

THE PCC OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST MARY & ST MELOR, AMESBURY

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

For the year ended 31 December 2023

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary & St Melor Amesbury for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 1 to 2.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material 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 in respect of the PCC as required by section 130 of the Act;
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

.....*Christopher Bush*.....

Christopher Bush FCA
Berkeley Bate Outsourcing LLP
Chartered Accountants
Blakey Road
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP1 2LP

Dated:.....*22 September*..... 2024

Amesbury Parish Church
Balance Sheet
As at 31 December 2023

| Account | 31 Dec 2023 | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Assets | | |
| Bank | | |
| CAF Current Account | | 64,581.31 |
| Lloyds Fundraising Account | | 44.85 |
| Lloyds Treasurers Account - Church | | 12,194.69 |
| Lloyds Treasurers Account - Wyndham Hall | | 25.00 |
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| CBF Deposit Funds - General | | 15.15 |
| CBF Deposit Funds - Wyndham Hall | | 1.02 |
| Friends Fund | | 23,040.65 |
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| Funds from Sale of Wyndham Hall | | 1,967.17 |
| Total Bank | | 103,418.88 |
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| Accruals | | 792.00 |
| Farewell Gift Collection | | 69.00 |
| Other Creditors | | 45.00 |
| Total Current Liabilities | | 2,252.17 |
| Non-current Liabilities | | |
| Loan from Diocese | | 40,836.58 |
| Total Non-current Liabilities | | 40,836.58 |
| Total Liabilities | | 43,088.75 |
| Net Assets | £ | 60,330.13 |
| Equity | | |
| Current Year Earnings | - | 251,398.39 |
| Retained Earnings | | 311,728.52 |
| Total Equity | £ | 60,330.13 |

Approved by the Trustees on 23 September 2024

Signed

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Amesbury Parish Church
Income & Expenditure
For the year ended 31 December 2023

| Account | 2023 | 2022 |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Income | | |
| Cash Collections | 3,860.79 | 3,572.97 |
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| Interest Income | 154.75 | 51.08 |
| Donations | | 881.34 |
| Mission | | 160.00 |
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| Fees Received for Services | 7,401.00 | 5,190.00 |
| Legacies Received | 50,500.00 | |
| Fabric Exceptional Income | | - 2,726.04 |
| Total Income | 102,968.76 | 37,707.52 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Diocesan Share | 31,687.75 | 15,610.00 |
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| Light, Power, Heating | 2,735.00 | |
| Water Rates | 126.22 | |
| Fabric Repairs & Maintenance | 293,948.56 | 24,798.19 |
| Charitable And Political Donations | 5,684.25 | |
| Fabric Exceptional Expenditure | | 16,136.73 |
| Total Expenditure | 354,367.15 | 77,803.70 |
| Surplus/Deficit | -£ 251,398.39 | -£ 40,096.18 |

Amesbury Parish Church Annual Report May 2024

Churchwarden's Report

It has been an absolute pleasure to serve the community of Amesbury Parish Church of St Mary and St Melor as your Churchwarden this year.

Yet again the church community has really achieved this last year. We have successfully completed the necessary overdue repairs on the Tower Roof as well as the fund raising; special thanks to Rita Goldthorp for claiming grants on our behalf towards this.

The consultation and planning stage towards the *Fit for the Future* project has been completed. Thank you to all who put so much effort into this and those who contributed their comments following the Open Morning attended by the architect who was able to present concept drawings and answer parishioners' questions.

With fundraising always in mind, this year has seen some successes. We have received a couple of bequests towards the Fabric of the church. We have managed to obtain a card machine to help with collection of funds. A special thank you to Ruth Davies for this.

We have introduced a series of Saturday coffee mornings with a variety of activities some of which involve fundraising as well as the church coming together for a chat and do: tidying, fixing, organising, or a specific activity. These Saturday mornings are becoming popular.

This issue of fundraising is also being addressed by regular meetings of the church community deciding and organising various events to try to generate more income. A great way for our community to be so involved in the running of our church together.

This year has also been one of farewells. We said farewell to our Priest in Charge, Fr Darren A'Court and family, and also to a long standing stalwart, Jacqui Brick. We truly wish them both well in their new adventures.

