at start of year were £977 and, after all activity in the year, were £913 at close.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

There were 5 restricted funds for future development at the start of 2022 amounting to £24019. The Kitchen/Hall project was completed as was the Quiet area project. There was no movement on the fund for Boiler/Flues or Vestry. These funds remain at £19984. Nave lighting work commenced late in the year at a cost so far of £1135, leaving £740 remaining for future changes. Cumulative restricted funds for future developments now stand at £20724. In addition, there are restricted funds for Outreach, Youth events, Worship and Church Groups. These funds at start of year were £5525 and, after all activity in the year, were £4202 at close.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023

This has again been a very difficult budget to prepare. Income from giving can only be based upon what is happening right now. We cannot assume church attendance will grow and, due to the current inflation rate and ever rising costs, we cannot assume giving will grow. We think income will be stagnant and boosted only by pledges received so far at the time of writing (9) and hopefully more to come as the year progresses. Expenditure is expected to be £11000 more than 2022, including an extra £9000 on energy costs (now expected to cost £19000 in a full year).

The final budget for 2023 shows a predicted deficit of £12400. We are confident that further pledges will go a long way to cutting that deficit substantially. My thanks to all who have assisted in the preparation of these Accounts, particularly a thanks to Gavin and Tim for their solid support and assistance.

Roy B Notley

Planned Giving Report

Around 90% of St Mary's income needs to come from giving/donations to resource its ever rising costs of ministry/upkeep of buildings. In 2022 regular giving was down by £1581 from 2021. Giving of all kinds was £8109 up on 2021. All giving amounted to 90.6% of expenditure.

Giving was via the following streams:

	2021	2022	
Direct Debits (Parish Giving Scheme)	29195	30848	23.36%
Bank Standing Orders	59993	56706	42.94%
On-line Debit/Credit Cards (Stripe)	690	720	0.55%
Dedicated Numbered Envelopes	3277	2938	2.22%
Gift Aid Reclaim from HMRC	20563	20925	15.84%
PLANNED GIVING	113718	112137	84.91%
Gift Aid envelopes	293	1107	0.84%
Cash Offertories	2816	6067	4.59%
Casual donations	5805	5618	4.25%
Gift Aid Reclaim from HMRC	1324	2417	1.83%
Gift Day	0	4719	3.57%
ADHOC GIVING	10238	19928	15.09%
TOTAL GIVING	123956	132065	

Monthly giving spread:

	2021	2022
Up to £25 per month	17	16
Between £26 and £50	32	27
Between £51 and £100	21	19
Between £101 and £200	10	14
Between £201 and £300	10	7
Over £300	2	4
	92	87

At start of year there were 92 regular givers; 17 increased their regular amount and 0 decreased; 8 started regular giving but 13 stopped leaving 87 regular givers at end of 2022.

On behalf of PCC of St Mary's Eaton Socon we convey our sincere thanks for your sustained regular giving. Only 2 now remain on dedicated numbered envelopes. The budget for 2023 is again extremely tight and will need your extra support to protect the services provided.

Remember, apart from regular giving by direct debit through Parish Giving Scheme and bank standing order there are many other streams for the occasional giver. there are many other streams of income available for the occasional giver.

1. **PARISH GIVING SINGLE DONATE.** parishgiving.org.uk (parishcode 320632297)
2. **VIA ON-LINE BANKING:** direct bank tfr to 'Eatonsocon PCC' 20.74.81 60347043
3. **CREDIT/DEBIT CARD:** by sum-up card reader.
4. **CHURCH WEBSITE** by various donate buttons on www.eatonsocon.org
5. **TEXT GIVING:** by text message SMES to 70085 Default is £10.
6. **EASYFUNDRAISING or SMILE AMAZON:** using St Mary's as nominated charity
7. **GIFT AID ENVELOPES:** by gift aid envelopes on finance table
8. **MONEY:** by cash or cheque in offertory baskets in church when open.

Please note: giving by means of options 3,4,or 5 above will incur a commission charge deducted at source from your contribution. We encourage you to continue to review the support you can afford which is so vital to St Mary's and we thank you for it.

Roy B Notley - Treasurer

Church Warden Report

This is the first church warden report from myself and Denis. We were elected in April 2022. This was followed by a service of commissioning in June in a church in Luton. We have therefore been in post less than a year. It has been a learning curve which is still on-going, and we have big boots to fill.

During this year, there have been major events in the world, which impact all of our lives, and the life of the church as well. We celebrated the life of Queen Elizabeth at her passing. We have welcomed a new King, Charles the 3rd. We witness the devastation of war in Ukraine, earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. Closer to home many people face financial uncertainty, and all of us, including the church, have to adjust to the rising cost of living.

Throughout this time the church services have continued and slowly returned to normality. This has been the first full year post Covid and some Covid legacies remain. We are happy to have seen people gradually return to church, as well as welcoming new members. This year has also seen the re-start of Sunday evening events, both as St Mary's @6 as a praise and worship service, and as teaching sessions by Rev Ray Porter and Dr Julie Robb. Thanks to all who have contributed to any of those sessions.

We have also welcomed our curate Christopher Scott and his family into our church.

This year has also seen several people standing down from various volunteering roles. This is now leading to a situation where we need more volunteers in different roles, so as not to overburden those who continue to contribute to this invaluable ministry.

I want to thank all those who have contributed as a volunteer to the life of the church. I want to thank all assistant church wardens, sides people, tea makers, readers, intercessors, musicians, M-team members, creation care team members and many others. I am not going to mention everyone by name, but I am going to make 2 exceptions. We want to thank Margaret Lygoe for doing the rotas. We would also like to thank Teresa Ansell for her many years of service to the church.

During this year we have seen an up-grade of the church hall, which makes it into a much nicer and user-friendly space.

For the coming year there are plans to up-grade the vestry, as it is now used as a space for Sunday school.

Finally, we would like to thank Tim and everyone in church, for your patience as we settle into this role of church warden.

Our prayer is that God will bless our church and use it as a beacon of light for our community.

Corrie Verduyn and Den Rimmer.



Church Administrator's Report

Firstly, I must make note of the fact that I have worked for Tim and St Mary's for over six years now which makes me the longest serving member of office staff – ever!! For my sins, maybe!! I say that with a smile on my face.

The office is an extremely busy and productive environment with lots of comings and goings. The work is very varied and I don't know what will come at me from moment to moment. I love that variation and being able to assist all of the people who do great work for the Church behind the scenes. It wouldn't run without them.

My duties include: taking all bookings and ensuring that the management system (ChurchSuite) is as up to date as is possible, copious amounts of printing, invoicing and dealing with our hall hirers, taking telephone calls, answering the many emails we receive, the filing of all Church documentation so that it is easily accessible, making sure that the hall is warm for our users, looking after the First Aid boxes (a small but essential job), these are to name but a few of the many tasks required to ensure the smooth running of this side of Church life!

Most importantly, it's drinking, often cold, the plentiful and much-needed cups of tea made for me by the good people of St Mary's.

What would I do without you? Thank you most kindly.
Karen McKenzie

Vicar's PA Report

I took over as Vicar's PA in January 2022.

My first year has seen me undertaking various duties, including record keeping for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. This involves liaising with the family/couple, completing computer records, updating the church registers, liaising with funeral directors and the church treasurer.

I have prepared PowerPoints for Baptism services, incorporating photos of the child/children and their family members, to personalise the service for them.

