
ST JOHN & ST LEONARD BEDFORD 2024



**Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council
(PCC)**

For the year ended 31st December 2024

Priest -in-Charge

The Reverend Helen Stewart

St John's Parish Office
38 St John's Street
Bedford MK42 0DL

Bank

The Co-Operative Bank plc
Community Directplus Account
35 Day Notice Account

Independent Examiner
Mr Barrie Frost

Background (Aims and Purposes)

St John & St Leonard PCC (The PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent of the parish in promoting, within the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church. Its mission is to be “Showing Christ’s Love, Giving Hope and Bringing Peace” both inside and outside the church.

It has responsibilities for maintaining two worship centres in south Bedford together with associated land and buildings. The Church of St John the Baptist stands to the east of St John’s Street, Bedford, and the St Leonard’s Church Centre lies on the north side of Victoria Road, Bedford.

The PCC is a body corporate [PCC (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended, Church Representation Rules (Synodical Government) Measure 1969 as amended] and is a charity registered with the Charities Commission. Registration number 1131545. The members of the PCC are the trustees. Until 2009 the PCC was an exempt organisation, being part of the Church of England.

The Charitable aims are described in the registration. In carrying out its activities, the PCC are able to confirm that there are clear benefits to the public and specific sections thereof, in accordance with the public benefit guidance published by the Charities Commission. The activities carried out to further its purposes for the public benefit are described in this report.

Structure, Governance and Management

PCC Membership

Incumbent: The Revd Helen Stewart*

Wardens: Mr Daniel Payton*
Mrs Hilary Searle*

Reader: Mr David Lambert*

Accredited Lay Minister: Ms Jill Thomas (PTO)

Representatives on Deanery Synod: Mrs Delyth Arrowsmith (to May 2026)
Mr David Lambert (to May 2026, also on Diocesan Synod)

Elected members: Mr Simon Brocklehurst* (to April 2026, Treasurer)
Mrs Liz Ewang (to April 2027)
Mrs Margaret Lambert (to April 2026, PSO, PCC Secretary)
Mr Alan Ledwick (to April 2027)
Mr Chris Moss (to April 2026)
Mrs Lizzie Payton (to April 2026)
Mrs Teresa Stone (to April 2027)
Ms Val Swanborough (to April 2025)
Mrs Sue Williams* (to April 2026, Lay Vice Chair)

The full PCC met 6 times during the year with an overall good attendance. The Standing Committee met between meetings and reports of activities and actions were received by the PCC and discussed where necessary.

Parish Safeguarding Officer – Mrs Margaret Lambert is a member of the PCC who reports on safeguarding matters and ensures that proper safeguarding practice underpins all that we do. in accordance with Government, Diocesan and Bishops’ guidelines the APCM was held on xxxxx , with participation online as well as in person.

Committees

Standing: Transacts the business of the PCC between meetings subject to any directions given by the PCC. Members identified as above*.

Finance: Sets operating budgets, provides regular updates to the PCC, manages the stewardship scheme, reclaims tax on gift aid donations, keeps books, manages cash flow, maintains appropriate financial controls and produces annual reports. The team consists of the Chair (Treasurer), Angela Locke (Bookkeeper), Hilary Searle (Salaries), and a churchwarden. Jill Thomas manages the Weekly Planned Envelope Scheme. The allocation of money to missions is undertaken by the PCC.

Buildings and Land: Manages the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings and associated land under the Church Wardens and invites others on an ad-hoc basis depending on skills required.

Staff and volunteers

Tracey Oliver was our (paid) Administrator and St John's Hall Cleaner until March 2024. The job is now in vacancy and we are awaiting her replacement for a new administrator. We employed a new cleaner in June 2024.

We are very grateful to Simon Brocklehurst who has continued his responsibilities as Music Director, as well as well as Dan Payton and the rest of the musical worship team. Our thanks also go to the team of people who have volunteered to run ‘Zoom’ in church, and run the audio and visual equipment.

In addition, the enormous amount of work done by a large number of people, in particular our wardens Hilary Searle and Dan Payton, as well as David Lambert, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord is acknowledged. This enables the buildings, the church activities, the outreach and the church itself as a fellowship to function and grow.

