

Trustees Annual Report and Financial Report of

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Lavant

St Mary with St Nicholas

Pook Lane, East Lavant. PO18 0AH

Registered Charity no. 1131684

For the year ended 31st December 2023

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Website: www.lavantchurches.net

Incumbent: The Revd Martha Grace Weatherill
The Rectory, Pook Lane, East Lavant, PO18 0AH

Independent Examiner: Mr P Tostevin
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St Mary with St Nicholas

Trustees Annual Report for 2023

Our aims and purposes as a charity

The primary objective of Lavant PCC is our Mission Statement:

To lead the people of Lavant and surrounding area into the knowledge and love of God, and bring them into the life and worship of Christ's Church.

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd Martha Grace Weatherill, in:

- The promotion of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England;
- Promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, social, evangelistic and, ecumenical.
- To know Jesus better and make Him better known;
- Practical support and care for people in the parish, from the youngest to the eldest, irrespective of level of need or, ability to pay;
- Providing financial support to those in need and, to other organisations with similar objectives.

What we planned to do to achieve our charitable objectives

When planning our activities for the year, our incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on 'charities for the advancement of religion'.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, fully recognising its duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

For this year we discussed and planned the following objectives and activities to fulfil our aims:

- Enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church
- Enabling as many people as possible to become part of our parish community
- Teaching, baptising and nurturing new and existing believers
- Maintaining an overview of worship throughout the parish
- Considering how services can involve the many groups that live within the parish
- Putting faith into practice, through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament
- Offering worship and prayer, learning about the Gospel, in small group situations
- Assisting people from all walks of life to develop their knowledge of, and trust in, Jesus
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- Providing assistance to the poor and needy of the parish and the wider locality by supporting the food bank and the relief of the homeless
- Giving grants to missionary organisations
- Reaching out to non-churchgoers through outreach activities at St Nicholas Church to create a community hub at the heart of the most populated part of the village. These activities include a monthly Brunch Café, Lunch House, Tea and Chat, a thriving Messy Church, and a Toddler Group.
- Maintaining the fabric of the church building as historic centres and focuses of life in the village, treasuring our past heritage whilst looking at new ways to engage people to use our buildings
- Ensuring the financial sustainability of the two churches

What we achieved and how we affected beneficiaries' lives

Attendance at worship

The Lavant Churches welcome visitors from within as well as outside the parish boundary. Visitors attend by personal choice and, it is our great pleasure to welcome anyone from all walks of life to take part in the life of the church. We contend that voluntary attendance to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, is a major demonstration of the public benefit of our activities.

"This church is like family to me and I feel at home here "

.....Member of the congregation

The average regular weekly attendance was 104 (at least attending once a month)

We look to encourage the deepening of

'Just wanted to say thank you for welcoming us last Sunday'...New member

faith for all ages, and alongside our services there is a programme for young people from crèche through to teenagers to join in with. Our youth work is especially varied and open to Year 6+ and meeting on Monday evenings termtime.

Christmas and Easter are very special times of celebration where many sections of the community come together to join in the services. Children and adults alike join in and memories are made.

Teaching, baptising and nurturing new and existing believers

During the year there have been 9 baptisms, 10 weddings and no services of blessing after a civil marriage, 12 church funerals, 5 funerals at the Crematorium, and 9 Interment of ashes/burials only.

A greater number of the church family have been involved in leading various aspects of worship, lending great encouragement to those involved, as well as the whole congregation. We continue to seek to extend the opportunities for the exercise of ministry and gifts within the life of our community.

Evangelism and outreach

Lavant churchgoers are the lifeblood of many regular village events as well as new initiatives. The local Church of England Primary school is also very much at the heart of the church community and is supported in its fundraising activities by members of the church.

"I have been attending St Mary's Church for forty years"

Member of the congregation

Lavant Churches offer a number of well attended outreach activities including a monthly Lunch House attended regularly by 25 - 30 villagers and church members; a weekly Tea and Chat, mainly for elderly villagers although all are welcome, and a thriving Toddler Group which meets weekly in term time and welcomes on average 12 pre-school children with their parent or carer. The monthly Saturday

Brunch continues to prove very popular and welcomes 25 - 40 villagers and churchgoers alike including parents or grandparents with children who come to enjoy a relaxed brunch while their children are occupied at the craft tables. See Parish reports

Lavant News is the monthly Parish Magazine prepared by a small editorial team which has the objective of uniting the interests of the Church and the village, promoting community spirit. Publicity in the magazine encourages villagers who may not be churchgoers to join in events organised by the church and local organizations. 11 issues were distributed in 2023 (one magazine for December/January). The publication is now delivered free to everyone in the parish and to those of our worshipping community outside the parish. Additional copies are available in both churches. Part of our mission is to reach out to everyone and this is one step towards that goal.

