

# **Parochial Church Council of St Mary, Shirehampton**

## **Annual Report and Financial Statements**

**Year ending 31 December 2024**

Charity number 1131636



Parochial Church Council of St Mary, Shirehampton  
Annual Report and Financial Statements  
Year Ended 31 December 2024

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Parochial Church Council of St Mary, Shirehampton  
Annual Report and Financial Statements  
Year Ended 31 December 2024

**Parochial Church Council**

**Vicar:** Rev Alison Sowton

**Independent Reporting Accountants:** David A Oakensen,  
Oakensen (Bristol) Ltd  
Chartered Accountants  
Suite 9, Westbury Court  
Church Road,  
Westbury-on-Trym  
Bristol BS9 3EF

**Bankers:** HSBC  
62 George White Street  
Bristol  
BS1 3BA

Parochial Church Council of St Mary, Shirehampton  
Annual Report and Financial Statements  
Year Ended 31 December 2024

The Parochial Church Council present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024. The financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 governing the individual accounts of PCCs, and with the Regulations' 'true and fair view' provisions, together with FRS102 (2016) as the applicable accounting standards and the 2016 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP(FRS 102)).

### Charitable Status

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England under the PCC Powers Measure. The PCC was registered as a charity in 2009, with charity number 1131636, having previously been an excepted charity. The PCC members have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

### Aims and Purposes

The PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also maintains the Tithe Barn in accordance with its aims and objectives, making it available for the purposes of St Mary's and for the use of the inhabitants of all ages with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants.

### Objectives and Activities

St Mary's Church, Shirehampton, provides Church of England services and religious activities for all ages, gives pastoral care to people living in the parish and beyond, and provides outreach into the community via work with youth, the elderly and the vulnerable. The PCC seeks to enable as many people as possible to worship in our church and to become part of our parish community. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and Scripture, music and sacrament.

We run a youth group, dance classes, a Mothers' Union branch, a Bereavement Journey branch and host a 'Goldies' singing group. We are open every day for coffee mornings for the community or for worship, and provide lunches during our Welcoming Space on Fridays. In addition, we hold various social activities and Pop-Up events during the year, all open to the whole community.

As part of the Avonside Mission Area (ASMA), we work alongside the Anglican churches of Avonmouth, Lawrence Weston, Sea Mills and Stoke Bishop to provide additional support and events to the whole community, including a Mental Awareness Group branch.

### Structure, governance and management

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure, The PCC is a Registered Charity.

Members of the PCC are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

During the year, the following served as members:

|                                                             |                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vicar:                                                      | Rev Alison Sowton                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Wardens:                                                    | Anne Ford<br>Richard Powell                                                                                           | Resigned 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Deanery Synod Representatives:                              | Pat Davidson<br>Derek Sowton                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Elected Members:                                            | Tim Forder<br>Philip Fowler<br>Solveig Gibson<br>Colin Godfrey<br>Florence Grimes<br>Sarah Parry Reid<br>Sharon Viney | Electoral Roll Officer<br>Data Protection Officer<br>Resigned 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2024<br><br>Secretary<br>Appointed to PCC on 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2024<br>& as Safeguarding Officer (16 Jan 2025)<br>& Health & Safety Officer (from 29 Nov '23) |
| Treasurer (not in PCC)<br>Safeguarding Officer (not in PCC) | Eleanor Beddoes<br>Claire Staynings                                                                                   | To 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

#### **Standing Committee:**

This is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings, subject to any directions from the Council.

#### **Financial Review**

Income at £128,430 (2023: £152,007) was lower (2023: lower) than expenditure of £150,010 (2023: £152,826) to give net expenditure) of £21,580 (2023: £819 net expenditure). Most income streams decreased during the year, and we have worked hard to make our church known in the community and welcome all through our doors. We are grateful for all the donations received. More donors have transferred across from monthly giving to the Parish Giving Scheme, freeing up administrative time and effort in recording donations and claiming Gift Aid. We applied for grants from some Charitable Foundations and were pleased to receive £7,000 towards the salary of our Youth Worker and £3,000 towards the costs of running our Friday Welcoming Space. Returns on investments continued to bring in valuable income. Total costs decreased from last year, as the PCC made the difficult decision to reduce our charitable giving, having increased giving in the previous year. Many running costs increased in the year, with suppliers passing on cost of living increases and the greatest impact was found in our utility costs. We continually review costs to minimise the impacts of price increases where appropriate, and upgraded our broadband provision during the year at Church and Tithe Barn, leading to faster speeds at lower cost.

We are grateful to our church family and local community for your continued support.

Giving to missions/charities from general funds totalled £3,000 (2023: £10,000). The amount paid to the Diocese for parish and ministry costs was £50,000 (2023: £50,000).

Restricted income exceeded restricted expenditure by £356 (2023: £46 income exceeded expenditure) and a breakdown can be found in the notes to the accounts.

The gain on revaluation of shares held as endowment funds was £17,474 (2023: £65,723 revaluation gain).

The Charity Commission approved a scheme allowing us to sell shares to the value of £109,000 to partly fund the purchase of the Tithe Barn, on the condition these shares would be purchased back until the full number of shares were reinstated. At 31 December 2023 the total market value of the amount remaining to be paid was £55,391 (2023: £55,391). The full amount is to be repaid by 2033.

#### **Reserves Policy**

The PCC aim to maintain reserves in unrestricted funds at a level that will allow sufficient funds to be available to pay for church activities as they arise and also to ensure that support and governance costs can be met as they fall due. The balance held as unrestricted funds at the year-end was £424,553 (2023: £459,879), of which £70,186 (2023: £98,015) are regarded as free reserves after allowing for funds tied up in tangible fixed assets.

Where possible, we maintain reserves to cover, as a minimum, identifiable repair and maintenance costs relating to the fabric and furnishings of St Mary's, three months' parish share payments and 25% of the amounts required from fund raising to cover general expenditure. We have estimated quarterly net expenditure on fabric and furnishings for 2025 at £5,000, parish contributions to the Diocese for three months total £11,250 and £3,000 is required to cover any shortfall in fundraising.

#### **Investments**

The Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, as custodial trustees, hold CBF Ltd shares on our behalf in both the Bernard Salmon and Napier Miles Trusts. In addition, 404 CBF shares are held in respect of the Ecclesiastical and non-Ecclesiastical Charities.

### **PCC Responsibility for the Financial Statements**

The law requires the PCC to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Parish and of its income and expenditure for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the PCC is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless this is inappropriate.

The PCC members are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Parish and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the relevant legislation. They are also responsible for safeguarding assets of the Parish and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

*Alison Sowton*

Approved by the PCC on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025

and signed on their behalf by Rev Alison Sowton (Vicar)

**Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of the Parish of St Mary, Shirehampton, Bristol.**

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on pages 6 to 14.

**Respective Responsibilities of PCC and Examiner**

The PCC is responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC considers that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of Independent Examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent examiner's statement**

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

1. Which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - a. To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - b. To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*David A Oakensen*

David A Oakensen FCA  
Oakensen (Bristol) Ltd  
Chartered Accountants  
Westbury Court, Church Road  
Westbury-on-Trym  
BS9 3EF

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025

## Statement of Financial Activities

|                                                        |       | Unrestricted<br>funds<br>£ | Restricted<br>funds<br>£ | Endowment<br>funds<br>£ | Total<br>2024<br>£ | 2023<br>£        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
|                                                        | Notes |                            |                          |                         |                    |                  |
| <b>Income and endowments from:</b>                     |       |                            |                          |                         |                    |                  |
| Donations and legacies                                 |       | 72,163                     | 12,242                   | —                       | 84,405             | 87,284           |
| Income from charitable activities                      |       | 10,315                     | —                        | —                       | 10,315             | 16,525           |
| Other trading activities                               |       | 6,452                      | —                        | —                       | 6,452              | 8,980            |
| Investments                                            |       | 22,821                     | —                        | —                       | 22,821             | 21,468           |
| Other income                                           |       | 4,437                      | —                        | —                       | 4,437              | 17,750           |
| <b>Total income</b>                                    | 2     | <b>116,188</b>             | <b>12,242</b>            | <b>—</b>                | <b>128,430</b>     | <b>152,007</b>   |
| <b>Expenditure on:</b>                                 |       |                            |                          |                         |                    |                  |
| Raising funds                                          |       | 232                        | —                        | —                       | 232                | 286              |
| Expenditure on charitable activities                   |       | 129,682                    | 12,601                   | —                       | 142,283            | 145,043          |
| Other expenditure                                      |       | 7,497                      | —                        | —                       | 7,497              | 7,497            |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                               | 3     | <b>137,411</b>             | <b>12,601</b>            | <b>—</b>                | <b>150,012</b>     | <b>152,826</b>   |
| <b>Net (expenditure) before gains and transfer</b>     |       | <b>(21,223)</b>            | <b>(359)</b>             | <b>—</b>                | <b>(21,582)</b>    | <b>(819)</b>     |
| Transfers between funds                                |       | (14,103)                   | (897)                    | 15,000                  | —                  | —                |
| Gains on investment assets                             |       | —                          | —                        | 17,474                  | 17,474             | 65,723           |
| <b>Net movement in funds</b>                           |       | <b>(35,326)</b>            | <b>(1,256)</b>           | <b>32,474</b>           | <b>(4,108)</b>     | <b>64,904</b>    |
| <b>Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2024</b>   |       | <b>459,879</b>             | <b>14,109</b>            | <b>748,495</b>          | <b>1,222,483</b>   | <b>1,157,579</b> |
| <b>Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2024</b> | 10    | <b>424,553</b>             | <b>12,853</b>            | <b>780,969</b>          | <b>1,218,375</b>   | <b>1,222,483</b> |

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

Notes 1 to 10 form part of these financial statements.