Safeguarding

We are delighted that Margaret Lambert continued in her role as Parish Safeguarding Officer. (PSO)

St John's and St Leonard's have a documented safeguarding policy for children and vulnerable adults, which is in line with the Diocesan policy and thereby pays due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding. Appropriate procedures are followed and relevant appointments made. The PCC includes safeguarding as a standing agenda item and receives regular reports. The policy is reviewed annually by the PCC.

The PSO maintains the **Parish Safeguarding Dashboard** tool as a continuous process. This enables the PSO and diocese to check that all the requirements of the policies are in place. It highlights areas that are complete and enables an ordered process to the safeguarding requirements of the church.

The PSO has ensured that all those who require it have undergone the Awareness of Domestic Violence training, as advised by the Diocese. Margaret also keeps up to date with those who require DBS checks and training, or who need to renew their DBS or their training, every three years, again as advised by the Diocese.

Margaret also takes every opportunity to undertake training for PSOs run by the Diocese or ThirtyOne:Eight – the body that handles DBS checks on behalf of the Diocese.

Church attendance

At our 2023 APCM our Electoral Roll stood at 53 which was a reduction of 5 from 2022. Of those on the roll 15 live in the parish and 38 within close proximity of the parish.

Our church services in 2024 were held in both centres. Every Sunday there has been a morning service at St John's with Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. These services have also been on zoom.

On the 2nd and 4th Sunday evenings we had an informal service Hungry for God. At St Leonard's Church Centre services have been held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. The second Sunday being Holy Communion until the end of May when Rev Helen Stewart went on maternity leave when both services have been Morning Praise. Attendance at St John's at the morning service was approximately 27 adults and 2-10 children and around 1-2 joining on zoom. Attendance at St Leonard's has been approximately 7.

Our Lent Course was held every Sunday evening at St John's Hall and follow up at our mid week communion services held at St John's on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. We followed the Healing and Hope in one household of God by Embrace for the Mid East. It was attended by approximately 12.

On Maundy Thursday we had a community meal with 27 attendees. Our Good Friday service was held at St Leonard's and our Easter celebrations at St John's. We held a Christingle service at St Leonard's on Wednesday 11th December, and our Carol Service, Christmas Eve midnight service and Christmas Day were held at St John's.

From June when Rev Helen Stewart went on maternity leave, we have been blessed by retired clergy and Bishop Richard who have been taking our Holy Communion services at St John's.

We would like to thank David Lambert, Sue Williams, Simon Brocklehurst, Jill Thomas and Lizzie Payton who have been leading/preaching at our Morning Praise services at both centres.

Buildings and Land

General: The care and use of the buildings and land is an important aspect of the church's stewardship of resources in its care. This is achieved through regular cleaning, maintenance and upkeep; also the appropriate use of the buildings. The environmental aspects also form part of the 5th mark of mission. During the year work was carried out which is being measured against the A Rocha EcoChurch criteria (Bronze).

St John's Church:

Routine maintenance was carried out during the year. It is a Grade 1 Listed Building having been re-listed in 2018. Smart Water is applied to the building. We have been working with Bedford Borough Council and the Diocese on quinquennial work to the churchyard. Following award of a faculty, repairs to walls, and substantial undergrowth and tree work was carried out to the closed churchyard. A works package, based on the most recent Quinquennial Report, is being drafted by the Quinquennial Inspector for consideration in early 2025. An Energy Audit and Advice Report has been carried out.

St John's Hall:

Regular maintenance has been carried out, working parties carrying out wider cleaning and maintenance on the hall and grounds. An Energy Performance Certificate survey has been received with recommendations (Grade C). During the year major work was carried out to the 12 year old boiler and immersion heater. The car park was renovated at the East end to recover lost parking space.

St Leonard's Church Centre:

Regular maintenance has been carried out, and the premises are maintained in good order. Failure of the kitchen water boiler will require replacement. The adjacent car park remains secured, and is used in conjunction with the centre. Redecoration was undertaken during the year and clearance work on the adjacent car park.

Curate's House:

Since June 2013 this has been rented out on a commercial basis on a formal short-term tenancy managed by a local agent. The PCC is engaging with the Diocese over the future of the building, which provides a valuable asset for a future curate. A Quinquennial inspection has identified both short and long-term works, for which quotations are being sought.