During this interregnum I wish to extend a huge thank you to the various visiting priests who are enabling our worship to continue whilst the long process of finding a replacement is underway.

Thank you all for your continuing support. I pray you will be happy for me to continue in the Churchwarden role to carry this journey on with you.

Sophia Moody
Churchwarden.

PCC Secretary's Report

The PCC had nine regular meetings and two further meetings to discuss specific matters: firstly in August for a presentation by our architect, Emma Mullen, on ideas for developing the building to be '*Fit-for-the-Future*', and secondly in January to meet with the Archdeacon and Assistant Rural Dean to discuss the procedure necessary for the recruitment of a new incumbent. During the year the PCC discussed matters including:

- The Tower Roof Project (which was undertaken during the summer of 2023).
- The pattern of PCC meetings.
- Health and Safety.
- Safeguarding routines and procedures.
- The purchase of an electronic donation device ('Payaz').
- A service to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III, which took place on May 7th 2023.
- The All Age Eucharist.
- The stone outbuilding and the old boilerhouse.
- Finances and financial arrangements, including the Treasurer's Role and the engagement of a professional book keeper.
- The Parish Share.
- The display of PCC minutes on the website.
- The toilets in the Scout Hall, their refurbishment and availability for use by the congregation.
- Vestry Security.
- The sheds in the churchyard.
- The Friends of the Abbey Church and their new constitution.
- The visit of the DAC on September 22nd 2023.
- The installation of wifi in the church
- Portable heaters.
- A painting gifted to the church.
- The war memorial in the churchyard.
- Fund-raising activities.
- Coffee mornings.
- Social activities and ideas for them.
- The Deanery Synod.
- The Fit-for-the-Future Consultation.
- Informal Parish Planning meetings at the George while we are without a Vicar.
- The church's new letterbox and postal address.
- Farewells to Father Darren and Jeanette A'Court; also to Jacquie Brick.
- The Parish Profile Project (to produce documentation for the recruitment procedure for the new incumbent).
- A Policy for the Use of the Internet and Social Media.

- Church cleaning mornings.
- A leaflet about Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.

Andrew Robson

PCC Secretary.

PCC Treasurer's Report

Without a PCC Treasurer, this commentary has been put together by the Churchwarden and the PCC Secretary as a result of their reading of the accounts which, as you will appreciate, is not a reading based on the expertise of those trained in finance. In recent years Amesbury Parish has struggled to secure the (voluntary) services of a PCC Treasurer. This is a large and an exacting role and not one to be undertaken lightly.

Due to extended absence because of illness, 2023 proved to be another problematic year in this respect. The difficulties were compounded by our being locked out of our bank accounts for many months.

As a result of the difficulties, and because the responsibility and work of the Treasurer fell upon the Churchwarden, the PCC decided to secure the services of a professional book keeper. This has proved to be a beneficial move and the fruit of that move is to be seen in the Statement of Accounts for 2023. The keeping of the ledger and responsibility for the transactions remains the Treasurer's (voluntary) role and this has been carried out by Sophie Moody in partnership with Ellie Turner. Katie Newham does essential work managing the Gift Aid scheme for the parish. We thank them for their vital contribution to the administrative work of the PCC.

The 2023 accounts show an especially large deficit because of the expenditure on the major roof works, the 'Tower Project', during the summer and early autumn.

It is important to keep in mind that, as a parish in the Church of England, we have a commitment to the Diocese of Salisbury which includes an obligation to contribute 'Parish Share'. This covers clergy payments as well as many other essential services to the parish that are administered centrally. In 2023 Amesbury contributed 25% of its requested 'Parish Share'; in 2022 we contributed a similar amount. For 2024 the diocese has calculated that Amesbury should contribute £66,241, of which nothing has been given so far.

We should like to record our thanks for legacies received during the year amounting to £50,500, for the maintenance of the fabric of the building. The Garfield Weston Foundation made a grant of £10,000 towards the roof works, for which we are most grateful. We thank Rita Goldthorp for her work in relation to the grant application.

We consider that the main message from the 2023 Statement of Accounts is that our annual income falls significantly short of our expenditure and therefore there is an urgent need to reflect on the level of our giving. If our faith and our church are important to us, a review of how much we each contribute would be timely. In 2023 the proceeds of the cash collections and Gift Aid donations totalled £30, 262.68. This is, as you will be aware, less than half of the amount the diocese suggests we should contribute to it. That is over and above the everyday running costs of this church which the parish must fund for itself.