Parochial Church Council of St Mary, Shirehampton  
Annual Report and Financial Statements  
Year Ended 31 December 2024  
**Balance sheet**

|                                            |       | 2024<br>£        | 2023<br>£        |
|--------------------------------------------|-------|------------------|------------------|
|                                            | Notes |                  |                  |
| <b>Fixed assets</b>                        |       |                  |                  |
| Tangible assets                            | 5     | 354,367          | 361,864          |
| Investments                                | 6     | 780,969          | 763,495          |
|                                            |       | <b>1,135,336</b> | <b>1,125,359</b> |
| <b>Current assets</b>                      |       |                  |                  |
| Debtors                                    | 7     | 8,418            | 9,378            |
| Cash at bank and in hand                   |       | 81,462           | 95,860           |
|                                            |       | <b>89,880</b>    | <b>105,238</b>   |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                         |       |                  |                  |
| Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year | 8     | (6,841)          | (8,114)          |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                  |       | <b>83,039</b>    | <b>97,124</b>    |
| <b>Total Net Assets</b>                    |       | <b>1,218,375</b> | <b>1,222,483</b> |
| <b>Represented by</b>                      |       |                  |                  |
| Unrestricted funds                         | 10    | 424,553          | 459,879          |
| Restricted funds                           | 10    | 12,853           | 14,109           |
| Endowment funds                            | 10    | 780,969          | 748,495          |
| <b>Total Funds</b>                         |       | <b>1,218,375</b> | <b>1,222,483</b> |

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025

*Alison Sowton*

*Eleanor Beddoes*

Rev Alison Sowton  
Vicar

E Beddoes  
Treasurer

Notes 1 to 10 form part of these financial statements.

## **1 Accounting Policies**

### **Basis of preparation and assessment of going concern**

The financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 governing the individual accounts of PCCs, and with the Regulations' 'true and fair view' provisions, together with FRS102 (effective 1 January 2019) as the applicable accounting standards and the 2019 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP(FRS 102)).

The financial statements use the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these financial statements. The valuation of investment assets 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 that are informal gatherings of church members.

The PCC constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The presentation currency of the financial statements is sterling and all figures are rounded to the nearest pound.

The PCC considers there are no material uncertainties about their ability to continue as a going concern.

### **Fund accounting policy**

Unrestricted funds are general funds that can be used for PCC ordinary purposes in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for a specific purpose, the use of which is restricted to that area. These funds represent income from trusts or endowments which may be expended only on those restricted objects provided in the terms of the trust or bequest, and donations or grants received for a specific object or invited by the PCC for a specific object. Any balance remaining unspent at the end of the year must be carried forward as a balance on that fund. The PCC does not invest separately for each fund. Where there is no separate investment, interest will in future be appointed to individual funds on an average balance basis.

Endowment funds are funds, the capital of which must be maintained. Only income arising from investment of the endowment may be used either as restricted or unrestricted funds, depending on the purpose for which the endowment was established.

### **Incoming resources**

Planned giving, collections and donations are recognised when received. Tax refunds are recognised when the incoming resource to which they relate is received. Grants and legacies are accounted for when the PCC is legally entitled to the amounts due. Dividends are accounted for when receivable, interest is accrued. All other income is recognised when receivable. All incoming resources are accounted for gross.

### **Resources expended**

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded if that award creates a binding or constructive obligation on the PCC. The diocesan parish share is accounted for when due. Amounts received specifically for mission are dealt with as restricted funds. All other expenditure is generally recognised when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

### **Volunteer Help**

The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the Annual Report. All help received is greatly appreciated and we would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community it is.

## **Fixed Assets**

### **Consecrated property and moveable church furnishings**

In so far as consecrated and benefice property of any kind is excluded from the statutory definition of 'charity' by Section 10(2) (a) and (c) of the Charities Act 2011 such assets are not capitalised in the financial statements.

Moveable church furnishings held by the Vicar 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 (at a reasonable time). For inalienable property acquired prior to 2000 there is insufficient cost information available and therefore such assets are not valued in the accounts. Items acquired since 1 January 2000 with individual value below £1,000 are written off.

## **Depreciation**

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost, less any residual value, over their expected useful life, as follows:

|            |                                                                    |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tithe Barn | 2% of construction and refurbishment cost on a straight-line basis |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **Investments**

Investments are valued at market value at 31 December. Investment gains and losses resulting from revaluing investments to market value are reflected in the Statement of Financial Activities.

## **Taxation**

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

## **Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisitions or opening of the deposit or similar account.

## **Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount at which the charity is expected to benefit in a future period. Provision is made for any amount that may prove uncollectible.

## **Liabilities and provisions**

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation.

## **Financial instruments**

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

## 2 Income

| <b>Donations and legacies</b>              | <b>Unrestricted Funds</b> | <b>Restricted Funds</b> | <b>2024</b>    | <b>2023</b>    |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                            | <b>£</b>                  | <b>£</b>                | <b>£</b>       | <b>£</b>       |
| Gift aided donations                       | 1,565                     | —                       | 1,565          | 3,928          |
| Gift aided donations via envelope          | 3,661                     | —                       | 3,661          | 5,601          |
| Planned giving                             | 37,494                    | —                       | 37,494         | 35,874         |
| Collections (open plate) at all services   | 2,171                     | —                       | 2,171          | 2,627          |
| Sundry donations                           | 15,125                    | 2,242                   | 17,367         | 20,705         |
| Donations – appeals, grants (see below)    | —                         | 10,000                  | 10,000         | 6,500          |
| Tax recoverable on gift aided donations    | 10,147                    | —                       | 10,147         | 11,749         |
| Legacies received                          | 2,000                     | —                       | 2,000          | 300            |
| <b>Donations and legacies total</b>        | <b>72,163</b>             | <b>12,242</b>           | <b>84,405</b>  | <b>87,284</b>  |
| <b>Income from church activities</b>       |                           |                         |                |                |
| Fees for weddings, funerals & interments   | 3,842                     | —                       | 3,842          | 10,262         |
| Church lettings - objectives               | 75                        | —                       | 75             | 277            |
| Tithe Barn lettings – objectives           | 5,762                     | —                       | 5,762          | 4,004          |
| Other income                               | 636                       | —                       | 636            | 1,982          |
| <b>Income from church activities total</b> | <b>10,315</b>             | <b>—</b>                | <b>10,315</b>  | <b>16,525</b>  |
| <b>Other trading activities</b>            |                           |                         |                |                |
| Fayres and fundraising events              | 1,843                     | —                       | 1,843          | 3,006          |
| Tithe Barn lettings – other                | 4,609                     | —                       | 4,609          | 5,974          |
| <b>Other trading activities total</b>      | <b>6,452</b>              | <b>—</b>                | <b>6,452</b>   | <b>8,980</b>   |
| <b>Investments</b>                         |                           |                         |                |                |
| Interest - dividends                       | 880                       | —                       | 880            | 693            |
| Bernard Salmon Trust income                | 13,770                    | —                       | 13,770         | 13,258         |
| Napier Miles Trust income                  | 7,201                     | —                       | 7,201          | 7,091          |
| Bank interest                              | 970                       | —                       | 970            | 426            |
| <b>Investments total</b>                   | <b>22,821</b>             | <b>—</b>                | <b>22,821</b>  | <b>21,468</b>  |
| <b>Other income</b>                        |                           |                         |                |                |
| Telecommunications agreement               | 4,437                     | —                       | 4,437          | 17,750         |
| <b>Other income total</b>                  | <b>4,437</b>              | <b>—</b>                | <b>4,437</b>   | <b>17,750</b>  |
| <b>Total income</b>                        | <b>116,188</b>            | <b>12,242</b>           | <b>128,430</b> | <b>152,007</b> |
| <b>Grants received:</b>                    |                           |                         |                |                |
| Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance          | —                         | —                       | —              | —              |
| Temple Ecclesiastical                      | —                         | 2,500                   | 2,500          | 5,000          |
| St Thomas Ecclesiastical                   | —                         | 2,500                   | 2,500          | 1,500          |
| Bristol Archdeaconry Charity               | —                         | 2,000                   | 2,000          | —              |
| Bristol Churches City Fund                 | —                         | 3,000                   | 3,000          | —              |
| <b>Total grant income</b>                  | <b>—</b>                  | <b>10,000</b>           | <b>10,000</b>  | <b>6,500</b>   |

We are grateful to all grant providers for their support.

### 3 Expenditure

| <b>Raising Funds</b>                              | <b>Unrestricted Funds</b> | <b>Restricted Funds</b> | <b>2024</b>    | <b>2023</b>    |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                                   | <b>£</b>                  | <b>£</b>                | <b>£</b>       | <b>£</b>       |
| Costs of fayres and events                        | 232                       | —                       | 232            | 286            |
| <b>Raising funds total</b>                        | <b>232</b>                | <b>—</b>                | <b>232</b>     | <b>286</b>     |
| <b>Church Activities</b>                          |                           |                         |                |                |
| Youth Programmes                                  | —                         | 544                     | 544            | 1,431          |
| Food and Fellowship                               | 290                       | 2,131                   | 2,421          | 260            |
| Ministry Parish Share                             | 48,720                    | —                       | 48,720         | 50,000         |
| Donation to St Peter's Hospice                    | —                         | —                       | —              | 3,333          |
| Donation to Macmillan Cancer Support              | —                         | —                       | —              | 3,334          |
| Donation to Mary's Meals                          | —                         | —                       | —              | 3,333          |
| Donation to St Mungo's                            | 1,000                     | —                       | 1,000          | —              |
| Donation to Marie Curie                           | 1,000                     | —                       | 1,000          | —              |
| Donation to Medecins Sans Frontieres              | 1,000                     | —                       | 1,000          | —              |
| <b>Church activities subtotal</b>                 | <b>52,010</b>             | <b>2,675</b>            | <b>54,685</b>  | <b>61,691</b>  |
| <b>Church activities – support costs</b>          |                           |                         |                |                |
| Employment costs                                  | 36,458                    | 7,000                   | 43,458         | 38,346         |
| Telephone and broadband costs                     | 1,566                     | —                       | 1,566          | 1,656          |
| Parish training and mission                       | 480                       | —                       | 480            | 164            |
| Fees paid for weddings and funerals               | 175                       | —                       | 175            | 56             |
| Additional organist fees                          | 400                       | —                       | 400            | 500            |
| Verger fees                                       | 1,100                     | —                       | 1,100          | 2,000          |
| Church running – insurance                        | 3,756                     | —                       | 3,756          | 3,596          |
| Kitchen consumables and equipment                 | 959                       | —                       | 959            | 992            |
| Church and office equipment                       | —                         | —                       | —              | 2,169          |
| Organ/piano tuning and maintenance                | 1,460                     | —                       | 1,460          | 1,284          |
| Church maintenance and replacements               | 717                       | —                       | 717            | 2,177          |
| Cleaning & hygiene                                | 1,358                     | —                       | 1,358          | 1,598          |
| Altar requisites                                  | 864                       | 390                     | 1,254          | 1,761          |
| Upkeep of churchyard                              | 601                       | —                       | 601            | 2,108          |
| Security expenditure                              | —                         | 527                     | 527            | —              |
| Printing and stationery                           | 2,739                     | —                       | 2,739          | 3,012          |
| Sundry expenses                                   | 204                       | —                       | 204            | 155            |
| Church running – utilities                        | 10,068                    | 2,009                   | 12,077         | 9,974          |
| Specific expenses including licences              | 1,803                     | —                       | 1,803          | 1,556          |
| Tithe Barn running – rates and utilities          | 5,033                     | —                       | 5,033          | 4,802          |
| Tithe Barn insurance                              | 1,610                     | —                       | 1,610          | 1,541          |
| Tithe Barn maintenance                            | 2,200                     | —                       | 2,200          | 1,751          |
| Tithe Barn broadband                              | 556                       | —                       | 556            | 638            |
| Tithe Barn equipment                              | —                         | —                       | —              | 124            |
| Governance costs – independent examination        | 1,320                     | —                       | 1,320          | 900            |
| Professional and other fees                       | 2,245                     | —                       | 2,245          | 492            |
| <b>Church activities – support costs subtotal</b> | <b>77,672</b>             | <b>9,926</b>            | <b>87,598</b>  | <b>83,352</b>  |
| <b>Church activity costs total</b>                | <b>129,682</b>            | <b>12,601</b>           | <b>142,283</b> | <b>145,043</b> |
| <b>Other expenditure</b>                          |                           |                         |                |                |
| Depreciation                                      | 7,497                     | —                       | 7,497          | 7,497          |
| <b>Other expenditure total</b>                    | <b>7,497</b>              | <b>—</b>                | <b>7,497</b>   | <b>7,497</b>   |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                          | <b>137,411</b>            | <b>12,601</b>           | <b>150,012</b> | <b>152,826</b> |

