

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, BRENCHLEY

ANNUAL REPORT

AND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

OF THE

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

For the year ended 31 December 2023

Incumbent:

The Revd Campbell Paget
The Vicarage
8 Broad Oak
Brenchley
Kent TN12 7NN

Independent Examiner:

Mrs Geraldine Hughes
Diocese of Rochester
St Nicholas Church
Boley Hill
Rochester
Kent ME1 1SL

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, BRENCHLEY
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

Administrative information

All Saints' Church is situated in The High Street, Brenchley. It is part of the Paddock Wood area Deanery and the Diocese of Rochester, within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Vicarage, 8 Broad Oak, Brenchley, Kent TN12 7NN.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of All Saints' is a charity registered with the Charity Commission (No: 1130911).

Structure, governance and management

The function and purpose of the PCC is outlined in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules 2020. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and are then eligible to stand for election to the PCC.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC of All Saints' Brenchley has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd Richard Campbell Paget, to promote in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibilities for maintenance of the church building and churchyard. It is committed to enabling as many people as possible, in all age groups, to worship at All Saints'. It maintains an overview of worship to ensure provision of a range of church services to suit different tastes of worship, with an overall aim to adhere strictly to the message of the Gospel. All members of the congregation are encouraged to play a part in services and there is a rota for bible readers and leaders of intercessions.

The main activities of All Saints' PCC are the provision of church services, baptisms, weddings, funerals, youth and children's work, and the teaching of adults by way of regular home groups throughout the year. A report on the various activities undertaken at All Saints' is attached, each group or committee dealing with specific aspects of parish life.

All PCC members are jointly responsible for deciding how their funds are to be spent and are made aware of the liabilities involved in their role. They are required to be DBS checked and to undertake regular Safeguarding training.

PCC Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio, elected or co-opted by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules 2020. During the year, the following served as PCC members:

Incumbent: The Revd Campbell Paget *Chairman*

Wardens: Mr Robin Brooks
 Mrs Moira Tunstall

Representatives on the Deanery Synod:

Mr John Garthwaite
Miss Cherie Sargent

Elected members:

Mrs Penelope Lowe	(elected 2022)
Mr Duncan Norman	(elected 2022)
Mr Nicholas Woodcock	(re-elected 2022)
Mr Stephen Edler	(elected 2021)
Mrs Angela Boobyer	(re-elected 2023)
Mrs Diana Brooks	(re-elected 2023)
Mrs Thelma Cunningham	(re-elected 2023)
Mrs Sarah Thorpe	(re-elected 2023)
Sir Robert Akenhead	(re-elected 2023)
Miss Karen Maier	(re-elected 2023)
Mr Samuel Smithson	(re-elected 2023)
Mr Peter Westley	(elected 2023)

Secretary
Vice- Chairman

Mrs Julie Humphreys	(co-opted 2023)	<i>Treasurer</i>
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PCC Committees

The PCC operates as a body, meeting whenever considered necessary up to 10 times a year (usually excluding August and December) and through certain committees which may or may not co-opt members of the congregation and others to fulfil their tasks.

Standing Committee:

This is the only committee required by law. It consists of the Incumbent, Churchwardens, Treasurer and Secretary. It has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council.

Churchyard Committee

This attends to all matters relating to the maintenance and preservation of the churchyard.

Other Committees

These attend to various other aspects of the life of the church on an ad hoc basis.

Achievements and Performance

Church attendance

At 31st December 2023 there were 183 parishioners on the church electoral roll, 55 of whom were not resident within the parish. Since the 2023 APCM, 10 names were added and none removed. In terms of attendance, although modern social developments and Covid have had their effect on Sunday attendance, over 200 men, women and children attended our varied diet of services of worship at least once a month, of whom a significant number attend more often. Some 70 of these live within walking distance of the church and a further 30 also live in the parish. Throughout the first six months of 2023, services continued in their post-Covid norm with Campbell. After the beginning of July services continued with the support of Andy Cameron and visiting ministers. Some services were lay lead. Streaming continues and streamed services are viewed by a wide range of people. The 'baby and toddler service' met throughout the year. The church building remained open and this together with the well-maintained churchyard was greatly appreciated by many in the village.

Review of the year

In addition to the short meeting to appoint officers following the APCM, the full PCC met 9 times during 2023, with an average level of attendance of 72%. We have increasingly relied on Teams to enable members who would otherwise have been absent to attend. All PCC meetings were held inside the church. Where Committees met between meetings, minutes of their deliberations were received by the full PCC and discussed where necessary. Copies of the Minutes of each PCC meeting may be found in a folder on the Black Tomb by the North door. Members of the church family are warmly encouraged to keep abreast of these and to make their views known to either the Vicar or the Churchwardens. In his absence, through selection of ministers, Campbell ensured that the teaching of the Christian faith in its biblically orthodox form with its insights and challenges to contemporary personal, moral, and social issues, continued to be central to the life of the church.

The regular life of the church continued throughout 2023 with increasing levels of volunteers picking up the gaps left by Campbell's absence from July following major heart surgery. The church building has remained in a very good state under the watchful eye of Peter Westley. Aspects of the work identified in the last Quinquennial Inspection (which revealed that the church building is in a very good state of repair for a building of its great age) were undertaken. Maintaining an old building requires continual vigilance and ongoing work. The churchyard continued to be well-kept under the active supervision of Richard Beale who organised both contractors and volunteers to produce a very well-maintained churchyard.

We held open-air services in July, August and September, Harvest Festival, on Remembrance Sunday, and at Christmas with a Christingle Service held on Christmas Eve.

By the end of 2023, Ruth Parnell completed over 2 years here as our Youth-worker and Chaplain to our church school. She has worked enthusiastically, tirelessly and successfully in her role and is well-established and widely respected.

The Vicar, Churchwardens, and PCC have continued to explore a closer link with St. Luke, Matfield, but the actual shape of this cannot yet be determined (See the Churchwarden's Report).