Early in the year I updated the church policies, in line with updates from the Diocese or the PCC. I am responsible for keeping the church key register up to date. I have also produced or updated service booklets and the church Welcome Pack.

The last few weeks have seen me formatting and producing the APCM Reports booklet.

I have produced the monthly newsletter, liaising with many members of the church to ensure inclusion of up-to-date articles, news and forthcoming events. I have really enjoyed the opportunity to be creative with this. Please keep the articles coming!

I have produced various posters, information cards and other documents, as requested by the Vicar, and on occasion, other members of the church, including a 'Beware of the Wasps' poster for the churchyard.

The job is varied, interesting and busy and, as a relative newcomer, has proven to be a great way to get to know people in the church.

From day one I have felt welcomed and supported. Thank you, Tim, Karen and everyone!!

Please continue to pop in and say hello when I'm in the office.

Jane Gill

Safeguarding Report

St Mary's Church, Eaton Socon is committed to being a safe place for all and we are working with the Diocesan guidelines to ensure this is maintained. The St Mary's 'Safeguarding for All Policy' was updated in January 2023 to reflect ongoing changes within the church. It is based upon the Diocesan Safeguarding policies 'Protecting All God's Children' and 'Promoting A Safe Church' (which covers vulnerable adults). St Mary's Church has adopted the principles and practices of safer recruitment.

As the church activities involving children continue to expand, new volunteers have come forward and the necessary safer recruitment and checks have been carried out so that this could be done safely. As the Church of England has recommended all DBS checks are renewed every three years.

All Safeguarding Training is delivered online. Records are kept of those who have undergone Safeguarding training so that, in line with Diocesan recommendations, renewal every three years can be prompted.

There is a regular Safeguarding item on PCC agendas allowing for the PCC to be kept informed on Safeguarding matters and to discuss initiatives as they arise. St Mary's Church is now on the Parish Dashboard, a system for ensuring that all necessary Safeguarding requirements have been completed.

Names and contact details of the vicar, the Safeguarding Officer and the Children's Advocate are displayed within the church along with advice helpline numbers. This information is also clearly signposted on the parish website. If there are any Safeguarding matters that need to be brought to our attention, please contact any of these people in confidence.

Jane Gogarty

Pre-Marriage Course Report

This course is offered to couples who choose to get married in our church. The course is built upon universal principles about marriage that are relevant to any couple anywhere. The intention of the course is to help couples prepare for marriage and develop the habits that are needed to build a strong, healthy and lasting marriage.

The course addresses such topics as: communication, conflict, commitment, connection and the adventure of marriage. It is a course that comprises of five teaching sessions.

In spring 2022 we took two couples through the course, we recently took 3 couples through a second course, in addition 3 couples took the course on a home based manner.

We have been very encouraged by the way that the different couples have applied themselves to their marriage preparation and give thanks to God for them. All of the couples expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the learning received.

Edward and Barbara Jarvis

Creation Care Team Report

The Creation Care Group was set up three years ago to help St Mary's understand and respond to the developing environmental crises around us. We want to show that we love creation because we love its Creator. We've made changes in our Church life and encourage Church members to make changes in their own lifestyles too.

Our efforts were recognised by an Eco Church silver award this January, following our bronze award eighteen months ago. This required further progress in five areas:

Worship and Teaching – our worship and prayers often reflect our love and concern for creation, including a Sunday in June when we focussed on our individual responsibility to care. Over 80 people returned a questionnaire about their own attitudes and actions. Creation Care is also a regular part of the children's and young peoples' teaching.

Buildings – we've provided bins opposite the kitchenette to help people recycle batteries and ink cartridges. And the recent installation of LED lights in the Church will help to reduce our electricity use. By far the biggest part of our 'carbon footprint' is the gas we burn to heat the Church and Hall – we planned to turn the thermostats down a bit, but the recent unwelcome price rises have made us turn them down even further!

Land – we've continued managing the Churchyard to be of more benefit to wildlife, while keeping it a pleasant place for visitors. The meadow areas have enabled wild plants and creatures to thrive there – we have found about 60 species of plants, apart from the trees and grasses. A small new bed behind the Hall has grown a variety of herbs and vegetables as well as some sunflowers, and elsewhere we've added plants that will provide seeds for the birds. Of nine bird boxes, six were used last year. Our camera has caught a hedgehog and a fox visiting our feeding and watering point during the night, as well as birds and a family of mice. The 'Quiet Area' was completed to provide space for individuals or small groups to relax. A new noticeboard outside the Hall provides information for visitors – thank you to ESCA for helping with the cost of that.

Community and Global Engagement and Lifestyle – we've become a Fairtrade Church, starting with a successful stall at the Christmas Fayre. We've also started occasional walks to help people to enjoy our lovely local area. We try to make sure that everyone has a copy of our home-grown leaflet of practical ways in which we can each enjoy more the world around us and do less damage to it, and there are regular tips in our Newsletters.

The challenge now is to keep at the silver level, and to look for areas where we might improve further. We were pleased that the PCC has agreed a Church Environmental Policy.

We're very grateful to the Town Council for their work and cooperation in the Churchyard. We're also grateful to all the people who've adopted beds in the Churchyard, or helped at the Groundforce mornings or the monthly Monday working parties.

There's more information about us on the Church website at www.eatonsocon.org/creation-care, and about the Churchyard at www.eatonsocon.org/churchyard.

If you are interested, want to know more, or have ideas, please contact one of us.
James Faulkner, Anthony Harris, Audrey Hedges,
Margaret Tabone, Roger Peppiatt.



Children and Families Ministry Report

Little Stars

Little Stars is a toddler group which runs at St Mary's on a Wednesday morning (term time). We welcome children from 0 to 4 years old alongside their grown up. We have free play, sensory play, craft, refreshments and always finish with a song time at the end.

Little Stars is well supported by both the church and local community, with us seeing many families who have left once their child goes to school but then re-join us with their 2nd or even 3rd child. We see an average of 25 children per week, which alongside parents means we regularly have a group of 40-50 on site.

In December we had our annual Christmas party where the children helped us retell the nativity story (which is always organised chaos!), sang some Christmas songs, had some party food, and gave every child a book about the nativity. This has been the same format for several years now and families love coming to it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our Little Stars volunteers – we have a 6 person strong team with others stepping in to help as needed/cover holidays and we could not run without you all.

Creche and Sunday School

Creche runs for children under the age of 4yrs and Sunday School takes children from 4+. Both groups run during the 10.30am Sunday Service. These groups have been a work in progress, with us still seeing numbers fluctuating as families begin to get back into attending regularly.

Until the end of 2022 these groups both ran in the hall with the same volunteers managing both younger and older children, however, it was felt that this was not going to continue to be a workable situation with such a wide age range in one room.

Therefore, in January 2023 the decision to split the groups was taken to PCC, who approved it. So now we have the creche remaining in the hall and the Sunday School using the vicar's vestry for their sessions. Thank you for everyone who helped (and is helping to) transform the vestry into a useable space for the children. This choice has made a huge amount of difference to both groups, with the older ones being able to focus on their teaching and the younger ones having the whole hall space to play in. We also live stream the service into the hall for the parents of the creche children to engage with the service.

The Sunday School have begun a series of teaching called "Heartshapers", which teaches Biblical stories and how they can speak to our lives today. The creche also follow this series with short stories and craft activities being available if the toddlers want to engage with this.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who have helped in 2022 to keep Sunday School going and who have stepped forward in 2023 to help us move creche and Sunday School forward into this new format. We are still looking for individuals to help support this ministry so if you'd like to get involved then please speak to me.