#### 4 Staff Costs

|                                                               | 2024<br>£      | 2023<br>£      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| The aggregate payroll costs of staff were as follows:         |                |                |
| Gross payroll and employer's national insurance contributions | 42,505         | 37,509         |
| Employer's pension contributions                              | 953            | 837            |
|                                                               | <b>43,458</b>  | <b>38,346</b>  |
|                                                               |                |                |
|                                                               | 2024<br>Number | 2023<br>Number |
| Number of part-time staff                                     | 4              | 4              |

#### 5 Fixed Assets for use by PCC

|                                   | Tithe<br>Barn<br>£ | 2024<br>£      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <b>Cost</b>                       |                    |                |
| At 1 January and 31 December 2024 | 515,000            | 515,000        |
|                                   | <b>515,000</b>     | <b>515,000</b> |
| <b>Depreciation</b>               |                    |                |
| At 1 January 2024                 | 153,136            | 153,136        |
| Charge for the year               | 7,497              | 7,497          |
| At 31 December 2024               | <b>160,633</b>     | <b>160,633</b> |
| <b>Net Book Value</b>             |                    |                |
| At 31 December 2024               | <b>354,367</b>     | <b>354,367</b> |
| At 31 December 2023               | <b>361,864</b>     | <b>361,864</b> |

## 6 Investment Assets – Endowment Funds

|                                                    | Number<br>of shares | Church<br>£    | Shire<br>Charities<br>£ | 2024<br>£      | 2023<br>£      |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Bernard Salmon Fund</b>                         |                     |                |                         |                |                |
| At 1 January 2023                                  | 21,944              | 496,076        | —                       | 496,076        | 443,335        |
| Shares purchased in year                           | —                   | —              | —                       | —              | 10,000         |
| Net gains/(losses) on revaluation                  | —                   | 11,355         | —                       | 11,355         | 42,741         |
| At 31 December 2023                                | <b>21,944</b>       | <b>507,431</b> | <b>—</b>                | <b>507,431</b> | <b>496,076</b> |
| <b>Napier Miles Trust</b>                          |                     |                |                         |                |                |
| At 1 January 2023                                  | 11,475              | 259,402        | —                       | 259,402        | 237,095        |
| Net gains/(losses) on revaluation                  | —                   | 5,937          | —                       | 5,937          | 22,307         |
| At 31 December 2023                                | <b>11,475</b>       | <b>265,339</b> | <b>—</b>                | <b>265,339</b> | <b>259,402</b> |
| <b>CBF Shares Charity Funds</b>                    |                     |                |                         |                |                |
| At 1 January 2023                                  | 404                 | —              | 8,017                   | 8,017          | 7,342          |
| Net gains/(losses) on revaluation                  | —                   | —              | 181                     | 181            | 675            |
| At 31 December 2023                                | <b>404</b>          | <b>—</b>       | <b>8,198</b>            | <b>8,198</b>   | <b>8,017</b>   |
| <b>Summary</b>                                     |                     |                |                         |                |                |
| Market value at 1 January 2024                     |                     | 755,478        | 8,017                   | 763,495        | 687,772        |
| Shares purchased in year                           |                     | —              | —                       | —              | 10,000         |
| Net gains/(losses) on revaluation                  |                     | 17,293         | 181                     | 17,474         | 65,723         |
| <b>Total investment assets at 31 December 2024</b> |                     | <b>772,771</b> | <b>8,198</b>            | <b>780,969</b> | <b>763,495</b> |

## 7 Debtors

|               | 2024<br>£    | 2023<br>£    |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Prepayments   | 7,821        | 7,652        |
| Other debtors | 597          | 1,726        |
|               | <b>8,418</b> | <b>9,378</b> |

## 8 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

|                              | 2024<br>£    | 2023<br>£    |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Trade creditors              | 3,126        | 3,091        |
| Accruals and deferred income | 3,684        | 4,777        |
| Taxation and social security | 31           | 100          |
| Other creditors              | —            | 146          |
|                              | <b>6,841</b> | <b>8,114</b> |

## 9 Analysis of Net Assets by Fund

|                             | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | Endowment<br>£ | 2024<br>Total<br>£ |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Fixed assets for church use | 354,367           | —               | —              | 354,367            |
| Investment fixed assets     | —                 | —               | 780,969        | 780,969            |
| Current assets              | 77,027            | 12,853          | —              | 89,880             |
| Current liabilities         | (6,841)           | —               | —              | (6,841)            |
|                             | <b>424,553</b>    | <b>12,853</b>   | <b>780,969</b> | <b>1,218,375</b>   |

## 10 Fund movement by type

|                    | Opening<br>£     | Incoming<br>£  | Outgoing<br>£    | Transfers<br>£ | Gains/<br>(losses)<br>£ | Closing<br>£     |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Endowment Funds    | 748,495          | —              | —                | 15,000         | 17,474                  | <b>780,969</b>   |
| Restricted Funds   | 14,109           | 12,242         | (12,601)         | (897)          | —                       | <b>12,853</b>    |
| Unrestricted Funds | 459,879          | 116,188        | (137,411)        | (14,103)       | —                       | <b>424,553</b>   |
| <b>Grand total</b> | <b>1,222,483</b> | <b>128,430</b> | <b>(150,012)</b> | <b>—</b>       | <b>17,474</b>           | <b>1,218,375</b> |

## Analysis of Restricted Funds

|                                     | 2024<br>£     | 2023<br>£     |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Audio Visual & Music Equipment Fund | 639           | 639           |
| Memorial Garden                     | 702           | 1,600         |
| Security System                     | 2,271         | 2,800         |
| Flower Fund                         | 280           | 360           |
| Roof Fund                           | 3,667         | 3,667         |
| Vestments                           | 180           | 180           |
| Fund for new church chairs          | 4,795         | 4,475         |
| Vicar's Discretionary Fund          | 288           | 221           |
| Youth Group Fund                    | 31            | 167           |
| <b>Total Restricted Funds</b>       | <b>12,853</b> | <b>14,109</b> |





ST MARY'S  
SHIREHAMPTON



# Annual PCC Report January to December 2024

## Parochial Church Council of St Mary, Shirehampton Annual Report

### Background:

St Mary's PCC has the responsibility of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

### Membership:

Members of the PCC are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year, the following served as members:

|                                                                |                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vicar:                                                         | Rev Alison Sowton                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Wardens:                                                       | Anne Ford<br>Richard Powell                                                                                           | Resigned 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Deanery Synod<br>Representatives:                              | Pat Davidson<br>Derek Sowton                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Elected Members:                                               | Tim Forder<br>Philip Fowler<br>Solveig Gibson<br>Colin Godfrey<br>Florence Grimes<br>Sarah Parry Reid<br>Sharon Viney | Electoral Roll Officer<br>Data Protection Officer<br>Resigned 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2024<br><br>Secretary<br>Appointed to PCC on 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2024<br>Safeguarding Officer (16 Jan 2025)<br>Health & Safety Officer (29 Nov 2023) |
| Treasurer (not in PCC)<br>Safeguarding Officer (not in<br>PCC) | Eleanor Beddoes<br>Claire Staynings                                                                                   | To 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## Vicar's Report

How do you sum up a year in the life of a church?

Our very breath, in and out, inspired by the Holy Spirit, filled with the love and servanthood of its people.

My thanks to each one of you that keeps the pulse of the body of Christ beating... Anne Ford our Church Warden and all the members of our P.C.C. that carry the vision and serve with integrity and care, my thanks especially to Claire Staynings for holding the safeguarding role and to Sharon Viney for health and safety lead, then stepping in to safeguarding as Clare had to step down, important roles that keep us a healthy church...to those who keep the gallons of coffee and teas flowing throughout the year...to the welcoming space team that feeds the body and souls of our community with food and friendship...the churchyard team who clear litter, tend plants and keep the space a place of sanctuary...the events team, young and old, who move chairs, put up tables, create a world of imagination as we raise much needed funds...to the money counters, and to Phil Fowler who keeps the books balanced...the Tithe Barn team for bookings opening and closing and being the connectors between our church and our users...to Shelley Eynon for keeping our church clean and tidy and our flowers magnificent. Every one of you giving so much to the life flow of St Mary's.

And of course a church needs the beating heart of worship. My thanks to Jill Eynon our amazing vergier and her team, seamlessly bringing together all the elements necessary to make services run smoothly...thanks too to Tim Forder our musical Director and to all the members of our choir that give of their time and talents, week in week out.