Provision of the church building for people to enjoy

We celebrated 9 baptisms, 10 weddings and 12 funerals in our church during the year. Our church continues to be appreciated by our parishioners and many others, as a space where life events are celebrated with joy and thanksgiving.

Our vision and plans are to continue to find ways in which the St Nicholas church building can be used for outreaches and events in addition to services. Its position at the heart of the most populated part of the village together with its lack of fixed pews and well-equipped kitchen make it an ideal venue for community events.

It is important to us that the church is available for private prayer and visits not just to the church family but to the wider visiting community. To this end St Nicholas and St Mary's are open during daylight hours and the many entries in the Visitors' Book (at St Mary's) testify to this.

Many remark not only how refreshing it is to find an open church but, also the sense of peacefulness and

"I am so glad to hear that the heating repairs are being done. It's such a lovely building..."

Member of the congregation

spirituality the church pervades.

Other remarks include the sense of history within; that people of much earlier generations found life and presence there and, comments on the appreciation of the architectural beauty of the building and biblical archaeology.

Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish

The Pastoral Care Team, chaired by Mrs Cynthia Blades, is responsible for visits, befriending and home communions.

Regularly they sacrifice their time and energies to caring, listening and helping people in the village

Provision of tangible support to the poor and needy

Especially encouraging was this year's Harvest festival where the church was joined by Lavant Primary School, the Little Harriers Lavant Montessori to provide food for the Foodbank in Chichester.

The school and church members responded to provide many tins of soup, toiletries and other essentials.

Other charitable giving

We supported various charities throughout the year. Our local Foodbank, Marys Meals, the Children's Society, the 4 Streets project, Safe in Sussex and My sisters' house, and the British Legion all benefitted from our donations. Our thanks go to our generous congregation and friends for raising so much for very worthwhile charities.

Archivist

Mrs Barbara Treverton was appointed again to look after our archives. She looks after all our files and documents, is very efficient and knowledgeable especially when we require information, and our thanks go to her for her work in looking after our valuable records.

Youth worker

The PCC were fortunate to be able to appoint a Youth and Schools worker, Mrs Frances Talbot, who is successfully working with the young people of the parish.

Financial review

As in previous years members of the congregation have supported church running costs and the Parish Share through the Parish Giving Scheme, standing orders and collections throughout the year. Donations have been received from anonymous benefactors including those from weddings and funerals. The Parish Share pledge of £78795 was paid in full, income from weddings and funerals were up on 2022, room hire has doubled on 2022 due to St Nicholas church being available for bookings now it has been improved and decorated. Lavant News continues to show an excess of income over expenditure. Between the Restricted and Unrestricted Fund Accounts there is a total sum of £61,587 to be carried forward into 2024. A new restricted fund has been created from a grant of £10,000 received in 2023 called Children's Work. This fund is to cover salary and expenses incurred purely from Children's work (Messy Church and youth events). This will be used in conjunction with the Mission Salary fund currently being used for Children's work, giving a total of £14804 carried forward into 2024.

There is an outstanding expense for electricity not yet charged to the parish of approximately £2000 - £10000. This has been set aside for when the bill comes in

St Nicholas Chancel Trust is held entirely by the Chichester Diocesan Board of Finance. Claims may be made for assistance with insurance premiums for St Nicholas

Why we hold some money in reserve

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on the general unrestricted funds (excluding property) which equates to approximately two months' worth of unrestricted payments as contingency against unforeseen situations.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

Churchwarden's report

St. Mary's

The quinquennial survey was carried out in May 2023 by our architect and the report submitted in the autumn. The report arranges repairs and maintenance in order of severity. Little work had been carried out from the previous survey, exacerbated by Covid restriction closing churches. However, the church remains in good repair and with the exception of overhauling the roof above the vestry, much of the maintenance work could be addressed by volunteers at minimal cost.

The war memorial plaque on the south wall was reinstated in time for our Remembrance Service following failure of the supporting brackets.

Monies donated by the Lavant Fete were used towards the purchase of a new lawn mower for Grave Concern; an electric model was chosen as it was more environmentally friendly.

The project to install a handrail along the drive to help visitors negotiate the slope is progressing. The boundary line has been ascertained and quotations obtained for the works including architect's fees. Planning permission and a faculty will need to be sought to take the project forward.