We have continued to maintain our financial support for missionaries Father Kevin and Jen Cable (former members of our congregation) in Jaffa, Israel, from whom we receive regular updates. We donated half of the Christmas collection to Kevin and Jen's work generally and with refugees from the conflict in Gaza, and half locally to 'Nourish' food bank.

Many Church members continue to participate in extra-Church charitable activities and take on different roles within the Church, which are too many to mention individually, but serve to maintain a welcoming church family. The church website has recently been updated and we would encourage all to use it.

Financial Review

2023 was a fairly difficult year financially for the PCC. Income has decreased while we continue to see expenditure increase.

Income on the **General Unrestricted Fund** was £111,165, against expenditure of £124,607. From the resulting net loss, the PCC then made decisions regarding the need to set aside **Designated Funds** for various projects or purposes at the PCC's discretion. Set out below are the transfers to these Designated Funds at the end of 2023, leaving overall a reduction of £11,314 on the General Fund. Closing balance: £3,027.

The Church Repair Fund - Here, we transfer £1,600 each year to a saving plan with the Diocese, intended to help budget with repairs. Closing balance: £3,999.

The Vicarage Redecoration Fund - As it remains unclear on the plan for the Vicarage, we have reduced the Vicarage Repair Fund by £3,000. Closing balance: £7,000.

The Web Services Fund - This was established in 2020 to fund the potential future costs of installing equipment to broadcast services audio-visually from the church over the internet. To date, this has taken place successfully without the need for costly equipment. This Fund will be retained for now, however. Closing balance: £4,000.

Mission Partners Fund - £3,000 has been transferred here to give a closing balance of £3,000 which is intended to be paid over the course of 2024 in line with the PCC's desire to support Reverend Kevin and Jennifer Cable in their call to rebuild and minister from the historic St Peter's Church in Jaffa, Israel.

Youthwork Fund - The Youth-worker position is vital to the local and church community, so to protect the employment for a meaningful time, we must keep a sufficient fund. We received a small donation of £350 towards this Fund. Closing balance: £21,050.

Then there are then a number of **Restricted Funds** which, unlike the Designated Funds, can only be used according to the wishes of those donating funds.

Churchyard Fund - Through a number of successful fund-raising activities during the year, £3,941 was raised for this Fund, against expenditure of £5,128. Closing balance: £970.

Friends Fund - This relates specifically to the maintenance of the Church for the benefit of the village and surrounding area as a whole. £2,275 was raised during the year, with expenditure of £5,197. Closing balance: £1,304.

Mission Fund - £3,403 was collected and intended to pay out over the course of 2024 to various charitable causes, including the PCC's selected Christmas Charities, and the Children's Society.

Hardship Fund - During 2023, £5,664 was donated towards those suffering through hardship within the community. Donations of £4,559 were received during the year. Closing balance: £0.

In total, our charitable giving for 2023, including amounts given as local hardship payments, was £12,067. This represents 10% of our total unrestricted income.

Finally, there are three **Endowment Funds**. The underlying capital investment saw investment gain of £6,302 during 2023. Closing balance: £73,286.

Looking ahead to 2024, the PCC's finances have the potential to become strained unless income can be increased or expenditure can be reduced. A notable proportion of our income is still received from a relatively small and decreasing number of generous benefactors. This cannot be relied upon indefinitely. During 2023, we saw a gain of £6,302 on the Endowment Funds but this cannot be guaranteed in 2024. We must also factor in the increase in energy costs and general increases in costs across all services. Gardening services have also increased for 2024 to £5,500 per year and we must factor in the cost to trim the Yew Trees of £4,500.

On a more positive note, the recent informal buildings inspection indicated that the church is generally in a satisfactory condition. We should still focus our efforts on increasing regular giving donations wherever possible.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the PCC to hold between two and six months' expenditure in free resources. It is estimated that the Church's average general expenditure is in the region of £10,500 per month. The current level of free reserves (£41,682 at 31.12.23) represents four months of average expenditure.

Approved by the PCC on 15th April 2024 and signed on their behalf by the Churchwardens:

Robt Bunting
M. T. D. Ball.

All Saints' Church Brenchley

Report and Accounts

of the

Parochial Church Council

Year Ended 31st December 2023

Accrual Accounts using SORP 2015

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds	TOTAL FUNDS 2023 £	TOTAL FUNDS 2022 £
Income and endowments							
<i>Voluntary income</i>	2a	107,910	350	14,628		122,888	133,474
<i>Activities for generating funds</i>	2b						
<i>Investment income</i>	2c	636	492			1,128	696
<i>Church activities</i>	2d	2,618				2,618	5,519
<i>Other incoming resources</i>	2e						
		111,164	842	14,628		126,634	139,689
Expenditure							
<i>Church activities</i>	3a	123,952	4,390	19,392		147,732	137,516
<i>Raising funds</i>	3b	655				655	95
<i>Other expenditure</i>	3c						
Total expenditure		124,607	4,390	19,392		148,387	137,611
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains		(13,442)	(3,548)	(4,764)		(21,753)	2,078
Net gains on investments					6,302	6,302	(8,937)
Net income/(expenditure)		(13,442)	(3,548)	(4,764)	6,302	(15,451)	(6,859)
Transfers between funds		3,120	(6,225)	3,105			
Net movement in funds		(10,322)	(9,773)	(1,659)	6,302	(15,451)	(6,859)
Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2023		13,349	48,822	3,932	66,984	133,088	139,948
Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2023		3,027	39,049	2,273	73,286	117,635	133,088