HIVE

HIVE is a monthly group which is for children with additional needs / SEND and their siblings and families. This group runs on a Sunday afternoon and is set up so that

Children and Families Ministry (Continued)

children can choose what activities to participate in. We have sensory items, a blackout tent, messy play, books, games, Lego and arts and crafts, we then have refreshments and all come together for an activity (last time we made chocolate crispy cakes, it went down very well with everyone!). Each session has different activities, but the room setup is always the same and visual timetables help to guide the children through the session.

The aim of HIVE is to support local families and provide them with a safe environment for all the children to meet and the parents to feel that they can relax for the time they're there.

We have been running for 12 months and have seen several local families committing to this group and attending every time (with other families dropping in and out as their time allows) and through this we've been able to build relationships with them and support them as their children and themselves go through challenging times.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our HIVE volunteers, their commitment to this group enables it to run and give this vital support to our local families.

One off events

Throughout the year we hold one off events for children and families both in church and in the local community. At these events we get to meet new families as well as catch up with families who we haven't seen since the last event. This year was the first time back for our events after Covid, this year we had:

Easter Eggstravaganza: our annual Easter family event held on the Saturday before Easter and is always well attended by families. This year we saw over 70 people attending for fun; doing mask making, sunflower planting, candle making and a scavenger hunt.

Summer holiday club: a 3 morning holiday club for primary aged children which is filled with games, crafts, teaching and loads of fun. This year we had over 60 children attend from all different primary schools and SEN provision in the local area.

Light Night: our alternative Halloween which is usually held on the Sunday before

Halloween. It provides families with a non-scary, fun alternative to all that is dark and frightening about Halloween and gives us the opportunity to talk about Jesus being the light of the world. This year we saw over 50 people come and make lanterns, bracelets, pumpkin crafts, play games and go on a night walk round the churchyard.

Christingle: this is always a popular event with families and this year we saw a good number of families attending. We had Christmas crafts and then we all made Christingles together. This was followed by the lighting of the Christingle and us all singing "Away in a Manger", which is always commented on by parents as to how lovely it is to have such a calm moment in a busy day.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped within our one-off events / holiday club in the past year. Your commitment to supporting these events is what enables us to connect to our local community and I certainly couldn't run them without everyone's support.

Liz Faulkner - Church, Community, Families & Children's Worker

Youth Ministry Report

Wow...where do we start? 2022 has been a year with many changes and therefore lots of news to tell. We would like to start with the fab addition of two new leaders Joshua Smith and Jerome Duval to the team along with three Young Youth leaders... Holly Arnold, Sarah Robb and Steven Johnson. A very big welcome to you all! As you will soon read, our Youth have been busy over the year taking part in many activities and events....enjoy!

REACTORS: Reactors is our Sunday Youth Church where we have a lively session with good humoured banter, hot chocolate and healthy bible study. Jesus is at the centre of our sessions which are always opened in prayer followed by recording our prayer requests for the week which is then posted on our WhatsApp group chat. Eight regularly attend but this year we said goodbye to Sarah and Holly as they left for University. Whilst it is lovely to see them again when they come home, it is encouraging to know that they have both settled down into local churches where they now live. At the start of 2022 we continued our series 'engage', a study book helping young people to discover who God is and what He's like; seeing what God's done for us through Jesus; and exploring practical ways of living for Him. We looked at John's gospel asking and exploring the question 'Who does John say Jesus is?'. We looked in Matthew to help us talk about spiritual growth and delved into Colossians to look at the characteristics of maturing Christians and how we can grow as Christians. In June we started a course run by Ministry to Youth entitled Summer Survival Guide in which we looked at issues such as the state of one's mental health and how the decisions you make today can shape who you will become tomorrow. After the summer break we started a series on The Armour of God and had fun playing Kahoot, an online quiz, about the different parts of the armour and what they stand for. At the start of 2023 we started an exciting new course from Ministry to Youth focusing on relationships, both healthy and unhealthy, and how to recognise these in dating relationships, putting God in the centre of these relationships and acknowledging that God created us to live in love and harmony with each other. The Youth Team and I are seeing young people in our church growing in their knowledge and faith and are excited at seeing an emergence of new young youth leaders, eager and willing. Thank you Jesus for your goodness and allowing us the privilege of discipling our wonderful young people.

(Julia Chapman)

FUSION: Fusion continues to be a great time for the youth to get together weekly on a Friday and enjoy an evening filled with games, team challenges and sports. Along with the chance to chill and catch up with each other's weeks news, it has been lovely to see friendships blossom and support networks grow. Over the year we have enjoyed trips out to the Ice skating rink and Bowling Alley, have held end of term parties along with a very big water fight to start the new school year. In December, in conjunction with the churches in St Neots and Youth For Christ (YFC), we held our first ever Youth Disco funded by the Diocese of St Albans. As we head into 2023, we look forward to having a chance to ring St Mary's bells, learn some new board games, take part in a jamming night, support our chosen charities and of course, attend Newday with our friends Open Door and River Church. We pray the youth continue to grow in their fellowship and with the opening of the Youth Café, we hope to welcome new members.

(Heather Arnold)

Youth Ministry Report (Continued)

YOUTH CAFÉ: A new venture for St Mary's in 2023 is the launch of a Youth Cafe for Years 7-13 every Monday after school during the term. The Cafe is the initiative of Youth for Christ and serves as a warm safe place to drop into after school, free of charge, to hang out with friends, play games or do some crafting whilst enjoying drinks and snacks. No adults allowed, only DBS checked volunteers helping prepare food or willing to listen and chat. The Cafe is open to all with additional trips and events arranged throughout the term for them to enjoy, such as discos, roller skating and bowling. We are looking forward to what God has in store for us as we get to know more young people and their families in St Neots and we are especially blessed as 5 of our young people have stepped up to help and become youth volunteers. Thank you to Molly, Nicholas, Morgan, Alfie and Faith.

(Julia Chapman)

CHRISTMAS DISCO: In December this year, St Marys was the place to be as we held our first ever Youth Disco to all the young people who attended local Church Youth groups and YfC Youth Cafes. Supported by many Youth leaders/co-ordinators from these churches and Youth cafes, we opened our doors to 50+ Youth for an evening filled with music and fun. This was a free ticketed event thanks to the support of St Albans Diocese which allowed us to provide free entry, snacks and drinks and have the decks turned by SamPlayz, a local 13 year old. A great night was had by all that attended, the amount of energy seen would have powered the whole of St Neots, definitely no heating was needed once the party got started!!!! With the success of the night, we look forward to holding a disco every term with our next one planned for Friday 24th March.

(Heather Arnold)

NEWDAY 2022: With bags packed and goodbyes said, 13 of us headed off with our Open Door friends to Norwich Showground. Along with 7500 other young people we had a great week connecting and learning more about our amazing God through meetings in the morning and in the evening. Many prayers were answered and the presence of the Holy Spirit felt among us particularly as this year due to the Big Top company pulling out at the last minute, our evening service was held in a field totally open to the weather. However no rain was seen and the sun shone brightly the whole week. New friendships were made as we spent time competing in games, physical and non-physical, taking part in a massive water fight, hanging out in the Cowsheds and completing the photo challenge on the last night. We are still in awe as to how many young people can fit into a toilet cubicle! Newday 2023 is now open for booking and we look forward to heading that way again in the summer.