Welcome Team

The welcoming team was re-established in December 2023 to try to make our church community appreciate the efforts our church and it's attempt to return to the happy family community we had once established.

A team of willing volunteers were readily assembled, and we now have a welcome team for every Sunday in the month, working together, happy to swap and be flexible where necessary. There is always room for willing volunteers, the task is not arduous, but very rewarding. It just entails arriving in church a little earlier. Putting together the hymn books with the orders of service, pew sheets, and any other information as requested, then distributing them as people arrive with a friendly smile and a cheerful "good morning'.

The only other duty is to help any newcomers or couples coming to hear their banns by showing them how to follow the Order of Service, so that they don't feel out of place or not welcome. This isn't a weekly task, but we do have new members attending occasionally. It is a task which is very enjoyable and rewarding and my gratitude and thanks go to the members of our congregation who so readily volunteered when I asked them to help.

Jan Swindlehurst

Welcome Team

The Altar Team at St Mary and St Melor Church

We have a dedicated Altar Team here at St Mary and St Melor Church. There are only five of us at present, but we are hoping more people will be called to join us.

There are usually two Servers - Deacon and Sub-Deacon - who assist the Priest at the 10am Eucharist, every Sunday. They stand to the left and right, respectively, of the Priest at the Nave altar, facing the Congregation.

The Nave Altar has to be prepared before the start of the Service. The Deacon and Sub-Deacon are responsible for this. The Chalice, Ciborium (Host/wafer pot) Pix (for consecrated wafers) are placed on the Altar, and covered by the Altar cloths, which vary in colour according to the church season.

The jugs with wine and water, and the ablutions bowl are placed on the credence table.

It is also important to check that the Gospel reading is the correct one for that Sunday, as the sermon is often based on it.

The Deacon and Sub-Deacon have different roles. At the start of the service, everyone processes around the church, following the Crucifer, Choir and Verger. The Sub-Deacon holds the Gospel high. When the Gospel is to be read it is held by the Sub-Deacon for the Deacon to read. They also assist with handing the small jugs of wine and water to the Deacon/Priest for the chalice to be charged. The Deacon then prepares the altar ready for the Eucharist, and the Sub-Deacon assists the Priest with the Ablutions (hand washing).

When the Altar team process to the high altar they take the bread and wine with them. The Deacon follows the Priest with the chalice and Holy Communion is offered to the Congregation. Occasionally the Sub-Deacon will assist with a second chalice, depending on congregation numbers.

After Communion, the Altar Team returns to the Nave Altar. The Deacon tidies the Altar and replaces the cloths. After the Blessing, they walk to the front of the altar, bow, and then follow the Crucifer, Choir, and Verger back to the Vestry.

Geraldine Scott

The Friends of Amesbury Parish Church Of St Mary & St Melor

The Friends' organisation was established in the last century to raise funds to help with repairing and revitalising the fabric of our beautiful ancient parish church. Originally it was a number of men from the congregation who chopped and sold firewood to raise funds. Since those days our efforts have increased dramatically and with the help of many volunteers, we successfully hold several events each year.

For several years now we have hosted a very successful Scarecrow Trail, which is a very popular town event, and now includes most of the businesses in the town centre as well as certain parishioners contributing to the trail.

We also host a very successful Christmas Hamper Draw in early December and are always looking for willing helpers and new ideas.

This year marks our first year as an independent charitable trust with an ongoing and increasing membership. Anyone wishing to join as a member can obtain the necessary form from Wendy Ellis or Jan Swindlehurst.

We donate to many requests for help from the PCC, the largest of which in recent years was £30,000 towards saving the roof. Funds are always necessary as this lovely old building continually requires help in her battle to survive.

Jan Swindlehurst
Chairperson

The Flower Team Report.

Since coming back as a team we have celebrated Christmas and Easter with flowers on both those occasions. We will also, due to our lovely collection of silk flowers, have two pedestals of seasonal flowers and a urn on display in the church at all times. Silk is essential as no watering or maintenance is required.

As mentioned in past conversations and a report, the flower team remains sadly undermanned. We have 7 volunteers (two over 80!). It's a lovely friendly little group, we all love seeing each other but we are limited to what we can do.