If I am to keep the analogy of the body of Christ going then my gratitude goes to the skeletal system, the very bones that hold everything together, our fabulous staff team. Eleanor Beddoes who has the job of keeping all the plates spinning, especially keeping the vicar on track! Eleanor does a million different jobs with such grace, gentleness and proficiency, thanks is too small a word. We have been joined this year by Gosia Piotrowska. Gosia is a welcome new addition to our team. Her post is funded through the Priority Community Network and she is our ops manager. Gosia will be taking a lead in our grant grabbing as well as some key operational tasks.

Amy Boucher...what can I say! The boundless creativity, the passion for the care and ministry to our children, youth and across the generations and your worship leading is a constant inspiration. Read Amy's report later to see just how much life and energy there is in this church.

Once again the ASMA team have been blessed with a Ministry Experience placement student. Tristan has been a real blessing to us at St Mary's. He has been a great help on Friday welcoming space and clearly has a preaching gift which we will continue to nurture. And of course my thanks to Trevor Hearn and Duncan Jennings for their continued ministry and care for the congregation and for me! And not least to Derek for always being there and giving his all.

This year we have sadly said goodbye to some longstanding church members who have gone to glory: Tim Christie, Irene Whitfield, John Barrett, Norma Wylie, Eileen Molloy and Joan Farquhar. It is always sad to say goodbye but we have been richly blessed by their lives amongst us.

The Tithe Barn is now on the market and we are praying for a buyer soon. The global financial uncertainty may have an impact on this. We wait in hope and faith.

The vision for St Mary's and the wider Diocese to be Transforming Church Together is really seeing some green shoots flourishing. We have new congregation members and over 1000 people have been part of the life of our church this year.

Our mission to love and serve our neighbours has been at the heart of all we do. Making connections and sharing God's love is what we are called to. Over the past year I have worked closely with the Priority Community Network and we have been blessed by funding for a new Lay worker. This role is for a Youth and Community Connector. The worker will be engaging with those on the margins, beyond the walls of church. It is a wonderful opportunity to add to the ministry here and we are grateful that the funding is in place till late 2029.

A portion of this funding has also enabled us to extend Amy's ministry by 5 additional hours a week allowing a deepening of her role.

Like churches everywhere we find ourselves struggling financially. The grants to cover the expense of our welcoming space allow this mission to go on and the PCN funding above will bring new opportunities, however, the challenges of keeping buildings running and the cost of utilities continue to bite. The donations you each make regularly are so vital in keeping St Mary's alive, do please continue to be as generous as you are able.

You are the body of Christ, whether you are able to do or are able to pray. Your smile, your welcome to newcomers, your love of Jesus is what makes church church.

A year in the life of a church! Beating, bleeding, loving, serving.

A huge thank you from me. It is a privilege to minister with you. As God leads us forward I am excited by what's to come!

Blessings Alison





## Churchwardens' Report

This last year has gone by so quickly and with gathering speed we are approaching another APCM. We have witnessed many things Locally, Nationally and Globally - some news items have brought us to wondering what next and others - great joy. Throughout all we have held on steadfastly with prayers and thanksgiving.

We are grateful to all who support the Church in many ways. Some folk work quietly behind the scenes, and may go unnoticed but are vital in helping to keep the Church open and welcoming throughout the year. We are blessed by all who give of their time, quietly making things happen.

Obtaining grants has enabled us to continue to support Youth work and Community Development.

The Friday Hot Drinks and Welcoming Space has flourished and numbers of folk coming are rising and some weeks have welcomed and fed 45+. We give thanks to all who help and support this in any way and to all who come and enjoy the food and fellowship All are Welcome!.

The Pop Up events have been another way of sharing hospitality and these events are really well received by the Community i.e:- on Shrove Tuesday 150 pancakes were served.

Our Choir faithfully sing each Sunday and at many other services throughout the year.

The Area Choir are also to be thanked for their time, energy and voices and especially the Christmas and Easter programmes.

To all who have helped in any way on the practical jobs during the last year we give sincere thanks.

Our Vergers, Jill, Chris and Colin assist in many ways - we appreciate all they do - often done quietly behind the scenes.

Richard and I continue to take Communion every month to the residents at Penhill Residential Home - there is always a warm welcome.



A huge thank you to all who help to keep the Churchyard tidy and empty the bins. Also to those who generously keep the flower beds and planters going.

Bristol City Council continue to cut the grass in the main Churchyard.

Our thanks to our clergy - Alison, Trevor and Duncan and for the clergy and members from the Mission Area who frequently join us for worship.

Finally, my sincere thanks to you all.

I have been grateful for your support during my time as Churchwarden.

Sincerely,  
Anne.

Anne Ford, Churchwarden



## **Report on the Fabric of the Church Building**

### The Church Building

Various leaks occur during the heavy rain. Colin and Richard have made various trips to the roof to clear guttering on a regular basis. Simon Cartlidge, the church architect, continues to look into a more permanent solution.



The church heating has been working well throughout the year, following fitting of a new programmer last year that aimed to improve control of our heating system.

### Church Yard

Maintenance of the church yard is the responsibility of Bristol City Council following formal closure for burials. However, we continue to maintain our memorial gardens with Norman England cutting the grass.

A local woodworking group have created new surrounds for the bins in the church yard, which also include space for placing posters for upcoming events. The intention is that these will be stronger than the bins they were replacing, hopefully deterring vandalism and allowing more space for rubbish, leading to a cleaner and tidier area.

### Church Security

The church alarm system continues to work well with remote monitoring and call-out facility of a key holder.

External metal on the building is protected with smartwater applied to all surfaces and the required notices displayed.

Anti-climb paint has been applied to drainpipes to deter anti-social behaviour and climbing onto the flat roof, and the required notices have been displayed.

The external lighting on the West End porch provides light from dusk to dawn, improving visibility during the hours of darkness.

### Routine Maintenance and Certification by Contractors

Annual tests and certification of the following are up to date:

1. Lightning conductors.
2. The church heating system and operation of its gas system and supply.
3. The security alarm system.

4. Fire Extinguishers.
5. Radio microphones licences.
6. The organ humidifier.
7. Portable electrical appliance testing (PAT).

#### Routine Maintenance – In-house

A schedule of routine maintenance continues to operate, ensuring a regular review of the condition of the building and any actions needed. The schedule includes frequent checks of such items as roofs, gullies, drainpipes, windows, toilets, water heaters, church ladders, timber door thresholds, tea/coffee water heater de-scaling and more.

#### 5 Yearly Inspection of Electrical Circuits.

This was carried out by Daley Electrical on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The recommendations from the report have been carried out which included improving emergency lighting.

#### Quinquennial Inspection

The next quinquennial (five yearly) church inspection was expected around the third quarter of 2024, but contact has not yet been received from the Diocese. We understand they are running behind in their diary. Preparations for a likely visit have been made and files updated as required.

#### Triennial Inspection

The next Archdeacons' triennial (three yearly) inspection to check church records, processes and property is due in 2025.

#### Energy Efficiency and Net Zero Carbon Advice

An energy and decarbonisation survey was undertaken by Inspired Efficiency Ltd in May 2024 to offer us advice on how the church can be more energy efficient, provide a sustainable and comfortable environment, and move towards net zero carbon. This is part of the wider environment and parish support programme within the Diocese of Bristol. The target date of the Church of England to achieve net zero carbon emissions is 2030.

The main recommendations were to improve draughtproofing, increase LED lighting and to change from gas boiler heating to a full electric heating system. They acknowledged that we had reduced some emissions by moving over some lighting to LED lighting and that we use some electric heating. Our gas and electricity contracts are already through renewable energy supplies.

It is estimated the cost to install an air-to-air heat pump would be in the region of £118,000.

## Finally

Grateful thanks go to:-

- Colin Godfrey and Richard Powell for all their work keeping the Church and Tithe Barn up and running.
- Chris Hearn and Derek Sowton for their help in the church yard.
- Pam Crawford, Julie Smith for tending the flowers in the memorial garden and Sue Alford for her care of the planters in the churchyard.
- Jill Eynon, Sarah Parry-Reid, Doug Jennings, Derek Sowton, Richard Powell and Colin Godfrey for emptying the bins in the churchyard.
- Phil Fowler, Derek Sowton, Sarah Parry-Reid, Richard Powell, James Smith for operating the sound system and projection at our services.
- Thanks also to everyone who has worked so hard, not just on the building fabric but in so many other ways to make this church truly active, accessible and attractive for everyone. If you have not been individually named, we apologise for the omission and value your time and efforts.





## Safeguarding Officer's Annual Report

It is a privilege to have recently been appointed as Safeguarding Officer (in training) at St Mary's, following Claire Staynings' resignation, and I would like to start with a huge thank you to Claire for all the work she did in the role. I hope that my extensive background in Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults through schools, nurseries, local authorities, special needs work, organisations, charities and Churches can be put to good use to continue her work.

Safeguarding is considered a vital part of any organisation's activities, including those in Churches or Communities and it is taken to be everyone's responsibility to be aware of vulnerable members and visitors and to ensure their safety at St Mary's and in the community by reporting any concerns they have or anything they feel uncomfortable about. Please speak to our Vicar, Alison Sowton, Youth and Families Minister, Amy Boucher, or Safeguarding Officer, Sharon Viney if you have anything to report, or please see contact details on our Safeguarding notice boards in the porch and church and at Tithe Barn, or on our website: [www.stmarysshire.org](http://www.stmarysshire.org)

Thank you for your help – "See something; Say something".

St Mary's Safeguarding policies and procedures, and other associated policies have been updated in the past year to ensure we are meeting all legal and national requirements to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm as well as those set by the Diocese.

Policies and Procedures in place to promote Safeguarding at St Mary's include:

- child protection
- vulnerable adults
- domestic abuse
- safer recruitment
- handling of disclosure information
- lone workers
- fair recruitment of ex-offenders

All policies are available in the policy folder at St Mary's. A series of Risk Assessments for each activity also help promote safeguarding and wellbeing of participants – these are due to be updated this year. Safeguarding events and actions are reported on to the relevant next stage as necessary and confidential records are kept securely in the document safe at St Mary's.

Bristol Diocese provides a variety of relevant safeguarding trainings at different levels and for specific roles, for those working with or in regular contact with children and vulnerable adults. Much of this training can be undertaken online

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/aboutus/safeguarding/safeguardingtraining/>

as well as in person and ensures that all those who need to can develop awareness of safeguarding expectations and required processes to take competent actions in specific circumstances.