(Heather Arnold)

CHARITIES: The youth at St Mary's actively support two Christian charities, Global Care and Samaritan's Purse. Global Care supports the poorest and most vulnerable children around the world by supporting their families and providing the children with education. We support this charity because we appreciate the education that is available in this country and our hope is that in the future the same education will be available to all of God's children, able to grow up to be responsible caring adults and influencers of society. We raise money through sponsored events and in 2022

Youth Ministry Report (Continued)

we took on a 9 mile sponsored walk around Graffham Water pushing gallons of water on a sack barrow. This was to raise awareness of how many of the poorest families in the world have to walk miles in order to get fresh water. We managed to raise over £1,000 which went into Global Care's emergency fund. 2023 sees Global Care celebrating their 40th Anniversary so we are planning an extra special sponsored event to join in the party. So watch this space! Samaritan's Purse is a charity we also support by filling shoeboxes every winter to be distributed at Christmas to less fortunate children throughout Europe. In 2022 our shoeboxes went to Ukraine.

(Julia Chapman)

As we enter 2023, we have many things to look forward to.....Youth Café, Newday, charity events, continued Cake sales to name but a few. We have much to thank God for in particularly our Youth, young Youth leaders and all those that have supported us throughout the year...parents, carers, church and leaders.

Thank you Lord for everything!

Julia, Heather, Joshua and Jerome.



Music Group Report

The music group has continued to lead sung worship at the 10.30 services throughout the year. This year we were pleased to welcome back Carole Green on piano, to have some services led by Ali and Ros Loaker, and to introduce Kenny Bello-Ayoola and Jenny Barrett as occasional singers. A highlight was when the newly-formed youth band of Nick Barrett, Sarah Robb, Ben Salkield and Jonny Selley aided by (not-so-youthful) Peter Arnold took over to lead music in the New Day service in September.

The music teams each Sunday morning are still generally smaller in number than pre-COVID, and we are always interested in new musicians or singers joining us. Please speak to Phil Barrett or the Vicar if you think you might want to offer your talents!

Phil Barrett



Prayer Ministry Report

*Have we trials and temptations; is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer.*



Praying both together and on our own is the life blood of being a Christian because it's what connects us to our amazing God.

In addition to your individual prayers over the past year (and thank-you for praying!), our corporate praying together in 2022 focused on the Day of Prayer in early February, and the weekly Prayer Meetings held on Tuesday & Thursday mornings at 9am.

As we look journey through 2023, there is a growing desire to grow more corporate opportunities to pray together, as well as offering prayer after the services again. If you would like to be part of these or other occasions to pray, please do let Tim know!

Tim Robb

Life Group Report

Life Groups exist to connect a small group of people both to each other and God. They help us grow in faith, whilst sharing life together. After all, Life stands for 'Living In Faith Encounters' – every time we meet together, our lives are enriched and we should be challenged to be more Christ like. As such, it is our vision that we are a church **of** Life (small) groups, rather than a church **with** Life Groups, where everyone is part of one!

Thank-you to everyone who has been part of a Life group during 2022 – the support they have been to so many has been much appreciated. Thank-you too, to David & Nanette Hesketh for their leadership up until mid 2022.

Looking ahead to 2023, it is our hope that the Life Groups will continue to grow, so do watch this space!

Tim Robb

Living In Faith Encounters

REAL Women Report

The ladies ministry restarted with 2 events last year starting with a coffee morning in September and then an afternoon tea in November. Both events were really well attended filling the church hall and show a heart for ladies getting together for fellowship, encouragement and laughter. A thought for the day and prayer was also shared at both events. We were so grateful for all the volunteers baking and helping on the day which was all part of the sharing and growing in friendship. A space we can comfortably come to and also invite friends.

We are currently praying about plans for further events this year allowing time for simply meeting together and growing in our accountability for each other. If you have a heart or passion for this ministry please speak to Kate Salkield.

1 John 3v18

Dear friends, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.

Catering Team Report

The Catering team have very much enjoyed using the new kitchen and equipping it as required,

Various events have been catered for during the past year including lunch after the APCM, welcome to new curate lunch, Harvest lunch, lunches for young families and special refreshments for the Jubilee. A trial of a monthly Lunch Club has just begun.

We are compiling a list of volunteers to help with the running of catering events eg people to lay tables, wash up, clear tables and help with food preparation – more volunteers are always welcome, please speak to a member of the catering team.

Gill Uings, Chris Harris, Frances Peppiatt, Carole Robson

Café on the Green Report

Cafe on the Green still offers a warm space for folk to come, relax and chat while enjoying home made scones made every week by Nanette. (Thank you Nanette) Each week is different as are the numbers.

This year has seen visits from the senior citizens with staff from the Hillings. Nanette held an impromptu mini service in the church one week where the folk joined in as much as they could with the Lord's Prayer. We have been able to pray for some of the folk too.

Every week there are three of us on hand to chat to our visitors. Myself, Nanette and Corrie. Once a month Frances Peppiatt comes to help too. The maintenance team pay us a visit once a month as do the creation care team and it is our joy to see them. They too enjoy the scones.

We have just had a new lady join us and really enjoys it.

We aim to create a warm, relaxing atmosphere where people can chat about anything they wish. A place to be themselves.

When appropriate we pray for them and hopefully show them the love of Jesus.

Thank you to Corrie and Nanette.

We look forward to the next step of our journey and for what God will do.

Barbara Jarvis

Craft Group Report

The Craft Group meet every Tuesday at 10.00am in the Church Hall and we have offered a warm welcome to new members who have arrived and said a sad farewell to some others.

We were very glad to be able to have a stall at the ESCA May Day celebration which had not been able to take place over the last two years due to the pandemic. During this time, we had not stopped crafting so had a lot of stock which was much appreciated. We again provided items for the Easter sale and the Christmas Fayre.

We all created 'hats' for the Innocent smoothie bottles which Age Concern benefit from when the 'hatted' bottles are sold. Once again, we were able to provide hats, gloves and scarves for the Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes, Christmas cards for Littlehey Prison and to help Tim pack Christmas hampers for local families.

We are always happy to welcome new members and you don't need any craft skills to join the group as we are happy to share our expertise whilst we chat.

Jane Gogarty

Pastoral Care Team Report

This was the first full year after the ending of Covid pandemic lockdowns. It was a year of returning to "normal" with one or two innovations.

The **statistics** speak for themselves:

Meal provision at home	11
Visits to provide Home Holy Communion	11
Texts, emails, letters	10
Provision of Transport	9
Phone calls	8
Visits to provide respite	6
Visits for other reasons	5
Care Home Worship	4
Hospital Visit	1
Bereavement Tea	1
Total	66

The team of eleven people remains unchanged:

Rev'd Tim Robb – leader Roger & Frances Peppiatt – coordinators
Rev'd George & Mrs Marilyn Cobb Pam Branch David Ferris
Brenda & Ian Ashford Sue Crook Nanette Hesketh

Team meetings took place on 20th January, 17th June (via Zoom) and 20th October. We have set up a small WhatsApp group to coordinate **supply of meals at home** when required.

The pilot Bereavement Tea took place in the church hall on 23rd June. Invitation had been sent out to 64 families whose loved one's funerals had been taken by either Tim or George. About ten people attended and were greeted by Tim, George and members of the team, with a hot drink and cakes. Useful conversations were had. It has been decided to repeat the event on 4th June 2023.