Following contact from a bell historian and archivist, a survey of the bell at St Mary's was carried out. Both the bells at St Mary's and St Nicholas (the information on the St Nicholas bell was gleaned from the survey and photographs taken during the refurbishment of St Nicholas) are now listed on the following website: thebellsofsussex.weebly.com.

St Nicholas

The final element of the refurbishment project, started in 2022, involved external repointing of the east elevation, replacement of eroded dressed stone and localised repair of the tiled roof.

A ceiling mounted projector, screen and audio system were installed prior to the Heritage Weekend in April 2023. The event included talks by local historians, an audio history and visual displays by local groups. On the Sunday the church was rededicated and blessed by the Right Reverend Dr Martin Warner, Bishop of Chichester.

The improvements to St Nicholas have enabled the church to continue outreach to the local and wider community and during the winter months the church provided a "warm space" for anyone who wished to attend, with soup and hot drinks being offered at no charge. Throughout the year a number of church and local groups used the facilities and in May the Brunch Group organised a themed breakfast to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III.

In respect of general maintenance; testing of the electrical services and fire extinguisher was completed without any concerns being raised. The drains did block on two occasions but were successfully cleared.

The Lavant Environment Team continue with a programme to create a wildflower conservation area within the churchyard. To this end we are working with Chichester District Council, who maintain the grass, to limit the frequency of cutting and to allow certain areas to grow undisturbed.

A generous legacy has been received for use at St Nicholas and consideration is being given to installing bespoke cupboards along the west elevation to provide much needed storage for toys used by the Toddler Group. The diocesan architect and a local joinery workshop have been approached for advice on the matter.

Electoral Roll

There were 205 members on the roll as reported at the APCM on 30 April 2023. In December 2023 there were 209 parishioners on the church electoral roll. There were 3 deaths and 12 new joiners. 42% [40%] of those on the roll live within the parish boundaries, however a further 52% [58%] live within a 7-mile radius of the parish.

Safeguarding

The Parish Safeguarding Policy as outlined by the Diocese was agreed by the PCC in 2023

This serves to remind us of the importance of the care and nurture of all church members for one another. During 2023 there has been one additional person who has obtained a DBS check; she helps with leading some Junior Church sessions.

Volunteers who help at the various children's and young people's activities have been undertaking their safeguarding training, as have members of the PCC.

Please note that there are cards at the back of both churches detailing the basics of Safeguarding which give very helpful information about the subject.

Frances Talbot is now assisting the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Elizabeth Woodford, on some safeguarding matters and her contact details, together with those of Elizabeth, are now on the parish website and in the pewsheets.

St Mary's Cleaning

A small team of people meet on the third Monday of every month, in the morning, for an hour or two. During that time they clean, Hoover and polish in St Mary's. The monthly cleaning ensures that St Mary's remains looking well cared for and visitors often comment on how beautifully kept the church is.

The team is always happy to welcome new people who are willing to come and help with this undertaking as the more people there are the easier the task.

St Mary's Church Brass Cleaning Team

During the year a small number of friends, under a rota lead by Jenny Wiseman, went monthly to the Rector's vestry. There, after removal of wax, both moveable candlesticks and those at the altar, were buffed or polished. The processional cross was polished less regularly together with any other pieces of brass

Flower Team - St Nicholas

The flower team at St Nicholas is a small but enthusiastic group who enjoy the simplicity of this beautiful country church. Within it there is a real sense of the centuries of worship that have taken place there. It is therefore a privilege to have the opportunity to create simple but effective displays to remind us all of God's creation expressed in flowers and greenery, which stand out against the solid stone walls and pillars. In April we were excited to welcome Bishop Martin to St Nicholas. For this special service and the reception afterwards, we were given a small grant to purchase flowers - it was really lovely to have the opportunity to create some more colourful and elaborate displays to ensure that St Nicholas was suitably bedecked for this happy occasion. During the rest of the year it is equally satisfying to fill some jam jars with garden flowers and hedgerow finds and spend some time thinking of those who have gone before us and enjoying quiet prayer time in St Nicholas. We mark the festivals with suitable displays and it is always nice to receive some appreciative comments. Do get in touch with any of us if you like to join in at any time. Karel Bartholomew, Lindsay Campbell, Clare Evison, Jean Sherrington and Amanda Smith.