Achievements and Performance

Details of our approach to Mission (how we deliver the charitable aims and objectives) are described in the Mission Action Plan (MAP). We reviewed and updated our MAP in August 2024 and will carry out a full review in 2025 when Helen returns from Maternity Leave.

Outreach and Service within the Local Community

We have 2 babies and toddler groups one at St John's Church hall and the other at St Leonard's., Both groups are led by Alison Clark of "Praise and Play". Each group has its own Facebook page set up and run by Alison which help to support our toddler families.

The coffee morning held every two weeks at St Leonard's has continued throughout the year with an attendance of around 30 people and has been a great blessing to those who attend.

We have carried out 4 outreach family events this year. They have been well attended with between 50-115 people per event. These events offer families crafts, dinner, and worship and fellowship as well as celebrating Christian festivals within the church buildings. These events have been held at Christmas, Easter, Shrove Tuesday and 31st October.

Throughout the year both St John's Hall and St Leonard's Hall have been available to local community groups including, among others, antenatal classes, baby massage, NCT meetings, Bedford Pipe Band, Locomotive Club of Great Britain (Bedford Branch), Bedford Hospital Cardiac re-habilitation, the Borough Council and elections. At St Leonard's we have also provided storage space for IMPACT. At St John's car Parking is provided free of charge for the staff and SMART support workers. We have been going into one of our local schools, Cauldwell for "Open the Book". Sadly we have been unable to go back to Shackleton since the pandemic, but we remain hopeful that this may return in 2025.

We have become more involved with the Bedford Area Schools Christian Support Trust (working title IMPACT) team that works with local schools. At Easter and in December 2024 they held an Easter experience and Barn Nativity using St John's Church and glebe for a week of sessions with multiple schools.

Wider Mission

Home activities

In addition to services held at St John's Church and St Leonard's Centre, a wide variety of activities were undertaken to support the Church Family. Our two Church Home Groups continue to meet to worship, study the Bible, provide mutual support and offer acts of service to our local community within the parish and across Bedford.

Vocations, Deanery, Diocese and wider Anglican Communion

We participated in the Bedford Good Friday Act of Witness (supported by a large number of local church groups). Deanery representatives participated in Deanery Synod meetings, and one, David Lambert, is an elected member of the Diocesan Synod, serves on the Diocesan Property Committee, and is vice chair of the Diocesan Environment Group.

The congregations continue to be kept up to date with developments across the Anglican communion, both through local information, teaching and through wider missionary contacts. Daniel Payton was commissioned as a Lay Leader of Worship at Easter.

Financial Review

During 2024 we continued to use the Paxton accounting package, the software accords with the accounting regulations, SORP 2015. Simon Brocklehurst continued as Treasurer, with Angela Locke very capably managing the book-keeping. In the absence of an administrator for much of the year, the majority of the invoicing, receipt of payments and payment for bills fell to the

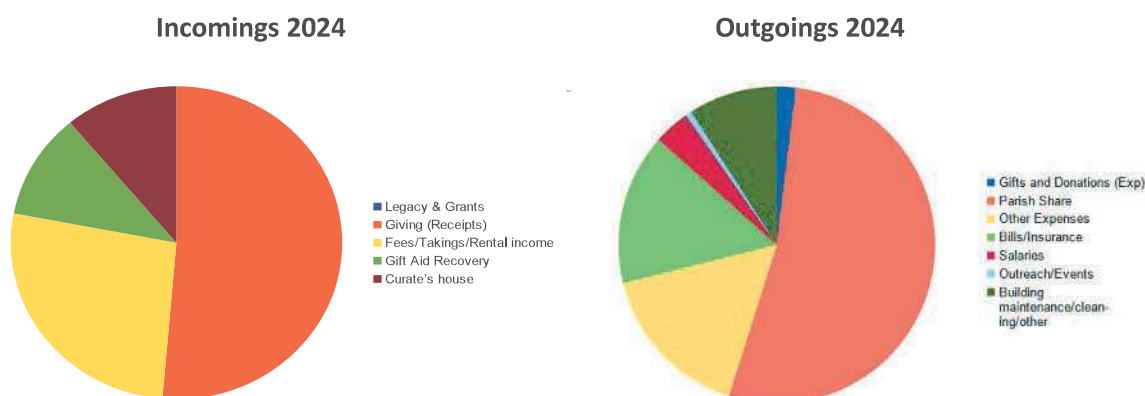
Treasurer. We use accounts with the Co-operative Bank (current and savings), all transactions are conducted online, with dual signatories as recommended by the Charity Commission.