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

**PRIOR YEAR STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR COMPARATIVE PURPOSES**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds	TOTAL FUNDS 2022 £
Income and endowments						
<i>Voluntary income</i>	2a	118,235	0	15,240		133,474
<i>Activities for generating funds</i>	2b	0	0	0		0
<i>Investment income</i>	2c	633	63	0		696
<i>Church activities</i>	2d	5,519	0	0		5,519
<i>Other incoming resources</i>	2e	0	0	0		0
		124,387	63	15,240		139,689
Expenditure						
<i>Church activities</i>	3a	108,319	10,474	18,723		137,516
<i>Raising funds</i>	3b	95				95
<i>Other expenditure</i>	3c		0			0
Total expenditure		108,414	10,474	18,723	0	137,611
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains		15,973	(10,411)	(3,484)		2,078
Net gains on investments					(8,937)	(8,937)
Net income/(expenditure)		15,973	(10,411)	(3,484)	(8,937)	(6,859)
Transfers between funds		(17,660)	16,600	1,060		0
Net movement in funds		(1,688)	6,189	(2,424)	(8,937)	(6,859)
Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2022		15,040	42,632	6,355	75,921	139,948
Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2022		13,352	48,821	3,932	66,984	133,088

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
		£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	5	-	-
Investments	6	73,286	66,984
Total fixed assets		<u>73,286</u>	<u>66,984</u>
Stock - Memorial kerbstones		2,045	1,184
Debtors	7	1,500	8,020
Short term deposits		12,132	10,208
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>36,855</u>	<u>51,202</u>
		52,532	70,614
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	<u>(8,183)</u>	<u>(4,510)</u>
Net current assets		<u>44,349</u>	<u>66,104</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>117,635</u>	<u>133,088</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	8		
NET ASSETS		<u><u>117,635</u></u>	<u><u>133,088</u></u>
Funds	9		
Endowment funds	10	73,286	66,984
Restricted funds	10	2,273	3,932
Designated Funds	10	39,049	48,822
Unrestricted funds	10	3,027	13,349
		<u><u>117,635</u></u>	<u><u>133,088</u></u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 15th April 2024 and signed on its behalf

Rob S D A S Hurdunball
Warden Warden

Chairman

Treasurer

Humphreys

The accompanying notes form a part of these financial statements.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1. Accounting policies

a Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 together with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP (2015).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for the valuation of investment assets which are shown at market value. The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body, nor those which are informal gatherings of church members.

b Funds

Funds held by the PCC are:

Unrestricted funds - general funds which can be used for PCC ordinary purposes

Designated funds - monies set aside by the PCC out of unrestricted funds for specific future purposes or projects.

Restricted funds - a) income from trusts or endowments which may be expended only on those restricted objects provided in the terms of the trust or bequest; b) donations or grants received for a specific object or invited by the PCC for a specific object. The funds may only be expended on the specific object for which they were given. Any balance remaining unspent at the end of the year is carried forward as a balance on that fund.

Endowment funds - funds the capital of which must be maintained; only income arising from the investment of the endowment may be used, either as restricted or unrestricted funds, depending on the purpose set out in the terms of the original endowment

c Incoming resources

All incoming resources are accounted for gross.

Voluntary income

Collections are recognised when received.

Planned giving receivable is recognised only when received.

Income tax recoverable on Gift Aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised.

Grants and legacies are recognised when receipt by the PCC is probable.

Income from investments

Dividends are accounted for when due and payable. Interest entitlements are accounted for as they accrue.

All other income

All other income is recognised when it is receivable.

Gains and losses on investments

Realised gains are recognised when the investments are sold.

Unrealised gains and losses are accounted for on revaluation on 31 December.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

d ***Expenditure and Liabilities***

Resources expended are accounted for on an accruals basis and are accounted for gross. Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal obligation and settlement is probable and quantifiable.

Grants

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded where the award creates a binding obligation on the PCC.

Church Activities

The diocesan parish offer is accounted for when paid. Any parish offer unpaid at 31 December is provided for in these accounts as an operational (though not a legal) liability and is shown as a creditor in the balance sheet.

e **Fixed Assets**

Tangible fixed assets

Consecrated and beneficed property of any kind is excluded from the accounts by s.10(2) of the Charities Act 2011.

Movable church furnishing held by the Rector and Churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal, are accounted as inalienable property unless consecrated. They are listed in the church's inventory which can be inspected. For inalienable property acquired prior to 1 January 2006 there is insufficient cost information available and therefore such assets are not valued in the accounts. Individual items acquired since 1 January 2006 have been capitalised in the accounts and depreciated over their useful economic life (see below).

All expenditure on consecrated or beneficed buildings and individual items costing under £1000 are written off in the year they were incurred.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated to write down the cost of tangible fixed assets, excluding freehold properties, over their expected useful lives. The rates generally applicable are:

Fixtures and fittings	25% straight line
Computer equipment	25% straight line

No depreciation is provided on freehold property as it is the PCC's policy to maintain these assets in a continual state of sound repair. The useful economic life of these assets is so long and residual values so high that any depreciation would not be material. These assets will be subject to annual impairment reviews. Provision will be made if there has been any permanent diminution in value.

Investments

Investments are stated at market value at the balance sheet date.

f **Current Assets**

Amounts owing to the PCC at 31 December in respect of fees, rents or other income are shown as debtors less provision for amounts that may prove uncollectible.

Short-term deposits include cash held on deposit either with the CBF Church of England Funds, or at the bank.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRECHLEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

2 Income from

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Churchyard Restricted Fund £	Restricted Mission Fund £	Other Restricted Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Churchyard Restricted Fund £	Restricted Mission Fund £	Other Restricted Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2022 £
a Voluntary income												
Gift Aid - Bank	46,222					46,222	50,993					50,993
Gift Aid - Envelopes												
Other planned giving	1,640					1,640	3,371					3,371
Collections												
Church boxes	2,189					2,189	1,882					1,882
One-off gift aid gifts	13,500					13,500	28,500					28,500
Donations and appeals	10,607	350	3,941	3,403	7,284	25,585	6,372		5,482	2,483	7,000	21,337
Charitable Giving Collections												
Gift Aid - tax recoverable	21,752					21,752	15,117				275	15,392
Grants	12,000					12,000	10,500					10,500
Legacies							1,500					1,500
	107,910	350	3,941	3,403	7,284	122,888	118,235		5,482	2,483	7,275	133,474
b Activities for generating funds												
Fundraising - General												
Fundraising - Churchyard												
c Investment income												
Endowment Income	636					636	633					633
Bank and building society interest		492				492		63				63
	636	492				1,128	633	63				696
d Income from Church Activities												
Fees from weddings, funerals etc	2,618					2,618	5,519					5,519
	2,618					2,618	5,519					5,519
e Other incoming resources												
Furlough Grants												
Other incoming resources												
Total income	111,164	842	3,941	3,403	7,284	126,634	124,387	63	5,482	2,483	7,275	139,689