Resumption of Care Home Services – this began with George taking a service on 4th June at Nelson Lodge to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. David Ferris has taken the lead in organising regular services at both Nelson Lodge and The Hillings, particularly in Advent. These have been well supported by the team (and other members of the church) and by residents & staff of the care homes.

In the early part of the year, Pam continued organising **delivery of printed church news sheets** to those unable to get out, partly due to the pandemic. This reached a natural conclusion and was discontinued.

On behalf of the team, Roger put together an **information sheet about local transport** for those who struggle to use ordinary transport to attend medical appointments etc.

Roger is most grateful to Tim for his leadership and the team for their willingness to respond to need.

Our next team meeting is in person at 2:15pm 9th March 2023.

Roger Peppiatt



World Mission Report

In 2022 we said goodbye to Chris and Elaine Hurst from the Wycliffe Bible Translators in Mexico as they decided to retire. Chris is still active with the bible translation team in Mexico but felt they didn't need St Mary's financial support any longer. We were all lucky enough to see Chris during his stay late last year and continue to pray for him and Elaine as they start a new chapter in their lives.

Our current partners are:

Allen and Litsa McClymont at OMF International
Teresha and Israel Karahukayo at Triumph Heart, (formally known as Spring of Hope) in Uganda
ACTIOS
Dr Mano Emmanuel at Colombo Theological Seminary in Sri Lanka

Due to the church suffering financially during the pandemic, we had to make cuts to our giving during 2022 but as the church re-builds, hopefully the budget will increase enabling us to give more.

News letters continued to be received and can be found on the Mission Board at the back of church. Please take time to read these and keep up to date with what our partners are doing.

We held two Missionary Sunday Services during 2022. Our first Mission Sunday Service of the year took place on 6th March. We welcomed Anita White to speak from Global Care. We were also able to show a short video from Chris Hurst outlining the work they had been doing with the Wycliffe Bible Translators in which he also thanked us for our support over the years. On 10th July we had a visit from Teresha Karahukayo, one of our partners, from Triumph Heart, Uganda. Teresha and her husband Israel, are starting a new venture creating a nutritional porridge to help the disabled and poorest children in their region. They have also changed the name of their charity to Triumph Heart. It was lovely to see and spend time with Teresha and three of her children and to hear their news.

Food.Gives was the charity we supported as a church for our Harvest Festival. We filled boxes with non perishable goods to send to persecuted Christians around the world.

We also took part again in Operation Christmas Child and generously filled many shoeboxes. The boxes from St Mary's were destined for Ukraine.

I hope you have all noticed that we have a smart new Notice Board on which we can display the latest missionary news and events coming up. Please take time to have a look.

Christmas cards to our partners were sent again at Christmas, signed by church members with words of encouragement and best wishes.

Things to look forward to in 2023 are more Missionary Sunday Services and a visit from Mano in Sri Lanka who is hoping to return to the UK.

Thank you all for your continuing support and prayers.

Julia Chapman



Buildings and Fabric Team Report

The Church and Hall buildings continue to require attention and with limited financial resources can be a challenge in deciding priorities.

Some urgent tasks this year were the relocation of the external light on the North side and repairs to the Tower roof and West End window. Also, the lights in church were beginning to fail, so the decision was taken to replace them with LED lighting, using as much of the original installation as possible. There is some work outstanding which is scheduled to be completed early in 2023.

The Vicar's vestry is due for a make-over this year to make it more welcoming for use by the Sunday School.

The M-Team (Maintenance) have once again had a busy year undertaking regular maintenance tasks around the church and hall buildings, keeping the church safe, secure and in reasonable condition. We also have responsibility for coordinating the annual inspections and servicing of equipment such as fire extinguishers, boiler servicing and electrical safety checks.

A big thank you to all who have volunteered and helped each month, and with a willing attitude has made the morning a more enjoyable experience. We are always keen to welcome anyone who would like to join in and help using their practical skills. Don't worry, we have tasks to suit all abilities!

Although these activities are important and serious, the morning can be a time of good fellowship and getting to know one another. And of course, there is always time for tea or coffee and a scone, thanks to the Cafe on The Green team.

Gavin Chapman



Audio Visual Report

The AudioVisual team has consisted of three members who provide the visual displays for the church services. We use a dedicated laptop with a program called Easy Worship which is configured for each service.

The 10:30 morning service is usually live streamed online with the loyal help of two cameramen who ensure the right picture is broadcast.

Sometimes technical issues don't quite go as planned and require some prompt action at the last minute! Anyway, often matters are resolved just in time. A big thank you to all the team for your loyal service.

We are very keen to welcome newcomers, so if you would like to get involved with serving on the AV team do get in touch with one of us. We'll happily explain everything and support you until you are comfortable to run a service on your own.

Wednesday Welcome Report

'Wednesday Welcome seems to continue to grow in popularity with membership in the mid-thirties, largely due, I think, to the fact it is a very nice mix of people who genuinely make everyone feel welcome.

Besides meeting at 3pm on a Wednesday with tea and cake, we have a mix of activities and speakers - Dogs Trust was very popular, our Corrie sharing her African adventure, our Karen's poetry, the police, the U3A Ukulele band for a sing along, discussions and games amongst other things.

Besides the meetings in the church hall we also had a number of off-site events such as a cream tea at Roxton Garden centre, lunches at the Barley Mow pub, lunch and afternoon tea at the Stables Christian centre and an afternoon cruise on the John Bunyan Boat including home-made cakes!

We need to thank ESCA and a local company for making these possible with donations.

A number of new experiences are planned for 2023 and we look forward to Welcoming new friends at 3pm on a Wednesday in the church hall.'



Mike Gilham



Wednesday Welcome

You are invited to join us
on Wednesdays 3 - 4pm

at St Mary's Church Hall, Eaton Socon.

An hour of friendship, tea, cake, quizzes,
guest speakers, celebrating birthdays and
special occasions.

For details, contact Mike Gilham
Mob: 07899 856 636

All Welcome!

Foodbank Report

During 2022, St Neots Foodbank has continued to be very busy, trying to meet the needs of those in our community in need. For the first 8 months, all food parcels were delivered, as they had been during the pandemic. However, during the summer, the trustees decided to reopen some of the distribution centres. The centre based at the URC opened in August on Tuesday and Friday mornings and Berkeley Street Methodist Church on Thursday afternoons. In October, the Friday session transferred back to St Mary's and is here permanently. The fourth session which used to be at Open Door Church is still to open.

At St Mary's we have 18 volunteers on the weekly rota, 4 on each week. Exactly half of them worship at St Mary's. We store food in the Music Vestry as we did pre-pandemic, but in new more robust crates (mouse-proof!). On average we are distributing about 4 crates of food each Friday. Usually, we are joined by a debt counsellor from Love's Farm Community Money Action, who is able to help our visitors with financial issues. Visitors are offered Waitrose vouchers for fresh fruit, vegetables & eggs and a Household Support Grant (if they have not had one before). Visitors who volunteer the fact that they have run out of gas/electricity or are close to doing so are offered additional help.

The foodbank has a contract with Citizens Advice for them to provide help for our visitors particularly with Benefits. This is proving very useful.

We stopped the fresh fruit, vegetables and eggs boxes scheme (which Frances and I did from our garage) in the summer to coincide with the opening of the distribution centres.

I stood down from my role as the St Mary's Church trustee on the foodbank board when my 6-year term of office had run its course in the summer. I have been replaced by David Gill.

Our thanks are due to the volunteers who keep the Friday sessions going and all of you who donate food and money.