Total incoming resources for 2024 were **£97,396** as compared with **£93,289** in 2023. This compares with the budgeted incomings of **£90,498**. Part of the increase (as always) is due to designated gifts that were received and then distributed, but there were also some significant un-budgeted gifts, for which we are grateful.

We are particularly grateful to our regular donors (most of whom now pay by standing order or on-line banking); total giving was broadly in line with expectations, and we recognise people's faithfulness in a difficult economic climate during 2024. All giving is treated as "open giving", unless specifically designated otherwise by the donor, which is to say that donors leave the allocation of use of the giving to the discretion of the PCC.

Gift Aid tax reclaimed amounted to **£10,613**, including the contribution from the Small Donations Gift Aid Scheme.

£10,800 income from the rental of the curate's house is included. It has been verified by the Diocese that they do not have a share in the equity of the property, therefore the previously anticipated back rental contribution, previously reported as being embodied within the equity of the property, is no longer earmarked for passing to the Diocese on sale of the property. This makes no difference to the income and expenditure aspect of the 2024 accounts. It does mean that the PCC is entitled to the full value of the property on disposal.



Total Expenditure for 2024 was **£114,581** compared with **£119,588** in 2023. This compared with the budgeted figure of **£122,463** budget. Whilst there has been some additional spending on ground works (St John's car park, St Leonard's land clearance), and (as always) the passing on of restricted gifts to the intended recipients, the decrease over the budgeted figure reflects 10 months without an administrator, lower costs for cleaning over the year (reduced hours), and unclaimed salaries.

Staff are paid at rates based on the "Real" living wage – in accordance with the recommendations of the "Living Wage Foundation". Pension arrangements (for the first two months of the year) have been made with the Church of England Pension Fund, who have provided an appropriate "disclosure notice" in accordance with the requirements of FRS 102.

Designated gifts are sent off (with the recovered Gift Aid where appropriate) to the relevant mission partners. For example, our Harvest appeal was given to the Bishop's Appeal (in support of the Leprosy Mission working in Sri Lanka). Other gifts from general income were sent to CMS (to support the work of Lea & Petra Williams in Brno, Czech Republic) and to the Malawi Orphan

Fund (for the Home of Hope in Mchinji, Malawi). Further details can be found in the notes to these accounts. The financial resources devoted to “mission” exceed this and include, for example, the provision of our two baby and toddler groups, and our series of local mission events such as the Light party, Pancake party etc.

Financial Explanation and Outlook

The budget for 2024, as presented to, and approved by, the PCC in March noted a planned deficit of **£31,965**, a little higher than the previous year. As we all know, energy costs are considerably higher than a few years ago. Our contribution to the diocese (Parish Share) is high for what is a relatively small congregation, but we do have our own full time minister. Both these factors will continue to be present in 2025.

At the end of the year our actual deficit was **£17,186**. The major contributor to this decrease, as noted above, was the lack of an administrator for much of the year. We, of course, hope to have administrator in place sooner rather than later. To address our deficit we know that we are blessed with physical resources (land and buildings) from which we currently receive significant income, but want to press ahead with developing these resources further, particularly when Helen returns from maternity leave.

The challenge to the PCC is to continue to deliver the Charitable Objectives (Aims and Purposes) within the continuing financial constraints. The PCC is addressing these issues, to ensure that financial stability is maintained to deliver the Church’s Vision, as defined in the parish “Mission Action Plan”.

Reserves Policy

In 2014 the PCC adopted the following Reserves policy: **“It is the policy of the PCC to maintain a balance of 2 months of utility expenditure, insurance and contractual commitments, including salaries. It is considered that a catastrophic event would require the use of such a reserve, and that on-going gifts would cover Parish Share and other expenses.”** At 2024 levels this requires a total of around **£5,500**, estimated in the absence of defined hours (and hourly rate) for a new administrator.