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

3 Resources expended

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Churchyard Fund £	Restricted Mission Fund £	Other Restricted Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Churchyard Fund £	Restricted Mission Fund £	Other Restricted Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2022 £
a Church Activities												
Missionary and charitable giving:	20	3,000		3,403	5,664	12,087	20	3,000		2,483	6,616	12,119
Ministry costs:												
Diocesan Offer	57,316					57,316	52,408					52,408
Working expenses	7,477					7,477	7,480					7,480
Vicarage expenses	4,742					4,742	4,571					4,571
Youthworker Salary	21,394					21,394	18,944					18,944
Youthwork Expenses	1,510					1,510	1,081					1,081
Other ministry costs	2,060					2,060						
Church running expenses												
Utilities and cleaning	8,458					8,458	9,167					9,167
Insurance	5,071					5,071	4,808					4,808
Church maintenance												
General repairs	11,113				5,197	16,310	6,614				2,820	9,434
Organ maintenance	1,094					1,094	1,022					1,022
Church major repairs		1,390				1,390		7,474				7,474
Upkeep of services												
Music	1,293					1,293	1,130					1,130
Altar Supplies	278					278	126					126
Service Sheets	564					564	593					593
Other service costs	1,057					1,057	355					355
Upkeep of churchyard												
Mowing			4,036			4,036			3,312			3,312
Gardening/General Mtnce			1,092			1,092			102			102
Tree/Hedge Cutting								1,760				1,760
Kerbstones								80				80
Path								1,550				1,550
Education and Training	505					505						
	123,952	4,390	5,128	3,403	10,861	147,733	108,319	10,474	6,804	2,483	9,436	137,516
b Raising funds												
Stewardship costs												
Fundraising costs	655					655	95					95
	655					655	95					95
c Other costs												
Total resources expended	124,607	4,390	5,128	3,403	10,861	148,388	108,414	10,474	6,804	2,483	9,436	137,611

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

4 Staff costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
a Wages and salaries	<u>23,169</u>	<u>20,403</u>

The PCC employed a Youthworker and an organist and made PAYE deductions on their behalf.

We also pay a cleaner weekly.

* *Youthworker salary uplifted for 2022 to remove income offset from Matfield PCC

b Payments to PCC members and related parties

No payments, apart from reimbursement of expenses, were made to any PCC member or related party.

The total amount of monies donated to the PCC by PCC members during 2023 was £36,867 inc Gift Aid reclaimed, (2022 was £36,328 (incl. Gift Aid reclaimed)).

5 Tangible fixed assets

The PCC does not have any tangible fixed assets.

6 Investments

	Units	Valuation (p)	£
At 1st January 2023	3,242	20.66	66,984
Disposals at carrying value			
Purchases at cost			
Net gains and revaluation			<u>6,302</u>
At 31st December 2023	3,242	22.61	<u>73,286</u>

The investment is held as units in a CBF Investment Fund.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

7 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Income tax recoverable	-	-
Prepayments and accrued income	1,500	8,020
Other debtors	-	-
	1,500	8,020

8 Creditors: amounts falling due in one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Accruals for utilities and other costs	8,183	4,510
	8,183	4,510

Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Creditors	-	-
	-	-

9 Analysis of Net assets by fund

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
Fixed assets for church use						
Investment assets				73,286	73,286	66,984
Current assets	11,209	39,049	2,274		52,532	70,614
Current liabilities	(8,183)				(8,183)	(4,510)
Long term liabilities						
	3,026	39,049	2,274	73,286	117,635	133,088

(117,635)

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

10 Statement of funds

	done At 1 Jan 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Investment Gains/(losses) £	Transfers between funds £	At 31 Dec 2023 £
Unrestricted Funds						
General Fund	13,349	111,164	(124,607)		3,120	3,027
Designated Funds						
Church Repair Fund - PCC	1,027	0	(1,390)		1,600	1,237
Church Repair Fund - Diocese	10,095	492	0		(7,825)	2,762
Vicarage Redecoration Fund	10,000	0	0		(3,000)	7,000
Web Services Fund	4,000	0	0		0	4,000
Mission Partners Fund	3,000	0	(3,000)		3,000	3,000
Youthwork Fund	20,700	350	0		0	21,050
	48,822	842	(4,390)		(6,225)	39,049
Restricted Funds						
Churchyard Fund	156	3,941	(5,128)		2,000	970
Friends	3,777	2,725	(5,197)		0	1,304
Mission Fund	(0)	3,403	(3,403)		0	(0)
Hardship fund	(0)	4,559	(5,664)		1,105	(0)
	3,932	14,628	(19,392)		3,105	2,274
Endowment Funds						
Brotherwood	6,984			657	0	7,641
Davidson-Hooker	35,579			3,347	0	38,926
Levett	24,422			2,298	0	26,719
	66,984	0	0	6,302	0	73,286
Total funds	133,088	126,635	(148,388)	6,302	0	117,635

The restricted funds comprise:

The Churchyard Fund can only be used on items specifically relating to the Churchyard.

The Friends Fund has been set up for donations specifically for Church Maintenance projects.

The Clock Fund is for monies donated towards the restoration of the Church clock. This project was carried out during 2021.

The Mission Fund is created for donations made to the PCC, which will be passed on the Charities as chosen by the PCC.

The Hardship Fund is used for monies donated for distribution to local causes at the discretion of the Vicar.

The endowment funds comprise:

Brotherwood (1941), 338 units in the CBF Investment Fund. Income can only be spent on the maintenance of the Church and Churchyard.