We could do with more volunteers particularly at Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival. During the time we weren't doing flowers at St Melors Carol and I both took on other commitments. We are happy to continue with doing flowers but would very much like to hand over to someone new to run it in the future, particularly if the church would like to see more involvement from the flower team ie weddings, funerals, other occasions, which used to happen in the past.

Liz Barnes

Safeguarding

During the year the Parish Safeguarding Officer has reported to each PCC meeting and has managed the procedures necessary for ensuring that the PCC complies with diocesan guidelines and regulations. PCC members and others routinely undertake Safeguarding training and the submission of DBS forms.

Ruth Davies
Parish Safeguarding Officer.

St Mary & St Melor, Amesbury Bell Ringers' Report 2024

During the past year, our band of ringers has remained too small to ring on a regular basis for Sunday Services. We have, however, managed to ring for some Services at important festivals, most recently on Easter Day.

Since our last report we have one learner who is now able to ring for services and another who is making good progress, attending regular practices at Middle Woodford. Unfortunately, another of our most loyal ringers has moved away from the area.

Over the past few months we have been able to hold regular practices on the second Monday of the month which have been very well attended by ringers from as far afield as Pewsey and Downton. This has enabled us to practise more complicated method ringing and to give more ringers the opportunity to ring on 8 bells.

Regular bell maintenance has been carried out for us by Mike Tizzard, for which we are very grateful. Although he is not a bell ringer, he is an engineer and has undertaken a 'steeple keeping' course. Recently he has fitted leather gaiters where the ropes are attached to the wheel on each bell to minimise wear on the ropes.

At the beginning of March we welcomed a visiting band to the Tower. You may have heard some excellent ringing for about 45 minutes fairly early on a Wednesday morning. They were a group of friends from Surrey and Kent who like to visit and ring in different churches. At least two of them ring in Cathedrals!

In June we are intending to support the nationwide 'Ring Out for Peace' campaign on Thursday, 6th June to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings.

At the end of September there will be an event for Salisbury Branch bell ringers to celebrate the end of the Chairman's Challenge competition. I am currently the Branch Chairman and have been setting monthly challenges for my fellow ringers to undertake. This will culminate on Saturday, 28th September in the Church with ringing, a buffet supper and prize giving from 5-9pm.

We will continue to ring for weddings and other events with the support of local ringers from nearby towers and to welcome visiting bands, who are always complimentary about our lovely bells.

As usual, I would like to thank my fellow Amesbury ringers and our local friends for their continued support over the year.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in learning to ring so that we can have regular

Service ringing in Amesbury again, please let us know and we'll arrange to show you what's involved.

Liz Wrighton April 2024

Deanery Synod Report March 2023 - March 2024

As your Representative of the Deanery Synod, I have attended each meeting, although in this past year there have only been two actual meetings, the latest of which was held at Sarum College and was with the Bishop, with members of five Deaneries in attendance.

The repeated theme throughout has been the way forward, with diminishing congregations and the continual problems of how paying our 'Share' has become more challenging.

The Bishop offered up that we will find a way, though it may not be in the traditional ways and that each parish should be considering alternative ways of increasing the Church community, in the ways we provide services and activities and that these may not be on a Sunday.

It was interesting to note, that with the gathering of so many Deaneries at the meeting, every single member stood up as wearing more than one hat within their Church.

I look forward to continuing to help build our Congregation – if I am re-elected, and what further advice and suggestions our Bishop will suggest.

Shaula Crabtree

Deanery Synod Representative for Amesbury PCC.

Electoral Roll Officer Report 2024

There are 92 electors on the Church Electoral Roll dated April 21st, 2024. This is a decrease of 2 on the 94 electors who were on the Roll before this year's update. 2 have moved away and a further 1 has sadly passed. The Electoral Roll will be next completely renewed in March 2025.

Shaula Crabtree - Electoral Officer

Amesbury Parish Church Choir Report 2024

I start my report for the past year by recording, with sadness, the untimely death of Mike Rooke, in August of last year. Mike had been a member of our church for many years, having served at one time as organist and choirmaster, and subsequently when he and Claire moved to France he would often join us on return visits to this country, to sing tenor in the choir, and sometimes play the organ. We shall miss his cheerful personality,

his good company and his musicianship, and we are grateful for all he did for our church, and its music. We will always welcome Claire to join us in the choir.