At 31st December the balance sheet shows **£122,378.37** cash in the bank. It is noted that the cash element of the endowment fund (the fabric fund) stood at **£30,213.78**. This leaves **£92,164.59** of free reserves.

In accordance with the guidance to PCCs under the Charities Act 2011 (section 3.5) the PCC will continue to prioritise the cash position to maintain the free reserves in line with the Reserves policy, whilst continuing to deliver the Charitable Objectives (Aims and Purposes). The PCC will keep this under close scrutiny in 2025.

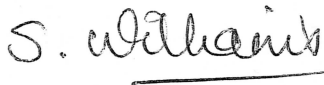
Stewardship

St John’s and St Leonard’s has always taken seriously its approach to Christian Stewardship, in its widest sense, and has a high level of planned and tax-efficient giving. This has had strong benefits during 2024. During 2025 the PCC will look at how we continue to be good stewards of that with which we have been entrusted (both financial and physical), and how assets can be best maintained and used as part of our ongoing mission.

Conclusion

As we look back over the past year, with its joys and challenges, we rejoice in God's faithfulness. We are grateful for Helen's leadership; for her energy, enthusiasm, expertise and fresh way of looking at things, as well as her evident love for God and for all she comes into contact with. We praise God for the continuing faithful witness of those whose health has deteriorated or who have become more frail, for the new families who have come to worship with us, and for the very positive response to our outreach events for children and families. We are grateful to every member of our church family and for the vital part which each one plays, often behind the scenes. We are reminded in the Bible that we are the body of Christ and Jesus is the head of the body. "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." (Ephesians 4:16). We pray that we may indeed show love, give hope and bring peace to those we live among and are called to minister to - that Jesus may be seen and known in us and through us to the glory of God.

Signed on behalf of the PCC



Mrs Sue Williams

Lay Chair, St John and St Leonard Bedford PCC

Please note that this report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Statement of Financial Activities as at 31/12/2024 (SOFA) - 1 page
- Balance Sheet as at 31/12/2024 - 1 page
- Notes to the accounts 2024 - 2 pages
- FRS102 Pension disclosure statement 2024 - 1 page
- Examiner's letter 2024 - 1 page

Approved at the PCC meeting on 19th March 2025.

St Johns & St Leanords

Printed: 11/03/2025



	Unrestricted funds	Restricted Income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	59,762	875	0	60,637	57,627
Charitable activities	22,663	0	0	22,663	21,507
Other trading activities	0	0	0	0	0
Investments	105	0	2,590	2,695	2,551
Separate material item of income	0	0	0	0	0
Other	11,280	120	0	11,400	11,604
Total	93,810	995	2,590	97,396	93,289
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	0	0	0	0	0
Charitable activities	111,138	3,157	287	114,582	119,588
Separate material item of expense	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	111,138	3,157	287	114,582	119,588
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)	-17,328	-2,162	2,304	-17,186	-26,299
Net gains/(losses) on investments	0	0	2,136	2,136	8,024
Net income/(expenditure)	-17,328	-2,162	4,439	-15,051	-18,275
Extraordinary items	0	0	0	0	0
Transfers between funds	-2,162	2,162	0	0	0
Other recognised gains/(losses):					
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use	331,172	0	0	331,172	17,948
Other gains/(losses)	0	0	0	0	0
Net Movement in Funds	311,682	0	4,439	316,121	-327
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total funds brought forward	2,146,244	0	121,225	2,267,469	
Total funds carried forward	2,457,926	0	125,664	2,583,590	