Davidson-Hooker (1959), 1,722 units in the CBF Investment Fund. Income can only be spent on the maintenance of the Church and Churchyard.

Levett (1970), 1,182 units in the CBF Investment Fund. Income can only be spent on the maintenance of the Churchyard.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ALL SAINTS, BRENCHLEY

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

11 Donations made to Charitable Organisations

	2023	2022
*		
Church Mission Society	3,000	3,000
Christmas - CMJ	675	0
Christmas - Community Storehouse	675	859
 Christmas - The Tanzania Borehole Project		859
Children's Society	535	852
Others	20	0
 Total	<hr/> 4,905	<hr/> 5,570

Independent examiner's report to the PCC of All Saints Brenchley

Date 11th April 2024

I report to the PCC on my examination of the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act') and the Church Accounting Regulations 2006.

I report in respect of my examination of the PCC accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act, and also those found in Church guidance, 2017 edition.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Gerry Hughes
BSc (Hons) ACMA
30 Green Lane
Paddock Wood
TN12 6BF
email: Gerry@hugmail.co.uk

ALL SAINTS' BRENCHLEY

OFFICER, COMMITTEE & CHURCH GROUP REPORTS FOR THE YEAR 2023

Churchwardens' Report

The calendar year 2023 saw significant change in the life of All Saints and broadly falls into three parts. The first six months when Campbell was with us, followed by a period from July to October when he was substantially absent through illness. November, when we said farewell to Campbell and he was with us in part and early December when Campbell's retirement took effect. It is testament to the resilience of our Community that many aspects of church life have continued through all these phases substantially as before. Consideration of Campbell's succession has dominated much of our thinking throughout 2023 and this is considered in a separate report.

Music and worship

Our normal pattern of worship in 2023 was a Family service at 10.00am preceded by a BCP communion service at 8.00am every Sunday. The first Sunday of each month is a joint Café Church service held with Matfield, the second and fourth Sundays were Communion services. Communion continued with the practice of using wafers pre-dipped in wine, although during the year the PCC gave consideration to the reintroduction of the Common cup. There is some pressure for the return of the "Common cup" and this is under discussion at the PCC. Traditional hymns are used during Communion services, a mixture of Leo/the worship group and organ are played on the third Sunday while Café Church in Matfield Village Hall is usually lead by Leo/the Worship Group on the guitar. During the Summer months, open-air services were held on the churchyard extension, which were all well-supported.

Children's Church

Whilst the total number of children involved in junior church in 2023 remained much the same as in 2022, weekly numbers fluctuate considerably. From June, Junior Church was organised by Cherie and Karen and we are very grateful to them and their helpers. Progress on conversion of the South Transept continues to be slow, but we hope we will be able to put plans on display shortly and for significant progress to be made in 2024.

The Churchyard

We continue to be grateful to Richard Beale and his helpers for the way our Churchyard is maintained. Continued progress has been made. In 2023 we used contractors for the mowing, but this was supplemented by a well-directed and effective team of volunteers.

2023 as a Whole

In 2023, the life of the church was affected by Campbell's absence through ill health from July 2023 onwards, and our attempt to secure an orderly succession when he formally retired on 3rd December 2023.

From the beginning of July 2023, we were without Campbell. In practice, services continued as before largely thanks to Reverend Andy Campbell and his wife Sue who have taken two sometimes three services each month and contributed significantly to the life of the church, including by leading a morning of prayer and meditation. Many of you have approached us to voice your appreciation for all that they have been doing. We have also been blessed by the Reverend Ian Aveson and Reverend David Kitley both of whom have taken services on a regular basis. Some services have been lay-led. Revd. Andrew Axon has provided much support. Thank you. Overall, 2023 has presented a number of challenges many of which we are still addressing.

The PCC met monthly and there were a number of additional meetings, some at relatively short notice. These included two so-called consultations on the future, one led by the Archdeacon of Tonbridge in May and another by the Reverend Mike Lodge. Both involved the Parishes of Horsmonden, Lamberhurst and Matfield. Both were significantly devoid of the information which in normal circumstances you would expect to be

available for a meaningful consultation to take place. In addition, there were two meetings with representatives of St Luke's Matfield to explore whether or not we could share a minister with them going forward. Overall, 2023 has been a demanding year for your PCC and we are grateful for the level of dedication shown by all members and their contributions. The subject of Campbell's replacement and where we are getting to in our discussions with the Diocese are contained in a separate report.

Campbell and Henrietta

We said goodbye to Campbell and Henrietta on 19th November and celebrated 25 years of their ministry in Brenchley. The church was pleasingly full, with a cross-section of families, older residents and children. There was drama and testament given to Campbell's close involvement with the life of the School by Jane Mallon, the Headmistress, and his involvement there on a day-to-day basis, alongside Ruth, the School Chaplain. Campbell and Henrietta are now settled near Oxford and getting involved in their local church.....Our heartfelt thanks and best wishes to you both.

Robin Brooks and Moira Tunstall

Treasurer's Report

2023 was a difficult year financially for the PCC. Income has overall reduced as a result of fewer one-off donations, a decrease in regular donations, and fewer weddings, baptisms and funerals, while we continue to see expenditure increase. For those interested, the Financial Review which accompanies the Accounts provides a much more detailed explanation of the finances, which I shall attempt to only summarise briefly here.

During 2023, we saw a decrease in income by around 12% compared to 2022 and an increase in costs of around 15%.

Overall, the PCC ended 2023 with £3,027 in Unrestricted General Funds, £39,049 in Designated Funds and £2,274 in Restricted Funds. There are also Endowment Funds with a total value of £73,286 although note that here only the relatively modest income generated on these funds may be utilised by the PCC, while the underlying capital cannot be touched. Excluding the Endowment Funds, overall funds are lower than what we had at the end of 2022. The Endowment funds, however, saw a gain of £6,302 during 2023.