Roger Peppiatt



Men's Ministry Report

Unfortunately the Men's group struggled to get going again after the lock down period and after the last breakfast in May 2022 it was decided to put on hold for the time being.

We are hoping to resurrect a men's group in some form, possibly recommencing in the Autumn of 2023.

Bellringing Report

This year has been a more optimistic one for the bellringers. Most of our previous ringers have returned to ring the bells but we have lost a couple due to ill health or because they have new priorities in their lives since the pandemic. We have also had a ready-made ringer join us from the congregation and are currently teaching his son to ring and have had a few enquiries from people who are interested in learning to ring in the future.

We are ringing the bells most Sundays for the 10.30am service but the number of bells we are able to ring remains inconsistent.

The practice night on a Wednesday has taken place most weeks since the turn of the year and once again we have visitors from outside the area joining us.

This year there have been an increased number of Ringers Tours wanting to ring our bells as they are considered to be the best in the area. A few Peal Bands have also visited (the bellringing equivalent of a marathon.) Couples began to request bells to be rung on their Wedding Day last summer too as restrictions were lifted. We have been able to fulfil all these requests, thanks to our friends from Bedford who have helped out when needed.

In May there is a campaign to ring every bell in the country for the King's Coronation. We are hoping to ring all 8 bells at Eaton Socon so we can play our part in achieving this.

Last year we were not able to teach new recruits but this has now changed. If you are a lapsed ringer, we would be delighted to see you, particularly on a Sunday morning. If you would be interested in seeing how we ring the bells, with a view to joining us, please contact us as we will be really pleased to welcome you to the tower.

Michael Matthews (Tower Captain)



Book Club Report

The Tea and Biscuits Book Club still meets, on Mondays 1.00pm to 2.00pm, every six weeks in the Church hall. Over the years we've had a good selection of books, supplied by the library. Most we've enjoyed but some we haven't and it's sometimes split between those who've enjoyed the book and those who haven't. The good thing is that it encourages you to read books you normally wouldn't choose. We have a good time discussing the book we've just read, drinking tea or coffee and biscuits (sometimes cake).

Our numbers are down at the moment to five, soon to be four, so we'd be happy to hear from anyone who'd like to join us. You'll be very welcome. Please speak to

Margaret Lygoe or Carole Robson.



Churches Together in St Neots (CTSN)

2022 was the year when churches lifted most Covid restrictions. The effects of Covid remain and churches have recovered in varied ways. Some continue with streamed services and resources as well as in person services. Technology remains a means of connecting with church members and the wider community.

Rev Ray Porter, from our church, continues as Chair until our AGM in September 2023 when a replacement will be needed. Five other church members, from various other churches, formed the Working Group reporting to the AGM with me acting as Secretary.

Ministers meet on a regular basis but there has been little connection with CTSN in the last year.

Churches Christmas Service dates and times were printed in Think Local as were Easter services. It is hoped that the Christian Performing Arts (CPA) group will be producing something for Easter on the Market Square in 2023.

The World Day of Prayer was celebrated at Berkley Street Methodist Church and was also well attended by members of other churches.

No Lent groups were shared across churches in 2022. No plans for this are in place as yet for 2023.

The warm clothing collection at our church was well supported and remains open to other churches to do the same.

The St Neots churches 'Warm Spaces' was set up by Ministers and publicised in the press. More recently 'Youth for Christ' has been involved with a number of churches in providing after school spaces for secondary age youngsters to meet, snack and do homework in a Christian setting.

The faith community is listed in the online www.stneotsdirectory.com

Thursday Food, the Bereavement Friendship group, Men's Forum and the Care Centre & Tree of Hope shop at the URC all come under the CTSN organisation. Other Christian activity in the town such as ACTIOS and Foodbank operate independently. Men's Forum meets at Berkley Street and has also linked with the Men's Breakfast group at SMES.

Pastoral Care is an important element of church activity and alongside this a couple of our churches are setting up Community Workers.

A WAVE event took place at the URC recently - the second of these, the first being at Berkley Street. WAVE (We're All Valued Equally) for Change encourages & enables places where people with and without learning disabilities can enjoy mixing together and growing in friendship.

The short history of CTSN has been produced and is available in churches.

The CTSN website is updated monthly and this is the main information point for lay members. www.churchestogetherinstneots.org.uk

CTSN remains a means of engagement between churches when required and when community benefits can be achieved.

Pam Branch SMES (CTSN representative & CTSN Secretary) January 2023

Deanery Synod Report

Deanery Synod has met three times during 2022 in March, July and October. There is always a business element to the meetings, such as Finance, but what follows here are other elements of the meetings.

The March meeting was held at Cople Church when Rev'd Lynne Sandle, Vicar, presided at a Eucharist Service.

We had a report from General Synod given by Sheila Bissell who was our newly appointed link to General Synod.

It was reported that Rev'd Matt Phillips would be leaving the Dunton Benefice on 27th March.

The Rural Dean informed Synod members that the suspension of the Riversmeet Benefice was being lifted and that he would be installed soon as Rector.

A reminder was given about the visit of David White, Diocesan Secretary, to the Deanery and members encouraged to come to Sandy to meet him.

In July, we met at Old Warden Village Hall when our speaker was Keith Williams from an organisation called Good News for Everyone. He explained the history of this new organisation and that it had been created as part of a separation from the Gideon Bible Society. It is entirely UK based and endeavours to be very diverse in its membership. He spoke at length about their remit which included schools, prisons, other organisations and working at street level offering pupils and adults free copies of their publications, a range of which he brought with him for members to peruse in the refreshment break. He touched on some really moving stories of the depths of anguish some people had reached but then, with encouragement, picked up a bible and for many their lives were transformed. They are entirely self-funded and rely on donations and it is possible to join support groups.

Members were reminded about the need to submit nominations for the 2023 Deanery Project.

Our October meeting was held at St Andrew's Church in Biggleswade when we welcomed Ruth Janes, treasurer of the Malawi Orphan Fund through whom our Deanery Project (Home of Hope in Malawi) money was being channelled. She, with her husband and some other supporters, had made a recent visit to Malawi and was pleased to give us an update on the home which was doing well despite economic pressures.

The Rural Dean presented her with a cheque for £2,000.00 which had been raised over an extended period of time due to the pandemic.

We had a report from General Synod given by Sheila Bissell.

There was only one nomination for Deanery Project 2023 which was for Chums Charity and specifically The Bereavement and Non- bereavement Trauma Services dealing with children and young people. This had been proposed by Sandy and Julia Bickerdike gave a presentation on behalf of the parish. She used a real Case Study of a young girl suffering anxiety and other mental health issues to highlight the invaluable work Chums were doing. It was both interesting and quite moving.

Synod members were asked to approve a transfer of Rev'd Liz Lavelle (Dunton Benefice) to represent Biggleswade Deanery on Diocesan Synod.

Graham Daniels

Synod Secretary

8th February 2023

Diocesan Synod Report



There were three meetings of the Diocesan Synod in 2022 in March, June and October.