It was a pleasure, in June, to welcome Cassie Stewart-Gillham and Arthur to the alto line and youth choir respectively, shortly followed by Hermione. We hope they will continue to enjoy singing with us. The choir now has 22 members, including 5 in the youth section.

The choir has continued to lead the music at our Parish Eucharist services and Festivals and, as previously, we have sung hymns and anthems from the English choral tradition, along with more contemporary music. In May we introduced the All-Age Eucharist Service, in an attempt to attract a younger membership to our church. This has given us the opportunity to include modern hymns and songs in a more informal setting.

In May the nation celebrated the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, and our own service included part of an anthem entitled 'The mountains shall bring peace', composed by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange. We sang the final chorus section 'Sing unto the Lord a new song'.

In July the town celebrated the start of the year in office of the Mayor of Amesbury, Cllr Monica Devendran, with a service in church. We sang 'The Lord is my Shepherd' by Howard Goodall, familiar from the BBC television series 'The Vicar of Dibley'. The service was attended by many local dignitaries, including the Lord-Lieutenant for Wiltshire, representing the King.

It was a pleasure to welcome so many people to our church for our Christmas Carol Service, at which we performed many of our traditional carols, which are an important part of our musical heritage. We were very grateful for the many appreciative comments received from members of the congregation, as this is a very real encouragement for us.

Our organ is a historic instrument, dating originally from 1777, and was moved from the church of St Edmund in Salisbury when it closed, in 1983. It has occasional problems, including sticking notes, and notes that do not play. It needs a complete restoration, an expensive project, costing over £20,000. When the 'Fit for the Future' project begins, it will create a lot of dust and disturbance, and there is no point in having the organ restored before then, so it is a case of nursing the instrument along, having repairs done as necessary, until other work is completed.

Ben Maton, a Salisbury-based freelance organist with whom I have had lessons, visits parish churches, gives some background information, showcases the organ, and records it on his Youtube channel. He recently visited our church, and you can see the results on

<https://youtu.be/Fvocwc27C98>. Alternatively, go to www.benmatonmusic.co.uk How to make an OUT OF TUNE organ sound AWESOME!

There are not many parish choirs left in the diocese, and we are keen to maintain our choral tradition. We are always pleased to welcome new members, particularly tenor and bass singers. If you would like to join, or know anyone who would like to, please contact us through the church website, or come and speak with us after a service. We practise every Thursday from 7.00 – 8.00 in the North Transept near the Jesus Chapel.

Finally, as ever, I am most grateful to members of the choir for their continued support, particularly during the winter months. My thanks to all, particularly those who travel some distance to attend.

Michael Nottage, Acting Director of Music.

The Companions of Amesbury Abbey Church

The Companions group was inaugurated on Advent Sunday 2023 as a group of parishioners that undertakes to focus on spiritual aspects of the church, as distinct from the fabric. We aim to fulfil together and individually the commitments described below:

- To include in our daily prayer intentions on the parish prayer list and monthly prayers for the various parts of the Amesbury community.
- To participate regularly in the Holy Eucharist
- To say the Daily Office on a regular basis, privately, in our homes, and on a corporate basis in church at a frequency to be agreed.
- To 'look out for' and support each other
- To be as approachable as we can to others, to accompany them on their faith journeys.
- To encourage the 'saying a prayer and lighting a candle' as a personal devotional act.
- To meet up on a regular basis

Parishioners interested in joining us would be most welcome.

Janet Darg-Forsyth, Geraldine Scott, Andrew Robson.

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Christopher Bush FCA
Berkeley Bate Outsourcing LLP
Chartered Accountants
Blakey Road
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP1 2LP

Dated: *27 September* 2024

Sophia M

Churchwarden
SOPHIA B MOON

*Rotified by PCC meeting
27/10/2024*

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| Fabric Repairs & Maintenance | 293,948.56 | 24,798.19 |
| Charitable And Political Donations | 5,684.25 | |
| Fabric Exceptional Expenditure | | 16,136.73 |
| Total Expenditure | 354,367.15 | 77,803.70 |
| Surplus/Deficit | -£ 251,398.39 | -£ 40,096.18 |