It is the policy of the PCC to hold between two and six months' expenditure in free resources. It is estimated that the Church's average general expenditure is in the region of £10,500 per month. The current level of free reserves (Unrestricted and Designated Funds totalling £42,076) represents 4 months of average expenditure.

Looking ahead to 2024, the PCC's finances have the potential to become even more strained unless income can be increased or expenditure reduced, preferably both. A notable portion of income is still received from a relatively small and decreasing number of generous benefactors. This cannot be relied upon. We must also factor in potential church repair costs and general increases in all services, including services relating to the churchyard upkeep, including the yew tree pruning expenses.

If anyone has any specific questions on the finances, please feel free to email me on:

jhumphreys25@icloud.com

Julie Humphreys

Safeguarding Report

I can confirm that during 2023 the PCC has complied with the duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidelines. During the past calendar year, I can report that we have had only one minor safeguarding incident, concerning the attendance, at church, of a vulnerable person. This was referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office and dealt with by them.

The PCC members, Secretary and the helpers of LOGS/Youth Group and Junior Church are all up to date with their relevant online Basic, Foundation and Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Trainings and C1 and/or renewals

are in progress. The Church Wardens and Leaders of LOGS and Junior Church are also up to date with their Leadership training and/or it is booked/ in progress. It is important to note that these courses should not just be seen as a box ticking exercise, but they are to remind us all of the issues concerning the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults as well as the procedures/ processes to follow should we have any concerns about the safety of a child or adult in the church community or beyond. Thank you all with your help in spreading awareness as well as keeping the church compliant.

Risk Assessments have been conducted by LOGS/ Youth Group and Junior Church and this is regularly monitored in particular with regards to LOGS/ Youth Group to ensure it is taking account of the risks associated with young people/teenagers in today's world. The Leaders are particularly mindful of the appropriate use of e-communications which are every increasingly used post Covid.

Scrupulous attention is paid to the recruitment of our employees and volunteers, including seeking references, issuing role descriptions, checking the understanding of Risk Assessment and the completion of DBS clearance. All staff and volunteers are up to date with their DBS checks. The relatively new rules requiring that DBS checks are now completed every 3 years (rather than every 5) is now in force for all those eligible for DBS checks and as such we now have everyone on a rolling 3 year renewal plan. Getting everyone up to date meant that there were 15 or so DBS checks to be undertaken in December last year so thank you to everyone for their assistance with this as it made the process much easier.

The auditing of safeguarding procedures is now by way of self-assessment through the new Safeguarding Dashboard. This provides a fairly simple way of checking that safeguarding requirements are being met and is maintained by the relevant Safeguarding Officer. Following recent training course, I am reviewing our various policies with the Diocese and will provide copies to be ratified by the PCC in due course.

The arrangements made by the PCC for streaming of services during the Covid restrictions are still in place and available for those unable to attend Church to stream services most Sundays. Despite the lifting of all social distancing rules concerning the spread of Covid, the Church has continued to maintain some of the measures it had in place during the pandemic such as reserving the North aisle for those wishing to wear masks and the distribution of elements at Holy Communion. We hope that these steps have enabled all members of the congregation to continue to participate in worship in a way in which they feel safe.

Alexandra McCaskill, Parish Safeguarding Officer

Building Report

There have been no significant problems with the church building during the last year. John Day has continued to work on the points mentioned in the last Quinquennial Report and in addition has made several attempts to solve the problem of water penetration above the black tomb by the internal north door which also results in unsightly streaks down the wall (which he had to repaint about three times last year with mandatory very expensive paint). It seems he has now found the cause of the problem and has carried out a similar repair to the north aisle roof where it adjoins the north transept. Unfortunately we had a large fall of plaster from the vestry roof (which landed about a foot away from me) but he has now re-plastered this and painted the west wall of the vestry as well as parts of the north aisle ceiling. We are extremely fortunate to have his expertise to call on.

The only other work carried out was the replacement of the internal boiler flue ,which goes from the boiler in the kitchen through the ground floor of the tower and through the external wall by the west door. This should cure the smell of fumes which sometimes made working in the kitchen unpleasant and it seems to be successful.

You will be aware of the plans to glass in the north porch and the south transept to provide somewhere protected for the Junior Church. Unfortunately progress on this has been unhappily slow during the past year although there was a useful meeting with the architects and the donors (who are paying for the work) to try to

finalise the plans. The only outstanding point before the architects can submit their final drawings to us for approval is the design of some lettering and other small fittings and we are pressing for this to be agreed by the donors. In the meantime, we are trying to set up a site meeting with the diocese and all the various heritage bodies that have to be consulted so that this does not delay the approval by the diocese of the final drawings and the issue of a Faculty authorising us to carry out the alterations.

We do not usually mention the Vicarage in this Report as structural repair is the responsibility of the diocese, but now that the vicarage is empty, we are keeping a check on it to alert the diocese to any problems. In the autumn it became apparent that the “sag” in the roof tiles between the two dormer windows on the front elevation had got noticeably worse and at our request the diocese replaced the battens supporting the tiles. No ingress of water was apparent but we will keep an eye on this. Richard Beale has also arranged with the company which mows the churchyard that they will mow the vicarage garden to keep this looking reasonably orderly. If anyone notices any problem or potential problem with the Vicarage, would they please notify the churchwardens or me so that we can investigate. All the services have been disconnected and we are no longer paying any Council Tax.

Peter Westley

Paddock Wood Deanery Synod Report

The **Deanery** is made up of the following churches/parishes: Brenchley, Capel, Collier Street, East Peckham, Five Oak Green, Hadlow, Horsmonden, Laddingford, Lamberhurst, Matfield, Nettlestead, Pembury, Tudeley and Yalding. In 2022, Brenchley had two Deanery Synod Reps: Cherie Sargent and John Garthwaite.

There were no formal meetings of the Deanery Synod during 2022.

The two meetings that I have attended have been Open Presentations. The first was a discussion regarding the Church of England’s ‘Living in Love and Faith’ process.