St Johns & St Leanords

Printed: 14/02/2025

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Income Funds	Endowment Funds	Total funds	Prior year funds
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	0	0	0	0	0
Tangible assets	2,363,601	0	0	2,363,601	2,032,429
Investments	0	0	95,450	95,450	93,315
<i>Total fixed assets</i>	2,363,601	0	95,450	2,459,051	2,125,744
Current assets					
Stocks	0	0	0	0	0
Debtors	3,236	0	0	3,236	12,714
Investments	0	0	0	0	0
Cash at bank and in hand	92,165	0	30,214	122,378	139,738
<i>Total current assets</i>	95,400	0	30,214	125,614	152,453
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	0	0	0	0	10,727
<i>Net current assets/(liabilities)</i>	95,400	0	30,214	125,614	141,725
<i>Total assets less current liabilities</i>	2,459,002	0	125,664	2,584,666	2,267,469
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	0	0	0	0	0
Provisions for liabilities	0	0	0	0	0
Total net assets or liabilities	2,459,002	0	125,664	2,584,666	2,267,469
Funds of the Charity					
Endowment funds	0	0	125,664	125,664	121,225
Restricted income funds	0	0	0	0	0
Unrestricted funds	2,459,002	0	0	2,459,002	2,146,244
Revaluation reserve	0	0	0	0	0
Total funds	2,459,002	0	125,664	2,584,666	2,267,469

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval dd/mm/yyyy
	Revd H STEWART	14-4-25
	J Brocklehurst	14-4-25

ST. JOHN AND ST. LEONARD P.C.C. BEDFORD.
Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2024 - page 1
ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, together with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP 2015 FRS 102. They follow the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets, which are shown at market value.

(b) Funds

General funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use and are available for application on the general purposes of the PCC. Funds that are designated for a particular purpose by the PCC are still unrestricted. Restricted funds are from income that has been accepted subject to conditions about how it may be used.

The restricted funds are given names that indicate their purpose and restrictions.

The accounts include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. However, they do not include any accounts of church groups that are simply informal gatherings of church members.

We have taken the opportunity at year end to resolve historic errors in the figures for debtors and creditors.

(c) Incoming resources

Voluntary income and capital sources

Collections are recognised as income when they are received by or on behalf of the PCC. Planned giving, under Gift Aid or otherwise, is also only recognised when it is received. Income tax recoverable on Gift Aid donations is recognised at the same time as the gift itself. Grants and legacies are accounted for as soon as the PCC has been notified of its legal entitlement and the amount is quantifiable and the PCC is reasonably certain of receiving it in due course.

The Church of St John's and St Leonard's does not usually engage in fund-raising activities. Some social activities are undertaken for which an admission charge is made (for example Harvest Supper) but these are regarded as part of the Church's outreach. In these circumstances proceeds are sometimes netted off against expenses where it is not reasonably practicable to separate some expenses and receipts (for example occasional refreshments and receipts) and the net cost is charged as a running cost under "Work of the Parish".

Other income

Rental income from letting of Church premises is recognised when paid (although see below for year-end). Bank deposit interest is accounted for as it accrues. Other investment income is accounted for when it is due and payable.

Gains and losses on investments

Realised gains or losses are recognised when investments are sold. Unrealised gains or losses are accounted for on a revaluation every 31st December.

(d) Resources used

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded if the awarding creates a binding obligation on the PCC. The diocesan parish share is accounted for when payable: any amount unpaid at 31 December would be provided for as an operational liability, but St Johns and St Leonards pays it monthly and the amount paid at 31st December has been confirmed.

(e) Fixed assets

Consecrated land and buildings and moveable church furnishings

Consecrated and beneficed property is not included in the accounts in accordance with s.10(2)(a) and (c) of the Charities Act 2011. No value is placed on movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal since the PCC considers this to be inalienable property. All expenditure incurred during the year on consecrated or beneficed buildings and movable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvement, is written off as expenditure in the SOFA and disclosed at 3c)

Other fixtures, fittings and office equipment

Equipment used within the church premises is depreciated on a straight line basis over a period not exceeding four years. Individual items with a purchase price of £2,500 or less are written off when the asset is acquired.

Investments and current assets

Investments are valued at market value at 31st December. Amounts owing to the PCC at 31st December in respect of fees, rents or other income are shown as debtors (such as Gift Aid and non-monthly-hire balances), less provision for amounts that may prove uncollectable (including rents not secured). Cash at bank and in hand includes funds on short term deposit.