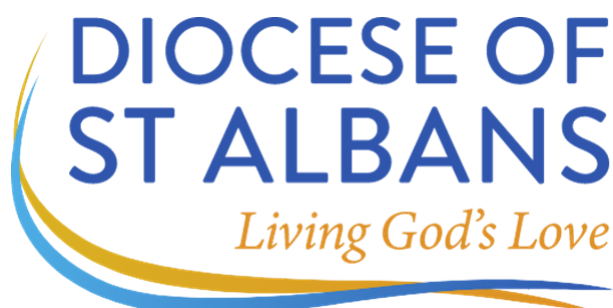
In the March Synod, Bishop Alan spoke about the challenges facing the church as things began to return to normal after the pandemic both spiritual and financial and the need to encourage all people wherever they are on this journey. Bishop Michael spoke about the emerging crisis in the Ukraine and the rapid response being put in place to support the taking in of Ukrainian refugees. Bishop Richard spoke of the Racial Justice

Action Group and the action plan they have been working on to counter racial and religious hate acts. An update was given on Living in Love and Faith and a presentation was made by the Diocesan Environment Officer about the policy and action plans they are working on towards the Diocese achieving the Bronze Award. Finally, the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance gave a report on the effects of the pandemic on the Diocesan finances and the work they were doing to mitigate this and the long-term effects of the reduction of funds.

In the June Synod, Bishop Alan spoke of the upcoming Lambeth Conference and reflected on the fact that there will be people attending from very different cultures and experiences. This should be an opportunity to listen and learn rather than be daunted by these differences. Bishop Michael gave a further update on the work of the Environment Group, the Policy and action plan. A report was given on the work being carried out on Clergy Wellbeing which included the feedback from a survey of clergy that had been carried out. Bishop Richard spoke about the challenges and opportunities that were being presented by the considerable amount of new housing development that was taking place in various parts of the diocese, The Annual Reports from various boards were presented and accepted and a further update on the financial position of the diocese was presented.

In the October Synod, Bishop Alan spoke about the energy crisis and the response from many churches and the support that the diocese could give to the provision of warm spaces. A further presentation was made by the Environment Group on the progress it had made with the action plan and how they were beginning to make this more detailed. A statement was made of the financial position of the diocese and how this was affecting the budget planning for next year. A presentation was made on the Reaching New People Impact Report indicating where there had been successes. The effect of the pandemic on this project was noted and how a New Pioneer Strategy was formed. Work continues on developing online support and resources for new initiatives.

Jane Gogarty



CHARITIES COMMISSION FINANCIAL REPORTS



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

PCC of ST MARY'S EATON SOCON			Charity No (if any)	1130537
Annual accounts for the period				
Period start date	Jan-22	To	Period end date	Dec-22

Section A Statement of financial activities

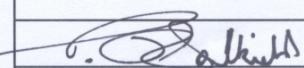
Recommended categories by activity	Guidance Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year funds
		£	£	£	£	£
		F01	F02	F03	F04	F05
Incoming resources (Note 3)						
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	S01	137,676	8,328	-	146,004	171,870
Charitable activities	S02	12,772	363	-	13,135	5,456
Other trading activities	S03	6,505	-	-	6,505	8,187
Investments		605	-	-	605	24
Separate material item of income	S05	-	-	-	-	-
Other	S06	-	-	-	-	1,565
Total	S07	157,558	8,691	-	166,249	187,102
Resources expended (Note 6)						
Expenditure on:						
Mission & Charitable Giving		5,525	-	-	5,525	9,843
Parish Share		76,748	-	-	76,748	74,849
Ministry	S08	10,020	750	-	10,770	14,155
Youth Work		3,017	3,260	-	6,277	803
Building Costs	S09	32,153	7,129	-	39,282	50,359
Fundraising		4,260	481	-	4,741	1,863
Administration	S11	12,495	1,388	-	13,883	3,544
Staff Costs		26,073	301	-	26,374	24,600
Print, Post & Stationery		3,697	-	-	3,697	4,349
Depreciation		-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities		-	-	-	-	-
Separate material item of expense	S10	-	-	-	-	-
Other		-	-	-	-	-
Total	S12	173,988	13,309	-	187,297	184,365
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)	S13	- 17,035	- 4,618	-	- 21,653	2,713
Net gains/(losses) on investments	S14	605	-	-	605	24
Net income/(expenditure)	S15	- 16,430	- 4,618	-	- 21,048	2,737
Extraordinary items	S16	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers between funds	S17	-	-	-	-	-
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Gains and losses on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use	S18	-	-	-	-	-
Other gains/(losses)	S19	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	S20	- 16,430	- 4,618	-	- 21,048	2,737
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward	S21	38,160	29,544	-	67,704	64,967
Total funds carried forward	S22	21,730	24,926	-	46,656	67,704

Section B

Balance sheet

		Guidance Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total this year	Total last year
			£	£	£	£	£
			F01	F02	F03	F04	F05
Fixed assets							
Intangible assets	(Note 15)	B01	-	-	-	-	-
Tangible assets	(Note 14)	B02	-	-	-	-	-
Heritage assets	(Note 16)	B03	-	-	-	-	-
Investments	(Note 17)	B04	-	-	-	-	-
Total fixed assets		B05	-	-	-	-	-
Current assets							
Stocks	(Note 18)	B06	-	-	-	-	-
Debtors	(Note 19)	B07	2,186	-	-	2,186	5,788
Investments	(Note 17.4)	B08	-	-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	(Note 24)	B09	57,581	-	-	57,581	66,365
Total current assets		B10	59,767	-	-	59,767	72,153
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(Note 20)	B11	13,111	-	-	13,111	4,449
Net current assets/(liabilities)		B12	46,656	-	-	46,656	67,704
Total assets less current liabilities		B13	46,656	-	-	46,656	67,704
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	(Note 20)	B14	-	-	-	-	-
Provisions for liabilities		B15	-	-	-	-	-
Total net assets or liabilities		B16	46,656	-	-	46,656	67,704
Funds of the Charity							
Endowment funds	(Note 27)	B17	-	-	-	-	-
Restricted income funds	(Note 27)	B18		24,926		24,926	29,544
Unrestricted funds		B19	21,730		-	21,730	38,160
Revaluation reserve		B20				-	
Total funds		B21	21,730	24,926	-	46,656	67,704

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval dd/mm/yyyy
	T. SALKIELD	23/2/2023
	DEN RIMMER	23/02/2023

Note 3 Analysis of income

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year
	Analysis				£	£
Donations and legacies:	Donations and gifts	108,787	5,523	-	114,310	129,246
	Gift Aid	24,425	1,050	-	25,475	26,995
	Legacies	-	-	-	-	-
	General grants provided by government/other charities	1,980	600	-	2,580	15,008
	Membership subscriptions and sponsorships which are in substance donations	-	-	-	-	-
	Donated goods, facilities and services	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	2,484	1,155	-	3,639	621
	Total	137,676	8,328	-	146,004	171,870
Charitable activities:	Fundraising Events	6,736	363	-	7,099	1,462
	Church Hall Lettings	6,036	-	-	6,036	3,994
		-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	12,772	363	-	13,135	5,456
Other trading activities:	Wedding and Funeral Fees	6,505	-	-	6,505	8,187
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	6,505	-	-	6,505	8,187
Income from investments:	Interest income	605	-	-	605	24
	Dividend income	-	-	-	-	-
	Rental and leasing income	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	605	-	-	605	24
Separate material item of income:		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-
Other:	Conversion of endowment funds into income	-	-	-	-	-
	Gain on disposal of a tangible fixed asset held for charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-
	Gain on disposal of a programme related investment	-	-	-	-	-
	Royalties from the exploitation of intellectual property rights	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	1,565
	Total	-	-	-	-	1,565
TOTAL INCOME		157,558	8,691	-	166,249	187,102

Other information:

All income in the prior year was unrestricted except for: (please provide description and amounts)

Donations and Gifts £26479; Gift Aid £5046; events £865; grants £5400 and £1565 refund VAT DCMS

Where any endowment fund is converted into income in the reporting period, please give the reason for the conversion.