In November, Paddock Wood Deanery met at Pembury Church with the Deaneries of Malling and Tunbridge Wells. It was an opportunity to hear about each other’s locations, successes, and challenges. We met the Rt Rev Dr Jonathan Gibbs, recently appointed Bishop of Rochester, who provided a vision of his future role in the Diocese. He stated his intention to concentrate on three vital factors: (1) change (2) service and (3) growth. He added that there is now an increasing ‘hole’ in the age profile within most of our congregations and we must be prepared to face up to change. This change may involve taking the ‘church’ outside the building to connect with and serve others in the community. The most vital requirement is that everyone must have a heart to serve the Lord. He also stressed the importance of connecting with local schools (which we already do). He emphasized that the church cannot afford to stand still, or it will not grow. Bishop Jonathan concluded with a quote from the words of Jesus- John 10 v.10 “I have come that you may have life in all its fullness”.

Cherie Sargent

Diocesan Synod Report

In the year 2023 there were 3 Diocesan Synods: on 11th March, 24th June and 15th November. I can (if anyone would like) provide further details, referring to the full Minutes of all the Synods, but for the purposes of this report I wish to highlight below the key topics and conclusions. As you will also note I have expanded briefly on some elements, which I believe are worthy of further comment.

11th March 2023 Synod:

1. Presidential Address by Bishop Jonathan emphasised the importance on the doctrine of marriage and the inevitable conflict with the LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Intersex, and asexual) community. The Bishop emphasised his role to uphold the historic teaching of the Church and the difficulties this creates, especially when other Bishops and the House of Laity in General Synod believe the Church’s traditional thinking needs modifying to include the alternative LGBTQI+ views.
2. General Synod Report: The breadth and depth of disagreement on the issues highlighted in the Bishop’s Address meant that common ground would almost certainly be impossible.

3. The opportunity for questions raised in 1 and 2 above illustrated that there was a very diverse view amongst clergy in the Diocese of Rochester and that the Bishop would have a difficult task uniting his own Diocese.
4. Children and young people's work: There is a re-examination of how children and young people's work is approached with a new funding model and approaches that are more community than church building focused.
5. The Parish Giving Scheme, which enables churches to take advantage of a central diocesan funded resource (nationally available as a C of E initiative) for gift aid recovery and accounting, continues to expand and has been very well received, reducing the administrative burden that would normally fall on a church treasurer.

24th June 2023 Synod:

1. Presidential address by Bishop Jonathan reviewed his past 12 months as Bishop. He wished to note:

- His homage on the day of his appointment to her late majesty
- The dedication of the clergy he had observed in the face of a cost of living and church attendance crisis
- The diocese has a commitment to maintaining standards and safeguarding. The issues faced by diocese require tough decisions to be made

2. Presentation on young people and their calling:

- Focus on need to grow and become more diverse, particularly the need to attract more young people to our churches
- The challenge majority of lay clergy and other key church leaders being over 60 leading youth work
- How we need to accommodate young people wishing to serve by giving them opportunities to create roles and become leaders
- How does your church listen to the vocational calling of 18-25 year olds?
- From the floor there was a clear focus on the importance of school chaplains planting the seeds in our church schools.

3. Annual Report and accounts Review for 2022: Some of the highlighted items included that Parish offers totalled £9.25m in 2018. In 2022 the figure reduced to £7.7m when adjusted for inflation. The reduction in income created huge challenges. 2023 looked similar. The diocesan deficit is £4.6m, which was partly attributable to property value reductions (£2.8m). The pure deficit is £1.4m. Income £9.9m against costs £11.3m.

15th November 2023 Synod:

1. Bishop Jonathan in his presidential address gave a very full account of the Doctrine of Christian Marriage and his very strong orthodox view of this core teaching, how the attempts by the C of E over many years to find a way forward to include all aspects of the LBGTQ+ community were unfruitful and the fact that the Orthodox view he holds is irreconcilable with the alternative understanding of same sex relationships promoted by the LBGTQ+ section of the church and those campaigning for the changes they request. The two sides of the argument cannot be resolved by discussion or compromise. [\[The full text of Bishop Jonathan's address is an important document, so please feel free to ask me to send you a copy\]](#). In the diocese the bishop would create separate oversight for the Liberal Churches which adopted the LBGTQ+ arguments. He is in the early stages of creating a new structure to allow such churches to stay within the diocese. He will continue as bishop to promote and support the orthodox view of Christian marriage and the teaching on sexuality which arises from it.

2. Approval of the Diocesan Budget for 2024: Operating deficit of £1.4m forecast and would be difficult to reduce. The requirement for each Parish was to recognise the cost of a full-time vicar being £74k, this being made up of: £47k employment and pension costs, £11k Diocese costs, request for Diocesan mission contribution £16k, allowing the diocese to support struggling churches. The total number of full-time clergy in the diocese is increasing marginally from 162.6 full time equivalents in 2022 to 164 budgeted for in 2024. The maximum total expenditure, requested by way of a vote, was a sum not to exceed £14m for the 2024 year. The Parish offers will need to rise by 5% to achieve the budget.

[I spoke to Nigel Pope, chair of the finance team, making the point that the Bishop is not permitting us to have a full time priest. How could Brenchley give a parish offer of the magnitude requested (by implication a 5% increase to reach a figure of £74k?). Since I received no adequate explanation, I felt I could not vote to approve the Budget and I was one of only 3 Abstentions. The Budget was approved by a large majority in the synod.]

John Garthwaite

Brenchley Ready Call

This year we have continued to arrange lifts to doctors, dentists and Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury. We continue with our monthly lunches at Grays and this year invited some of our volunteer drivers to join us for our Christmas meal. We also had an outing with a cream tea to a large garden centre on the outskirts of Tunbridge Wells with a stunning supply not only of plants and accessories, but also Christmas items and clothing.

We subsidise the meals and outing with your kind contributions for the Church Family Christmas Card so our heartfelt thanks as without these, we would not be able to continue with Our Care in the Community. Thank you.