Valuation of Buildings

From 2016 Ecclesiastical Insurance amended its insurance approach from being based on a given asset value (which had been used as the current asset value in the accounts) to a "limit of claim", which does not provide a defined asset value. From 2016, therefore, the asset value used in these accounts is based on the latest available valuation, which it was intended would be reviewed every 3 years and adjusted in accordance with recognised valuation increase/decrease criteria. Ecclesiastical Insurance have advised that the Archdeacons have been made aware of the change in the basis of insurance. The figures used for valuation for 2024 accounts are those given for St John's Hall by Ecclesiastical Insurance on 30th November 2017, with a similar increase for St Leonard's Church Centre (pro-rata on the figures used for 2016 valuations). In 2024 it has been decided to continue to use the same valuations as previously.

[illegible]

Church Workers Pension Fund (CWPF)
FRS102 Wording - December 2024 Year End

St John & St Leonard PCC Bedford participates in the Pension Builder Scheme section of CWPF for lay staff. CWPF is administered by the Church of England Pensions Board, which holds the CWPF assets separately from those of the Employer and other participating employers.

CWPF has two sections:

1. the Defined Benefits Scheme
2. the Pension Builder Scheme, which has two subsections;
 - a. a deferred annuity section known as Pension Builder Classic, and,
 - b. a cash balance section known as Pension Builder 2014.

Pension Builder Scheme

Both sections of the Pension Builder Scheme are classed as defined benefit schemes.

Pension Builder Classic provides a pension, accumulated from contributions paid and converted into a deferred annuity during employment based on terms set and reviewed by the Church of England Pensions Board from time to time. Discretionary increases may also be added, depending on investment returns and other factors.

Pension Builder 2014 is a cash balance scheme that provides a lump sum which members use to provide benefits at retirement. Pension contributions are recorded in an account for each member. Discretionary bonuses may be added before retirement, depending on investment returns and other factors. The account, plus any bonuses declared is payable, unreduced, from age 65.

There is no sub-division of assets between employers in each section of the Pension Builder Scheme.

The scheme is considered to be a multi-employer scheme as described in Section 28 of FRS 102. This is because it is not possible to attribute the Pension Builder Scheme's assets and liabilities to specific employers and means that contributions are accounted for as if the Scheme were a defined contribution scheme. The pensions costs charged to the SoFA in the year are the contributions payable (**2024: £232, 2023: £1,161**).

A valuation of the Pension Builder Scheme is carried out once every three years. The most recent valuation was carried out as at 31 December 2022.

For the Pension Builder Classic section, the valuation revealed a surplus of £34.8m on the ongoing assumptions used. At the most recent annual review effective 1 January 2025, the Board chose to grant a discretionary bonus of 6.7% to both pensions not yet in payment and pensions in payment in respect of service prior to April 1997; and a bonus on pensions in payment in respect of post April 2006 service so that the pension increase was 2.7% (where usually it would be calculated based on inflation up to 2.5%). This followed improvements in the funding position over 2024. There is no requirement for deficit payments at the current time.

The next valuation is due as at 31 December 2025.

For the Pension Builder 2014 section, the valuation revealed a surplus of £8.5m on the ongoing assumptions used. There is no requirement for deficit payments at the current time.

The legal structure of the scheme is such that if another employer fails, St John & St Leonard PCC Bedford could become responsible for paying a share of the failed employer's pension liabilities.

To:
The Parochial Church Council of
Bedford St John & St Leonard

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Parochial Church Council of Bedford
St John & St Leonard (Registered Charity No. 1131545)**

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2024 as described in the Annual Report, including the 2 pages of notes, the Balance Sheet (1 page), the SOFA report (1 page) and the FRS102 Disclosure Notice in respect of the Church Workers' Pension Fund (1 page) is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ('the Regulations') and S.145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and S.144(2) of the Act does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of this report

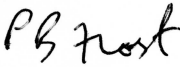
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under S.145(5)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- i. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with S.130 of the Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met;or
- ii to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

I again wish to place on record my gratitude to Simon Brocklehurst and Angela Locke for their considerable assistance in this exercise.


(Barrie Frost)

Thank you

to the people of the Parish of

Bedford, St John and St Leonard

for your ongoing support of the cost of ministry
in your Parish and across the Diocese.

Maintaining this ministry would not be possible
without your continuing generosity.

The amount of Parish Share paid in 2024 was:

£60,677



+ Alan

Bishop of St Albans



D. J. W. S.

Diocesan Secretary