--

Within the income items above the following items are material: (please disclose the nature, amount and any prior year amounts)

--

Note 6 **Analysis of expenditure**

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year
	Analysis				£	£
Expenditure on Ministry:	Staff Expenses	3,977	-	-	3,977	1,384
	Telephone	1,119	-	-	1,119	928
	Fellowship	367	-	-	367	76
	Pastoral	12	337	-	349	468
	Worship	1,254	76	-	1,330	8,819
	Services	1,916	-	-	1,916	1,774
	Refreshments	-	-	-	-	87
	Hall Hire	1,244	-	-	1,244	428
	Outreach	131	337	-	468	343
		-	-	-	-	-
	Total expenditure on Ministry	10,020	750	-	10,770	14,155
Expenditure on building/utilities	Building Maintenance	17,438	7,129	-	24,567	39,964
	Insurance	4,461	-	-	4,461	4,236
	Heat, Light, Water	9,867	-	-	9,867	5,782
	Cleaning	387	-	-	387	377
	Total expenditure on buildings/utilities	32,153	7,129	-	39,282	50,359
Expenditure on admin costs	IT	10,594	1,352	-	11,946	2,581
	Other Admin/courses	1,901	36	-	1,937	963
	architect fees/mgmt svcs	-	-	-	-	-
	Equipment purchases	-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	Total expenditure on Admin costs	12,495	1,388	-	13,883	3,544
Other	Mission & Charitable Giving	5,525	-	-	5,525	9,843
	Parish Share	76,748	-	-	76,748	74,849
	Youth Work	3,017	3,260	-	6,277	803
	Fundraising	4,260	481	-	4,741	1,863
	Staff Costs	26,073	301	-	26,374	24,600
	Print, Post & Stationery	3,697	-	-	3,697	4,349
	Depreciation	-	-	-	-	-
	Total other expenditure	119,320	4,042	-	123,362	116,307
Separate material item of expense		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		173,988	13,309	-	187,297	184,365

Other information:

Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Activity or programme	Activities undertaken directly	Grant funding of activities	Support Costs	Total this year	Total prior year
	£	£	£	£	£
Activity 1					
Activity 2					
Other					
Total					

Prior year expenditure on charitable activities can be analysed as follows:

Within the expenditure items above the following items are material: (please disclose the nature, amount and any prior year amounts)

Note 11 **Paid employees**

Please complete this note if the charity has any employees.

11.1 Staff Costs

	This year £	Last year £
Salaries and wages	26,180	24,499
Social security costs	-	-
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	194	101
Other employee benefits	-	-
Total staff costs	26,374	24,600

Please provide details of expenditure on staff working for the charity whose contracts are with and are paid by a related party

none

Please give details of the number of employees whose total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) fell within each band of £10,000 from £60,000 upwards. If there are no such transactions, please enter 'true' in the box provided.

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period of more than £60,000

none

Band	Number of employees
£60,000 to £69,999	
£70,000 to £79,999	
£80,000 to £89,999	
£90,000 to £99,999	
£100,000 to £109,999	

Please provide the total amount paid to key management personnel (includes trustees and senior management) for their services to the charity

11.2 Average head count in the year

The parts of the charity in which the employees work

	This year Number	Last year Number
Fundraising	-	-
Charitable Activities	-	-
Governance	-	-
Other	5	5
Total	5	5

11.3 Ex-gratia payments to employees and others (excluding trustees)

Please complete if an ex-gratia payment is made.

Please explain the nature of the payment

--

Please state the legal authority or reason for making the payment

--

Please state the amount of the payment (or value of any waiver of a right to an asset)

--

11.4 Redundancy payments

Please complete if any redundancy or termination payment is made in the period.

Total amount of payment

--

The nature of the payment (cash, asset etc.)

--

The extent of redundancy funding at the balance sheet date

--

Please state the accounting policy for any redundancy or termination payments

--

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 19 Debtors and prepayments

Please complete this note if the charity has any debtors or prepayments.

19.1 Analysis of debtors

Trade debtors
Prepayments and accrued income
Other debtors

Total

This year	Last year
£	£
0	325
2186	5463
0	0
2186	5788

Please complete 19.2 where a material debtor is recoverable more than a year after the reporting date.

19.2 Analysis of debtors recoverable in more than 1 year (included in debtors above)

Trade debtors
Prepayments and accrued income
Other debtors

This year	Last year
£	£
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
Total	-

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 20 **Creditors and accruals**

Please complete this note if the charity has any creditors or accruals.

20.1 Analysis of creditors

	Amounts falling due within one year		Amounts falling due after more than one year	
	This year £	Last year £	This year £	Last year £
Accruals for grants payable	-	-	-	-
Bank loans and overdrafts	-	-	-	-
Trade creditors	4,908	939	-	-
Payments received on account for contracts or performance-related grants	1,603	900	-	-
Accruals and deferred income	6,600	2,610	-	-
Taxation and social security	-	-	-	-
Other creditors	-	-	-	-
Total	13,111	4,449	-	-

Section C	Notes to the accounts	(cont)
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Note 24 **Cash at bank and in hand**

	This year £	Last year £
Short term cash investments (less than 3 months maturity date)	-	-
Short term deposits	46,620	46,015
Cash at bank and on hand	10,961	20,350
Other	-	-
Total	57,581	66,365

Section C Notes to the accounts (cont)

Note 27 Charity funds

27.1 Details of material funds held and movements during the CURRENT reporting period

Please give details of the movements of material individual funds in the reporting period together with a balancing figure for 'Other funds'. The 'Total funds' figure below should reconcile to 'Total funds' in the balance sheet.

** Key: PE - permanent endowment funds; EE - expendible endowment funds; R - restricted income funds, including special trusts, of the charity; and U - unrestricted funds*

Fund names	Type PE, EE R or UR *	Purpose and Restrictions	Fund balances brought forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains and losses £	Fund balances carried forward £
FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS	R		24,019	4,837	-	8,132	-	20,724
OUTREACH	R		1,589	560	-	337	-	1,812
YOUTH EVENTS	R		674	334	-	929	-	79
WORSHIP SUPPORT	R		421	465	-	76	-	810
CHURCH GROUPS	R		1,158	1,773	-	2,015	-	916
OTHER	R		1,683	722	-	1,820	-	585
	R						-	-
	R						-	-
	R						-	-
	R						-	-
	R						-	-
Other funds	N/a	N/a	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funds			29,544	8,691	-	13,309	-	24,926

Note 27 **Charity funds (cont)**

27.3 Transfers between funds

	Reason for transfer and where endowment is converted to income, legal power for its conversion	Amount
Between unrestricted and restricted funds		
Between endowment and restricted funds		
Between endowment and unrestricted funds		

27.4 Designated funds

Planned use	Purpose of the designation	Amount
future projects	fund set aside for a variety of future projects under feasibility study	4230

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

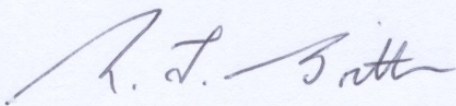
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

14 The Paddock
Eaton Ford
St Neots
Cambs
PE19 7SA

To Eaton Socon PCC

Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention 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 2011 Act and section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act and section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations have not been met or to which in my opinion attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Roger Brittain FCA

15-Feb-23