Thank you to those who have undertaken training to make our church a safer place already- 3 yearly revalidations are arranged on a rolling basis and please ask if you think some Safeguarding training would be useful to you.

All those in regular contact with children or vulnerable adults are also required to have clearance through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as a national background check for safety and suitability to work with them. Our next update of DBS checking for volunteers is now due. Thank you to Eleanor for her work carrying out this process.

We have a Safeguarding Dashboard as an online data storage system for all our records such as DBS and training etc. Many thanks to Gosia for her rapid work updating this important information for us recently. I have now been given access to this so we can monitor current competencies and upcoming needs and arrange the required training updates on an ongoing basis, to ensure we are compliant with requirements and records and are continuing to ensure St Mary's is a safe, inclusive and happy place to be.



Sharon Viney  
Safeguarding Officer



## Finance Report

The year ended 31st December 2024 has been a mixed one. On the one hand, we have seen growth in areas of church life such as our Friday Welcoming Space and Monthly Pop Up Events, which has been wonderful to witness. On the other hand, this has not yet translated into an improvement in our financial position, with a drop in income not covering our expenditure for the year.

Following an appeal at last year's APCM, several donors transferred their giving to the Parish Giving Scheme, leading to administrative time savings. Our donations and gift aid receipts are similar to the previous year, and we are grateful for all donations received. We continue to look at ways of making it easier for people to give and you will notice that a new Dona machine has appeared near the kitchen hatch which enables people to give more easily via card, should they wish to do so. We continue to welcome cash if you prefer, but this gives people more choice and ensures that people who do not carry cash are able to give to St Mary's.

In line with other churches within the Church of England, we have seen a significant drop in occasional offices, meaning we have received lower income due to fewer funerals, interments and weddings taking place at St Mary's.

The biggest impact on income has been the loss of the telecommunications mast income and we have not yet found another income stream to compensate for this.

We received £10,000 grant funding in the year, £7,000 to cover our Youth Minister salary and £3,000 to cover the costs of our Welcoming Space. The grant making climate has changed of late, with several funders restricting the size of grants, or pulling out altogether. This has made fundraising even more challenging. Having said that, Gosia Piotrowska has joined our team in January as Operations Hub Manager and one of her main roles is to find grants, be they for chairs, salaries or core costs. She has already identified several potential sources and is preparing applications as we speak, so we hope to have more positive news in terms of grant income during this year.

Although costs for the year are slightly lower than for the 2023 financial year, this has mainly been as a result of paying lower donations out – Parish Share decreased from £50,000 to £48,720 whilst donations to chosen charities reduced from £10,000 to £3,000. Utility costs continued to challenge us, but were partially funded by a grant from Bristol Churches City Fund.

Employment costs rose by £5,112 or 13.3% in the year, partly due to a salary increase for all employees in April and partly due to an increase in Amy's hours worked per week from

September 2024, the increase to be grant-funded. The grant funding for that did not arrive in 2024, but can be claimed for throughout 2025.

Net expenditure for the year before investment gains was £21,582 compared with net expenditure of £819 in 2023. Investment gains for £17,474 were made in the year, compared with £65,723 in 2023. There is clearly a need to reduce the gap between income and expenditure, so grant fundraising has an important part to play going forward.

With the anticipated sale of the Tithe Barn, we will see a reduction in costs and freeing up of valuable volunteer time. This should allow funds to pay for crucial works in the church, including making preparations for the church to become net-zero by 2030. Before any other payments are made, we will need to purchase back £55,391 Bernard Salmon shares from the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance, as these funds were used to purchase the Tithe Barn. The additional shares should see an increase in investment income going forward.

We are thankful for all donations of money and time. I don't wish to name individuals in case I miss someone out unintentionally, but I should personally thank Phil Fowler for his ongoing hard work in preparing so much of the bookkeeping, payments and background work.



Eleanor Beddoes  
Treasurer and Parish Administrator





## Health and Safety Report

Health and Safety requirements state that everyone should be responsible for the Health and Safety of themselves and others – that it is everyone's responsibility to notice and report anything that could be a hazard or risk in their work or meeting place or organisation, so as we set out on the next year of updating and improving, I invite you all to please be a part of helping us to note any elements that we could do better with for Health and Safety and let myself or Alison know of any concerns so that we can act on them quickly. Thank you.

Following our 2024 H & S audit of policies, procedures, risk assessments and practice, when a number of recommendations as to how we could improve our practice were made, we have progressed well through the checklist of the improvements agreed and still continue to add further measures. The PCC has continued to review other policies connected to H & S throughout the year too, including Safeguarding, youth policies and Lone Working.

Several recommendations from Health and Safety review visits on the Tithe Barn and the main Church have been actioned, as noted on the policy review, to further improve our compliance to requirements and care of building users, including provision of emergency grab bags, relocation of first aid kits and better regulation of chemical products in Church and a new key hook for the rear door key at Tithe Barn to make escape quicker and safer in an emergency. Many thanks to all those who have helped to achieve these improvements.

Policy folders for the Tithe Barn and Church needed some updating at the time of last year's internal audit, so thanks go to Alison and the PCC for steadily working through a number of them, updating and improving, especially to Sarah and Eleanor for the admin work involved in this. The next task will be to update our risk assessments for all activities and situations as current ones (apart from those for youth/family activities) are generally not yet as comprehensive as we would like to make them.

Thank you to Amy for updating Policies, Procedures and Risk Assessments for Youth, Family and Multi-generational church activities. Many thanks also go to all the other people who have continuously supported the implementation of Health and Safety requirements at St Mary's through various roles- Richard Powell, Colin Godfrey and Anne Ford for ongoing checks and maintenance and generally to everyone who is involved in any way in following or overseeing procedures to help keep us safe as part of their roles such as helping at events - we are grateful to you all for committing to keeping people and processes safe when volunteering.

Thank you all for your commitment to making St Mary's a safe and welcoming space for Church family of all ages and for our constantly expanding numbers of people visiting from the wider community for food, friendship, comfort, practical or emotional help and support or special events full of fun too.



*Sharon Viney*

Health and Safety Officer

## **Children's and Youth Report**

Over the past year we have continued to see the model of 'multigenerational church' grow and reach into many elements of youth work and church life, as well as being able to welcome new families and individuals from a variety of different cultures who have come to settle here in Shirehampton.

Providing opportunities for people to mix across generations, cultures and life experiences has been really enriching to experience at St. Mary's. The welcoming Space on Fridays sees many people from a large cross section of the community join together to share friendship and food. As a result, we are seeing a new wave of individuals receiving support from the St. Mary's community and in return are finding that more people are showing an interest in volunteering with the day to day tasks of church life- from kitchen help and setting up for events, donating handmade items for fayres and spreading the word of what goes on here, to new volunteers on our youth and events team, it's all really appreciated and wonderful to see people unite to use their gifts and skills to play a vital role in God's welcome for all. I also look forward to being able to expand God's outreach and welcome even deeper when we appoint a Youth and Community Connector, who's work will complement the things already in place but also reach further to the vulnerable members of our community.

Many of the children's and youth provision outlined below now includes elements of whole family ministry, allowing for faith conversations with both adults and children, encouraging a faith filled family life and being able to provide support, advice and guidance in the forms of food bank help, mental health signposting, school support and providing several families with Bibles who have requested to learn more of the Christian faith:

### **STOMP Dance Clubs:**

Our dancers range from age 3-17 and they have been working hard on a variety of routines and confidence building activities. Break time topics have been used to help with team building whilst looking at various faith topics. The groups have enjoyed a range of performance opportunities such as dancing at a variety of All Age and Celebration services, as well as being able to participate in Bristol STAGES dance weekend in a professional theatre setting – this year's dance theme was 'Creation' where the dancers looked at the story in depth and were able to retell it through music and dance. The family room that is open whilst the dancers are in classes continues to function as its own thriving community- we see extended families of all ages use this area as a warm space, homework club, crèche area and social hub.

### **Youth @ The Barn:**

Our sessions include young people aged 9-17 where we have a great core group of around 18 young people and each year we have a new intake from the year 5 classes in the area, as well as a few new older teens this year too. We have had a few new leaders join our volunteer team and it's great to have them with us each week, getting stuck in to all the activities,

themes and talks. The young people have been really keen to join their Youth Events Team and so far have helped to plan, prep, set up, pack up and lead a variety of events including The Glow Party, food serving at Pop Ups, The Noise Community Fayre, Pop Up play village, Pentecost, Easter and Christmas services and set designing for the Wonka Land Fayre!

### **Pop Ups Outreach Events:**

The Pop Ups have been in full swing throughout this year and continue to be one of the most powerful tools of multigenerational outreach for us with well over 1000 people attending throughout the year who span a large range of ages, cultures and faith beliefs. Families have expressed their thanks for a welcoming space with free activities and many have opened up with lots of soul searching questions. Some highlights have been a massive Pancake Party attended by 128 people, lighting up the High Street with Carols by Disco Light, hosting a Global Feast with many bring and share dishes from all over the world and a Summer Holiday Pop Up Play Village that filled the Church and brought in over 250 visitors, plus many Dads who said they really appreciated some Saturday sessions so that they weren't at work and could make memories with their children too.

### **GLOW:**

We have a core group of 12 Young People who have been attending Glow sessions to ask bigger faith questions. The group has engaged well with the sessions and have looked at global events and news topics through a faith lens. This year our young people formed part of a pioneer focus group to explore the future of the Church of England and how our communities can best become safe, inclusive and nurturing to teens and young adults as they explore their faith. They even won a £50 Pizza Party for all of their hard work and insight!

### **Schools Work:**

I continue to regularly attend Shire Primary School for monthly assemblies to both KS1 and KS2, as well as the Church being able to host the school Easter and Christmas assemblies. There have been quite a few exciting school developments over this year – the new RE lead at Shire Primary is keen to bring classes of Children to visit St. Mary's each term as part of their RE curriculum. So far we have welcomed 130 5-7 year olds to explore the Palm Sunday events and next term hope to welcome a similar number of 7-9 year olds to learn about Pentecost. We have also got some fantastic new links with Nova Primary School, who have so far brought their 8-9 year olds to learn about the Trinity and their 5-6 year olds to learn about Palm Sunday. They are keen to continue to visit St. Mary's to help with their RE studies. We have also had contact from Kingsweston Special School where we will be accepting teenage students on work experience in our Café and coffee mornings in the Summer. These students hope to gain experience so that they can get a job in catering when they leave school. Finally, we hope with the appointment of the Youth and Community Connector, we are able to explore links into Oasis Academy Brightstowe to further engage with teenagers across Shirehampton.