Helen Brown , Jill Sturgeon Lewis, Natalie Hayward (transport coordinator and contact)

The Children's Society

A year passes very quickly and it was October again, the time for me to empty and count the money from boxes held by members of the congregation who support the Society. The total for 2023 from the boxes including donations at Church coffee was £535.

Thank you to all those who continue to give to this worthy cause supporting runaway children on the streets, children who are carers, holidays for children in poor circumstances and generally supporting children in need while they are growing up.

If you have a cup of coffee after church, may I encourage you to add a few coins to the box which is on the table or if you feel inclined, do ask me for a collecting box. Every little helps.

Margaret Maw

Churchyard Report

First and foremost, I should like to thank John Sales and our volunteers Nigel and Brenda Cullis who have over the year continued to keep improving the general health and wellbeing of our churchyard.

The team have planted more bulbs in the conservation area and one will see the daffodils, donated by Mrs plumber, planted beside the hedges. The privet hedge on the south boundary has been reduced in height and width such that now there is an attractive walkway beside this hedge. We are grateful to Mrs Coleman, who provided Colin Langridge with his tractor powered hedge cutter to give an excellent finish to the hedges that border the churchyard.

There is the continued use of Capel Groundcare to mow the churchyard through the season. They provide a very good service at a very fair rate and have been retained for the 2024 season.

We held a very successful Christmas wreath sale, albeit in very inclement weather, such that we had to retreat into the church. Our thanks to all who assisted and all who produced the wreaths.

It is planned to revive the Friends of Brenchley Churchyard this spring, so please if you are able do join the Friends.

Richard Beale

Flower Committee

This year we have arranged flowers for the usual 4 pedestals for our Sunday services, the Church festivals and King Charles 111 Coronation, often utilising our beautiful artificial flowers in these days of fluctuating temperatures and the price rises for fresh blooms due to production and transportation costs. We have also arranged for weddings and funeral and memorial services.

We must again mention that the list of our arrangers is dwindling, please consider having a go, no experience is required, the majority of us have never had a lesson.

Please talk to anyone on the committee or give Helen a call for a chat.

Thank you.

Helen Brown (722885), Jill Sturgeon Lewis, Pam Playfoot, and Lynda Harvey

The Ladies' Study Group

The Ladies' Group, organised by Henrietta, met intermittently at the Vicarage during the first few months of 2023, sometimes including a delicious lunch. Following informal and light-hearted chat, we looked at chosen passages (read aloud from our various different versions of the Bible) and followed this up with a frank and meaningful discussion. This often involved relating to our individual personal experiences and interpretations, thus providing varying perspectives. This served to broaden our general outlook. The sessions always helped to aid our appreciation of God's word. Each meeting always included prayers for members of our community we were aware of who were especially in need of God's help and support at that time.

From July onwards, Henrietta's care for Campbell following his major surgery, meant our meetings eventually dwindled. It would be great if someone was prepared to take over the running of this group, so please let me know if this might be a possibility. I certainly feel that I have benefitted greatly from attending; it increased my knowledge and understanding of the Bible as well as strengthening my Christian faith, and this experience was enhanced by the group rapport, offering mutual love and support to all members.

Sarah Thorpe

Junior Church

The first few months of the year were led by Henrietta Paget and the leaders met to support each other and discuss the way forward, our resources and any specific needs.

Due to the health needs of her husband, Henrietta was unable to supervise the team for the rest of the summer/early autumn but we appreciated her prayers and support.

In the Autumn at their farewell service, we wished Rev Campbell Paget and Henrietta a happy and well-earned retirement. The children sang a 'Thank You' song to them and presented Henrietta with a Camelia and some small plants for her new garden.

The numbers attending Junior Church vary from week to week. We continue to meet in the small chapel at the south end of the church. Our programme is based on a published series called "Roots". This encourages child participation so that they can grow spiritually in knowledge and understanding of the Love of God.

The children are very enthusiastic about showing the congregation what they have learnt and or made during each session. Recently the children have taken responsibility for the intercessions on the third Sunday of each month.

The appreciation from the congregation of the increased amount of child participation in the service is a great encouragement to the children and the leaders.

Our leadership team has met twice on Zoom to develop the rotas for each term and share comments. All team members are very supportive of the children's spiritual development through fun activities and biblical lessons. All are up to date with DBS and training, one holding the required level 3 leadership training.

Cherie Sargent and Karen Maier

Youth Worker's Report

This year has been a great second year to build on experience and ideas from the first year in role. In April 2023, I introduced a new Teacher Appreciation week for all families to contribute towards thanking our school staff for all their hard work. Most were astounded by the efforts made and some comments included teaching staff with over 30 years of experience and never having been thanked in that way before.

In May 2023, two senior leaders from the Canterbury Diocese education department came to experience primary school chaplaincy. They observed collective workshop and interviewed the children. The feedback given was that children are showing a deeper understanding of Christianity and applying this to how they relate to their peers within and outside their school community.

Later that month we had our second May Camp where some youth from All Saints attended the teenage Bible weekend at Plumpton Racecourse. We all came back exhausted but with many memories of the fun we had. More are keen to attend next year.

In June 2023 Tunbridge Wells Youth for Christ launched "Unite"- a monthly youth service of which we attended a few. At one session two of our youth decided to give their lives to Christ. A highlight!

This Summer Term we organised an after-school club for Year 6 children to have a taster of youth at All Saints. We gained 5 children who now regularly attend our after-school "toast and chat".

In the autumn, along with developing the website, I organised a barn dance with the aim to bring families of all ages together with (and around) All Saints. We also split the youth into Younger Youth (years 7-8) and Older Youth (years 9+) due to our increase of numbers.

Monthly Café Church services with Matfield continued with me leading in November 2023. We are really keen to find ways to encourage families to gather together.

2023 ended with me leading the Christingle service on Christmas Eve. The youth read the Christmas story while Junior Church took part. A great opportunity to preach the gospel to all ages and visitors!

As we progress onwards, we are aiming to increase our youth to over 20 young people and therefore seek a team of support for both May Camp and socials.

Ruth Parnell