### **Sunday Services:**

Rise and Shine has moved to a new Season of providing a varied programme on a monthly cycle that allows families and individuals to engage with faith on different levels depending on where they are in their own journey:

Mary's Munchies – held over Breakfast in a relaxed environment, with a monthly Christian theme to explore through a variety of faith based activities/ Questions/ Prayers laid out in the Café area. A perfect starting place for very young children and new families that might be at the beginning of their faith journey who can build friendships with our longer standing families in attendance.

Rooted Life Group – A relaxed informal exploring of the Bible around the sofas with Breakfast pastries, deepening the faith journey of the children and adults who want to know more and potentially explore if confirmation/ further faith commitments may be of interest in the future.

Refresh- a family 'at home' programme containing Bible verses and matching activities aimed at exploring themes of social justice as a family unit or to meet up with friends to complete. The activities allow for plenty of opportunities to explore God's creation, to build faith patterns into daily life and grow together as a family in whatever capacity fits with busy family life and routines.

Worship for All Services – Offering a wide range of worship and learning styles for our community to engage with both on communal and personal levels, creating a balance of Sunday Services across the month from Traditional Sung Eucharists, standard Communion Services and All Age Services exploring Modern Worship. This also allows for our youngest members who would normally attend the Rise and Shine programme to have the opportunity to meet with wider members of the congregation, begin to learn the rhythms and patterns of Church life in a full service from those with a mature Christian faith and allow their families the ability to participate in monthly communion.

We have also had a successful year of special celebration services, with a broad range of Church family and community families of all ages coming together for Harvest, Christingle, Nativity, Mother's Day Cafe Church, Easter Services and the Pentecost Birthday Party. It was also great to see some of our uniformed organisations at our Remembrance Day parade.





## Rooted Monthly Service:

In response to recognising the missing age gap of many 15-30's in our worshipping community, we have launched a new monthly week day service, held in the evening to allow working individuals and those who have family commitments on weekends to attend. This is an informal and relaxed service featuring modern and creative worship with home group style exploration of themes and rhythms of Christian life as we move throughout the seasons of the year. It is designed as a safe space for exploring, learning and growing in faith through a variety of expressions that are inclusive for all ages. This Service shares its name with the Rooted life group as they are intended to complement each other and help with 'rooting' faith throughout the month. It is early days but has already gained interest with people from age 15+ and we hope as our young people get older and start to outgrow the youth programmes, this Service will become a space that they can make their own as they become young adults.

A huge thank you to all leaders, volunteers, young people and congregation members for helping on various teams and being present to share God's love in our community - you have made such a valuable difference to our local children, young people and their families, and we look forward to continuing to do this through many more all age opportunities!

Amy Boucher  
Youth Minister



## **Mothers' Union**



Mothers' Union was first established in the Diocese of Bristol in 1898.

### **Diocese Of Bristol Projects**

Members support our diocesan projects either by volunteering or by raising funds and giving donations.

Mothers' Union members started the Friends for Parents scheme at Bristol Children's Hospital more than 30 years ago, providing a friendly face, supplies of tea and coffee and practical help for parents who arrive from all over the Country. One of our own members, Shirley is now a member of Friends for Parents.

In the summer we send coaches with families to Weston-Super-Mare for the day, under the Away From It All (AFIA) scheme.

We have recently gone into partnership with Gympanzees helping to fund transport to pop ups to enable transport for all.

Every Christmas we purchase over three thousand Christmas Story books from the Bible Society and distribute them in pre-school play groups, primary schools and children's centres, reaching out to the families who have little knowledge of the real message of Christmas.

We are in partnership with the Clewer Initiative, raising awareness across the Diocese of the plight of modern-day slaves, those who are 'Hidden in Plain Sight'. We also participated in the 16 Days highlighting Domestic Abuse.

We value our link with Bristol Cathedral and the Mothers' Union prayers are part of the 12.30 pm Eucharist in the Cathedral on the first Thursday of every month. Supporting the 'Blonde Angels Street Team' working to bring homeless people into accommodation.

### **Shirehampton Branch**

Rachel and Darren Giltrow gave an amazing talk with pictures of their 2024 holiday in Chile and Easter Island.

Julia and friends knitted twenty teddy bears which were given to our local fire station who give them to children who have been traumatised by fire.

The Deanery Festival which some of us attended was at Henbury.

We hosted the Deanery lunch at Tithe Barn in July. I received many grateful comments at our Deanery meeting.

Jenny Gore talked to us about 'Cats I have known' which was another amazing talk. We had a collection for her as she supports wild cats in Cyprus.

Ian Caskie's talk about the SS Great Britain was also interesting as was the talk which Denise gave about the Avon Wildlife Trust.

Our last meeting in 2024 was our Christmas Bring and Share lunch. There was a variety of food to choose from which went down very well with everyone. We played a couple of games, then Santa joined us and gave out all the presents. (Thank you Colin).

When asked what shall we do this year, it was a unanimous decision to repeat the Bring and Share lunch.

Throughout the year we gave donations to various events, also to the Mothering Sunday appeal and Summer of Hope.

Thank you to all the Committee and to all our members for their support and generosity.

Julie Smith  
Branch Leader





## **Community**

Coffee mornings have taken place throughout the year in the church and are well attended by a range of people of all ages.

Fridays are particularly busy, with bacon butties being served during the Coffee Morning, followed by our Welcoming Space from midday to 2pm (1pm in the warmer months). Lunches are generally prepared by Rev Alison, ably assisted by a wonderful team who have served it up to all who come along. This has proved to be a very popular and vibrant session, with piano music provided by Sarah, lots of chat and a vibrant atmosphere. We have received grant-funding in the year to help pay for food and heating, and the grant-funders were delighted to come along and see what we were doing each week.

Despite standing down as Coffee Mornings Co-ordinator last year, Jill Eynon continues to help out at some mornings and keeps an eye on all supplies of coffee, tea, milk and biscuits.

We are so grateful to all our volunteers who regularly help, those who are happy to help at short notice and anyone who helps temporarily. The coffee mornings are such an important space for the community to meet and connect, and is widely appreciated by many. We could not continue to provide this space without the help of all of you.

It would be wonderful if we could find more volunteers who are able to help, as our team is now quite small and some would like to reduce their time volunteering. If you are interested in serving refreshments for the two hours between 10am and 12 noon, please let us know. Anyone could potentially help, so if you are aware of somebody who lives locally and would like to help, please point them in our direction.

Our church building has been used for various community events during the year. West Bristol Concert Band and Shelley Cox have held concerts that have been well attended and appreciated.

In August, we held a cream tea and flower festival as part of our Patronal Festival Celebrations. Many thanks to Morgan Williams for playing the harp during this event, and also for playing at our Longest Night Service.

Unfortunately, our Christmas Fayre had to be cancelled at very short notice due to a red weather warning being in operation on Storm Darragh's arrival. We were able to sell a lot of items over the following days and weeks during our Coffee Mornings, but Willy Wonka's arrival was postponed until the Easter Fayre in 2025.

Thanks to all who help at these events in any way, we couldn't welcome so many into our space without you.

## **Building Co-ordinators Report on the Fabric of the Tithe Barn**



This is the fabric report for the Tithe Barn.

### Roofs

The Tithe Barn roof and the Orangery roof are in good order. There is a small leak in the Orangery roof that becomes apparent in very wet and windy conditions.

### Walls, Windows and Doors

External walls of both parts of the building are in good order.

All windows are double glazed and have required routine maintenance during the year. They are all in good working order. The kitchen window has been cracked on the outside and a temporary solution is being sought.

There is a small area of peeling paintwork on the pillar to the left of the door leading from the main hall into the extension. This requires attention.

### Rain Water Goods

Gutters and downpipes of the original barn and the orangery are working and are routinely cleared of debris.

### Interior

The kitchen and toilets are in good working order.

The heating programmer installed in the main hall last year is working well and has improved control of the heating system

### Exterior

The exterior fence, gates and party wall are in good order.

The garden is maintained by Norman England.

### Security

The building is secured with modern dead locks.

### 5 Yearly Inspection of Electrical Circuits

This was carried out by Daley Electrical on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 the recommendations from the report have been carried out which included improving emergency lighting.

Annual tests and certification of the following are up to date:

1. The barn heating system and operation of its gas system and supply.

2. The fire/smoke alarm system. (6 Monthly tests to BS 5839)

3. Fire Extinguishers.

5. Radio microphones licences.

6. Portable electrical appliance testing (PAT).

Thanks to:-

Philip Fowler and Eleanor Beddoes for managing the lettings and accounts of the Tithe Barn.

Colin Godfrey, Philip Fowler, Monica and Tony Symons for the opening and closing of the Barn, dealing with the routine maintenance and operational actions required including setting up and clearing away after each letting.



## Tithe Barn Report

All the activities that took place at the barn, including lettings and charity work are controlled directly by the PCC and the roles of caretaker/ manager, building fabric co-ordinator and health and safety officer were undertaken by Colin Godfrey, Richard Powell and Sharon Viney. Eleanor Beddoes and Philip Fowler provided administrative support.

St Mary's regularly used the facilities at the barn for Church activities, including STOMP dance groups, Youth Group and GLOW.

Our Mindfulness Group also met there on a regular basis, throughout the year as did Mothers' Union and our Art Group.

The barn was let for private hire with three regular monthly users and further lets taking place throughout the year.

Members of the PCC and the church family have supported the work of the barn and their contributions are much appreciated.

Whilst the barn provides the opportunity to raise much needed income to help offset the cost of the running the building, there is a significant reliance on volunteers to undertake the tasks involved.

Having considered the benefits afforded by the availability of the barn, the PCC concluded last year that church-led activities can all be accommodated without using the barn building and the disposal of this asset would release much needed cash resources.

The Tithe Barn is now being marketed for sale. Any net proceeds from the potential sale can be used to further enhance the facilities at St Mary's, and it is hoped that there will also be scope to carry out further works to help us to achieve our net zero carbon goal by 2030.



Philip Fowler





## Church Music Report

St Mary's enjoys a traditional style of music in worship with traditional hymns and a worship song downloaded and shown on the screen. We have a sung communion with a musical setting by David Ogden on the first Sunday of each month and other special occasions. The second and third Sundays are said communion services with hymns and songs. The fourth Sunday is an all age service. We have a small but enthusiastic choir of seven mostly senior adults at the present time, but new members would be warmly welcomed. We aim to sing an anthem or hymn during the communion administration. The choir do not robe up for the all age service. The music is accompanied by our manual organ or grand piano and the organist regularly plays voluntaries before and after each service.

There is also a Shirehampton community choir run by our present musical Director which regularly practices in the church and produces performances in St Mary's during Holy week and at Christmas. Some members of the community choir are always very willing to supplement the church choir for special occasions such as the Annual Carol Service. The Area choir is also diminishing in numbers and would warmly welcome new members.

Music has always featured as an important part of our worship and fellowship at St Mary's and we have enjoyed over the years a good number of concerts in the church both by the Community choir and other invited parties. This will continue in May this year with a visit from the Avon and Somerset Police choir on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2025.



Tim Forder  
Organist and Director of Music

## Electoral Roll Report

The current status of St Mary's Shirehampton Electoral roll at the time of producing this report stood at 99 members, 39 of which live outside the parish. 7 Members have passed away during the last year. This year we are required to produce a new Electoral roll so all those wishing to remain on the roll have had to re-apply. Members of the Church will only be permitted to take part in any election of Officers and PCC members if they are on the Electoral Roll.



Tim Forder  
Electoral Roll Officer

## **Avonside Mission Area (ASMA)**

It's been a joy for me to be part of the ASMA family of churches for another year. We have continued to support one another through prayer, volunteering and shared worship and learning.

Lent saw the continuity of the tradition of coming together on Wednesday evenings to meet for worship and study in each of the churches. We started with an Ash Wednesday service then followed a course produced by the Church Urban Fund (CUF): *Growing Good: Growth, Social Action and Discipleship in the Church of England*. This was a helpful opportunity to learn about the different communities in the Mission Area and how the church can bless them and help them to grow for good in every sense.

In June and October we shared celebration events, worshiping together at St Mary's Shirehampton and St Mary's Stoke Bishop for prayer and encouragement. In June we welcomed Rev Nicola (Nic) Harris and her family to the ASMA team and she started her role as Associate Minister in Lawrence Weston and Avonmouth which has further released Rev Andy Murray into his additional role as Dean of Priority Communities for Bristol Diocese. In October we also welcomed a new Ministry Experience Scheme worker, Tristan Haggard. Tristan quickly got stuck in serving on ministry teams across the mission area and has been a great blessing.

We continue to share in running courses that bless the community wherever possible. Courses this year have included two Bereavement Journey courses, an Alpha Course and the Kintsugi Hope wellbeing groups.

Prayer continues to be a vital part of our connection. The seasonal prayer newsletter helps us to pray for one another. In May we launched the ASMA Prayer Hub to offer prayer ministry to anyone across the Mission Area. The team is gathered from across the churches and pair of people base themselves in the side chapel at St Mary's Shirehampton on a Wednesday morning and anyone can pop in for prayer. This can allow for a more extended prayer time which Sunday mornings may not allow. We use the time between praying for others to pray for the Mission Area and needs we are aware of within it. Please do come along anytime you feel in need of prayer. The café in St Mary's Shirehampton is open at the same time so it is a nice environment to be in before and after prayer also.

The monthly informal Sunday evening service 'Deeper' continues to be another point of prayer worship and connection open to all. The clergy also appreciate opportunities to connect and pray for one another at their regular breakfast meetings.

Rev Julie Summers and I have continued to serve across the Mission Area, albeit focusing more at St Mary's Stoke Bishop during Rev Simon Potter's Extended Ministerial Development Leave (Sabbatical) from August-November. The year closed with a shared service held at St Edyth's and led by Rev Duncan Jennings, a retired priest living and serving in the Mission Area.

***Rev Sonia Home, Curate for the Avonside Mission Area***

## **Bristol West Deanery Synod Report**



Diocese of Bristol

### **Introduction**

Three Deanery Synods took place during 2024.

In 2024 and the key themes were:

- **Serving Others – Focus on Volunteers**
- **Life Events and Occasional Offices**
- **Priority Communities – Mission and Discipleship**

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### **March Deanery Synod:**

#### **Serving Others – Focus on Volunteers**

**Deanery Synod on 12 March 2024** focused upon the issues of 'Volunteers'. The Meeting was held in person at All Saints Clifton.

## **The Main Theme: Serving Others – Focus on Volunteers**

Volunteers are key to our Parishes', communities and mission areas' ability to operate and flourish. Due to societal changes and the 'covid effect' we have seen volunteer numbers reduce significantly. As a Diocese, we are creating a resource framework that will support ministry and parishes/communities to attract diverse and committed volunteers, who in return find their support and service enriching.

In close partnership with the Releasing Ministers to Flourish workstream, **Transforming Church. Together** is doing everything it can to lift burdens from the people who make such good things happen across our Diocese, allowing us to concentrate on bringing God's light to those around us.

### **Two Questions for Group Reflection:**

1. When we talk about volunteers within our worshipping communities what do we mean? (Is volunteering shaped by ideas of 'discipleship', or 'service', or 'calling' – or is it simply *'using unpaid time to benefit others'?*)

2. Do we have different 'types' of volunteer?

Worshipping Community members serving the church (PCC to coffee/tea making)

Worshipping Community members supporting other charitable organizations

Local Community members supporting church activities (church foodbank)

## **The Uganda Link**

Rev Janet Hill and Sarah Thomas updated Synod on the Kitgum Clinic and the Nebbi Girlchild Project.

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### **May Deanery Synod:**

#### **Life Events**

**Deanery Synod on 15 May 2024** focused upon 'Life Events and the Occasional Offices. The Meeting was held in person at St Mary's Shirehampton.

## **The Main Theme: Life Events**

### **A Brief Introduction:**

Throughout its history, the Church of England has connected with people as they reach major milestones over the course of their lives and at the end of them. The church offers a variety of services - to mark the birth of a child, to celebrate a marriage, to mark the beginning of a journey of faith, and to commemorate a life that has ended.

The Church recognises that all change, even positive events like a birth or marriage, can cause stress as new roles are adjusted to and values, priorities, and belief systems are brought into question. If we take funeral service (in church and at the Crematorium) alone the number in Bristol Diocese has dropped from 2,260 (in 2010) to 1,220 (in 2022). In the same period Marriage and blessings of civil marriage has also halved.

### **Round Table Discussion:**

How do we learn from each other so that we can respond to this decline, connect with people more significantly and develop the missional nature of these events?

1. What items of Good Practice can we share?
2. Given opportunity, what would increase our effectiveness?

### **Summary:**

- A single approach across the Deanery is difficult because of the different parish policies on Baptism and Marriage – Funerals are more straightforward
- Building relationships within community is the responsibility of all members of the worshipping community (not just clergy)
- Building relationships with Schools (Primary and Secondary), Toddler Groups and other centres of community (from pub to Community Associations) is important
- Introducing a pattern of alternative worship helps: Messy Church and multigenerational services, Tea-Time Service, Rise and Shine, etc
- Holding specific groups and events is important: Listening Café, Bereavement Groups, Space for Grief
- Regular invitations and keeping in contact and recognising anniversaries is important
- Form a Parish 'Life Event Team' (not the Vicar, not a rota!)

### **The Uganda Link**

Rev Janet Lee updated Synod on the Lira Palwo clinic (a remote health clinic in Kitgum Diocese which is this year's deanery project), the Archbishop Janani Luwum College and the Nebbi Girlchild Project.

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## **October Deanery Synod: Priority Communities – Mission and Discipleship**

**Deanery Synod on 8 October 2024** focused upon Priority Communities – Mission and Discipleship. The Meeting was held in person at St Andrew's Avonmouth.

### **The Main Theme: Priority Communities – Mission and Discipleship**

Andy Murray, Dean of Priority Communities, provided an introduction to the work being conducted within the Priority Community Network. Many communities across our Diocese have been subject to decades of underinvestment from national and local government leading to significant socio-economic disadvantage and marginalisation. Across the Bristol and Swindon area approximately 30 of our parishes sit within the top 20% of the national indices of multiple deprivation (IMD). Local churches and clergy in serving in these areas often face a range of particular challenges, not least limited resources. We long to turn the tide and see clergy and churches in these areas flourishing and cultivating sustainable good growth, through intentional investment and support.

Support for clergy, lay leaders and churches who serve in PCs, through:

- Priority Community Network (PCN) gatherings for prayer, planning or social events. This has initially focussed on the gathering clergy from the churches below, and other invited clergy. In time, we anticipate opening the invitation to a wider range of PC churches.
- Tailored lay & ordained ministry development coaching, courses, and programmes.
- The offer for 5 parishes to be part of 'Jesus Shaped People' discipleship programme, which is running parallel to the PC programme (for churches in the top 20% IMD).
- Financial investment for 14 PC contexts, which sit in the top 12.5% IMD.

### **1. Intentional Mission and Discipleship**

- a. Mission is about sharing God's vision of justice and love for all people in the world around us, including our local neighborhood. Discipleship is about recognising and responding to God's presence in every aspect of our lives and, as church members, helping each other to do that. How does this translate into what we do as a Deanery?

### **Roundtable Discussions:**

Following an introduction provided by Revd. Andy Murray, Synod discussed the question of what we actually mean when we talk about Christian Discipleship.



**Key points included:****Discipleship:**

- Is more than 'volunteering' it is embarking on a journey with God.
- It is the 'working out' of our faith
- The challenge to parishes is to create a culture that enables people to grow in faith – it's about flowering and flourishing
- Some parallel ideas are about 'stepping-out' and 'life of service'
- Is there an important idea about 'belonging' before taking next steps?
- Enable sense of fellowship

**Invitation:**

- Far better to make personal contact and invite rather than general requests for volunteers
- Also, keep investing in people – enabling offering learning and opportunity, equipping, encouraging, being affirmative, recognize gifts
- How do we recognize those who would like to take next steps?
- Do we have a plan to foster future leaders/
- Make sure it's a safe place to take risks
- Make sure we stick to the Safeguarding policies

**Focus:**

- The focus of our gifts can be in worship, nurturing, prayer, ministry, pastoral activity and mission – so many ways to live-out being a disciple
- Preaching, teaching, home-groups

**Challenge:**

- Many parishes are limited in the number of potential 'volunteers'
- Young people and families are often an empty area in churches
- Volunteers for key roles
- Being willing to stop something if it doesn't work
- Being willing to share across boundaries

**Elections to Diocesan Synod**

Bristol West elected the following numbers to Diocesan Synod:

|                 |                                                                  |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| House of Clergy | Nine members elected (out of nine places)                        |
| House of Laity  | Ten members elected (out of eleven places)                       |
| Ex-Officio      | Two members from General Synod – one of each house (not elected) |

**St Mary's Church Shirehampton**  
**Annual Parochial Meeting and Election of PCC**  
**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 12-noon**

**Chaired by Rev. Alison Sowton; Approx. 40 attendees**  
**Agenda as attached**

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Opening Prayer</b><br>Rev. Alison Sowton                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2 | <b>Apologies for absence</b><br>Apologies: none                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 3 | <b>Minutes of last Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved by the meeting.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 4 | <b>Any matters arising</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None noted.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 5 | <p><b>The Reports</b></p> <p>All reports were published in the Annual PCC Report Booklet (January to December 2023), and circulated prior to APCM. Reports published were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vicar's Report</li> <li>Electoral Roll</li> <li>Annual Fabric Report of the Church and Tithe Barn</li> <li>Churchwarden's Report</li> <li>Children and Youth Report</li> <li>Safeguarding Report</li> <li>Health &amp; Safety Report</li> <li>Mothers' Union Report</li> <li>Tithe Barn Report</li> <li>Church Music Report</li> <li>Social Events and Coffee Mornings</li> <li>Deanery Synod Report</li> <li>Avonside Mission Area (ASMA) Report.</li> </ol> <p>Tim Forder [TF], Electoral Roll Officer, noted one correction point for the Electoral Roll Report: the current Electoral Roll includes 106 members (and not 105 members as in the Report).</p> <p>Questions invited from the floor to any of the published reports.<br/>No questions or comments were raised.</p> <p>Rev. Alison Sowton noted thanks to all involved in writing and collating the individual reports and the Annual Report Booklet.</p> <p><b>All reports received by the meeting and accepted as provided.</b></p> |
| 6 | <p><b>Finance Report 2023</b></p> <p>See Annual Report Booklet for full report from Eleanor Beddoes [EB] and Phil Fowler [PF], circulated prior to APCM. EB reported briefly to the meeting, to note that she took on the role of Treasurer in June 2023, and noted particular thanks to PF for all his continuing help.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

A video from Bishop Viv was also played, noting Parish Share.

General finance points noted were:

- Two main costs in 2023
  - i. Payroll: for 4 members of staff (part-time)
  - ii. Parish Share: Diocese request for 2023 was £64k, but following discussion at PCC meetings (and noted in APCM 2023), St Mary's pledged £45k and actually paid £50k, with the additional £5k relating to 2022 Parish Share.
- Parish Share 2024: Diocese request for 2024 is £48k. PCC expect to pay full amount.
- Major expenditure planned for the coming year includes:
  - i. New chairs at church (approx. £4.5k raised to date towards new chairs)
  - ii. New Memorial Stone for the Garden of Remembrance
  - iii. Energy audit towards net zero / new heating system
- Noted that the Cellnex mast income will likely continue this coming year.
- Noted St Mary's will need to raise money: plans include the Parish Giving Scheme (See St Mary's website), standing orders, one-off online donations, accepting cheques, introduced a more user-friendly card reader for coffees, fayres, etc (credit/debit cards), Gift Aiding, legacies.

### **Gifts and Giving**

Anne Ford [AF] noted several bequests in the last year, to a total of £5,600. All gifts and bequests are recorded in the Gifts Book, kept in the Memorial Chapel.

### **Discussion and Questions:**

- Noted thanks to EB and PF for all their work on accounts and weekly input.
- Noted the date on the Accounts states 2022, but confirmed that this is a typo, and should read 2023. EB will correct date to 2023 before the Accounts are sent to the Charity Commission. *[see Addendum below]*
- Comment / queries from floor: noted the Parish Giving Scheme is a simple system to set up and becomes a useful option for giving as many local bank branches are now closed. The Parish Giving Scheme is a national CofE designed and administered scheme.
- Question about cheque payment – noted banks charge for both cash and cheque payments.
- General request for those currently making direct debit / standing order payments to change to the Parish Giving Scheme, as it is simpler for St Mary's team to use, has zero cost to the church, includes the Gift aid, and can be set to include an inflationary uplift.

### **Finance Report received by the meeting and accepted as provided.**

**Addendum from EB, 15 May 2024:** *Some of the pages in the Annual Report booklet included the wrong date (i.e. 31 December 2022). There were some problems copying across from the signed set of accounts into the booklet, as the headings weren't copying across correctly. For this part of the booklet, the headings had to be created manually, and the last section was missed in error.*

*The Treasurer (EB) has checked the original Accounts documentation following the APCM, and confirmed that the Accounts that were signed by Rev. Alison Sowton, EB and the Independent Examiner were correct and did not contain this error. The correct documentation will be filed with the Diocese of Bristol and the Charity Commission.*

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| 7  | <p><b>Elections and Appointments</b></p> <p><b>a. Election of Church Wardens</b><br/> Anne Ford [AF] and Richard Powell [RP] have served multiple years as Church Wardens, and both have now stepped down from these roles. We thank Anne and Richard for all their service.</p> <p>Noted the key role of the Church Wardens in church life. There was an open request to the meeting for any person in the meeting to stand as Church Wardens.</p> <p>No one has come forward to date. We pray for others to come forward as new wardens or deputy wardens over the coming months.</p> <p><b>b. Election of PCC members</b><br/> Anne Ford, Tim Forder, Philip Fowler, Colin Godfrey, Florence Grimes, Sarah Parry-Reid, Richard Powell and Sharon Viney had submitted signed applications (proposed and seconded) to stand for election to the PCC.</p> <p>Noted that the PCC will also include Church Wardens (if anyone comes forward) and the current Deanery Synod Members Pat Davidson and Derek Sowton.</p> <p>Noted that Solveig Gibson has taken a short break from the PCC whilst she recovers from surgery, and hopes to re-join the PCC in the coming year.</p> <p>No other person has come forward to stand for election to PCC.</p> <p><b>Proposal: To elect those named above to the PCC.    Approved by the meeting.</b></p> <p><b>c. Appointment of Independent Examiner</b><br/> The Independent Examiner for Annual PCC report April 2023 to March 2024 was David Oakensen FCA, of William Price &amp; Co Ltd, Westbury-on-Trym.</p> <p>Eleanor Beddoes noted St Mary's church has worked with William Price &amp; Co Ltd for the previous 4 years, but there has been a significant increase in costs for the last year.</p> <p>No questions from the floor.</p> <p><b>Proposal: To not appoint an Independent Examiner during the APCM, but rather to allow the PCC to discuss the increase in cost and alternatives, at a meeting shortly after this APCM.    Approved by meeting.</b></p> |
| 13 | <p><b>Vicar's Summary</b><br/> See Annual Report Booklet for Vicar's Report (Rev. Alison Sowton), circulated prior to APCM. Rev. Alison also spoke at the meeting, commenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted she is approximately 18 months into her ministry here at St Mary's.</li> <li>• Talked to the idea of laying firm foundations - that the road ahead may have times of challenge, but also of hope - and her hope that we as a church family are ready to 'bring it on' to be a flourishing church in the year to come.</li> <li>• Thanks to the whole church family for sharing their world, and thanks to everyone who has done anything for the church, to make it the place it is.</li> <li>• Particular thanks to Amy Boucher, Trevor Hearn and Duncan Jennings for their ongoing ministry, to Anne Ford and Richard Powell for all their work as Church Wardens, to Jill Eynon and to the Choir and music makers.</li> <li>• Noted progress of regular times of coming together for fellowship and faith, such as Friday warm space, coffee mornings, the new Prayer Hub (with Rev Sonia Home), Bereavement Journey course and continued work with ASMA.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pray that St Mary's will be at the very heart of the village, by physical presence and through visible pastoral care. Noted that more than 1000 people have come into church for the pop-ups and events. Our role in going into our community, to invite people in to share in Christ.</li> <li>• Noted that in our community work, we are building towards the Diocese goal of Transforming Church Together; Diocese has asked that churches build stronger relationships within church and within community.</li> <li>• Spoke to some of the changes to come, such as a new worker, perhaps a new curate, new seating, sale of Tithe Barn, and a Buildings Energy Audit; hope that sale of Tithe Barn will help to fund some of these changes, such as more sustainable power and heating systems, and will also take pressure off the volunteers who currently manage and operate the Tithe Barn. In future, groups using the Tithe Barn will move into church building, e.g. youth groups, building a clearer, direct relationship with St Marys. Will choose seating, lay-outs and storage that are moveable and can accommodate larger groups of people or space needs.</li> <li>• Spoke to the need for open communication, and open hearts to accept these coming changes. Hope to continue the journey forward, with prayer, love and grace, gifting to the future.</li> </ul> <p>Alison Harding noted thanks to Rev Alison Sowton and Derek Sowton, to the PCC and retiring church wardens.</p> |
| 15 | <p><b>Closing Prayer</b><br/>Rev. Alison Sowton</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

St Mary's Church, Shirehampton  
Annual Parochial Church Meeting and Election of PCC  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 12pm



1. Opening Prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 – Approval of minutes
4. Any matters arising
5. The Reports
  - a. Vicar's Report
  - b. Electoral Roll
  - c. Annual Fabric Report of the Church and Tithe Barn
  - d. Churchwardens' Report
  - e. Children and Youth Report
  - f. Safeguarding Report
  - g. Health & Safety Report
  - h. Mothers' Union Report
  - i. Tithe Barn Report
  - j. Church Music Report
  - k. Social Events and Coffee Mornings
  - l. Deanery Synod Report
  - m. Avonside Mission Area Report
6. Financial Report
7. Elections and appointments
  - a. Election of Churchwardens
  - b. Election of PCC Members
  - c. Appointment of Independent Examiner
8. Vicar's Summary
9. Closing Prayer

First meeting of the new PCC – further dates to be agreed



# ST MARY'S

SHIREHAMPTON

**Come: as you are**  
**Be: renewed**  
**Go: share God's love**

[www.stmarysshire.org](http://www.stmarysshire.org)



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