Church flowers - St Mary's

St Mary's is decorated with flowers weekly with a pedestal arrangement to the left of the chancel steps and a small display on the shelf beneath the War Memorial tablet on the South wall. The flowers for weddings (of which we generally have quite a few) are nowadays arranged by professional florists. Our 'team' consists of Sarah Newman, Pat Riches, Deecie Tester and Elizabeth Woodford. We make as much use as possible of garden flowers in the summer months with the P.C.C. covering the cost if these are not available. Would you like to join us ? If so please get in touch

Pastoral Care group

We are a small group who try to help where possible responding to requests for visits or helping with lifts to important appointments. We have not been called upon often but are there when there is a need

Lunch House

Lunch House has had another busy year with the Christmas lunch as the grand finale. We are very grateful to the fete committee for kindly giving us a very generous donation again so we were able to provide Christmas lunch with all the trimmings at no cost to our loyal patrons. We seek to provide tasty meals at knock down prices once a month, always the second Wednesday at 12 noon, at St Nicholas church. The friendship and general socialising is important as the food. Why not come along and see, there is no age limit, everyone is welcome.

Tea and Chat

Held every 3rd, 4th and 5th Wednesday each month at St Nicholas Church at 2 pm. Tea and Chat is open to everyone and does exactly what it says on the tin! Delicious scones, quiche and cakes, copious tea and hilarious chat, everyone leaves feeling much better for meeting their friends. Donation only if you are able. Why not give us a try. Numbers have been growing so we must be doing something right!

Brunch Café

Brunch Café at St Nic's from 9.30am to 11.30 am on the first Saturday of the month has continued to be well supported this year. With a tasty offering of egg, bacon and sausage baps, bagels, croissants, toast and fruit, all washed down with freshly filtered coffee and tea there is something for everyone. We regularly welcome around 30 guests, a mix of regular Lavant churches friends, families from Lavant School as well as other Lavant residents, visitors from further afield, cyclists and dogwalkers. We are also blessed with a happy band of volunteer helpers. This year we have been pleased to host a regular Swap Shop where good quality clothes and jewellery can be exchanged. From time to time other village groups and societies join us to share their areas of interest via exhibitions and displays and we welcome this added interest. We operate on a donation basis via cash or the card reader in St Nicholas and cover our costs as well as making donations to church funds. Card payments are becoming more popular. All are very welcome, to enjoy a relaxed chat or quiet time catching up with the weekend newspapers in company.

Church Website

The church website remains a source of information for those outside our church. The new site has been in use for several years and is very simple to update and maintain.

Readers and Sidesperson Duties

There is very little change since the 2022 Report, with continuation of the trend of less folk taking on the duties of Sidesperson or Reading. The regulars are now doing monthly or twice monthly duties to cover the range of services. Attempts to recruit volunteers has yielded 2 x new Readers for the 8am services.

	2021	2022	2023
Total number of Readers and Sidespersons:	41	34	21

Monthly Prayer Meeting

Monthly prayer meetings continue to be held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. These meetings are held on Zoom and link details are available from me. A small but dedicated group pray for Lavant Churches, local and world issues, and individuals known to be in need of prayer.

The prayer trees are being well used in both churches for prayer requests and prayer requests can still be made on-line. These are used in the monthly prayer meetings.

Prayer Trust leaflets and bookmarks which give prayers for different circumstances such as bereavement, illness and special occasions remain available in St Marys and St Nicholas churches.

The monthly prayer meetings are open to all and everyone is most welcome.

St Nic's Toddlers

The Toddler group is still going strong. At the end of the Summer Term we lost 6 children as they moved up to Primary School- most went to Lavant . We start at 9 am because quite a few mums or carers drop off their older children at school and then come to us.

During 2023 we had 30 children on the Register but most do not come every week, and 6 children moved up to mainstream school.

It is great to have more helpers. Caroline Loten and Suzy Lowe look after the craft table which is very popular. We also have Gina Bill, Cynthia Blades and Barbara Treverton so we are looking to be able to split into teams later in the year. However with more helpers we are able to offer a reading corner which Cynthia has been running.

As well as Crafts, we have playdough, a large selection of books and puzzles and giant lego . Plenty of toys are available on the central mats to suit all the ages who come. We always finish with a sing-song with movement and actions .

Thanks to the generosity of the Lavant Fete Committee we were able to buy two "balance bikes".

It is a really lovely group and great to see the parents/carers having time to relax and socialise. We still only charge £1 per family group and provide refreshments mid- session

Children and Young People's

Lavant Youth and Schools Worker

The principal tasks of the role are to nurture children and young people within our community through Messy Church and to support our local school, Lavant C.E. Primary School, mostly by leading the 'church-led' weekly assemblies. The role also covers marketing events and activities undertaken at Lavant Churches, informing the congregation of the opportunities for children at Lavant Churches, building relationships with the children and providing them with pastoral care. Volunteers working with young people and children are encouraged and supported to ensure that all the safeguarding and health and safety requirements for the activities and programmes are met.

The paid role as Lavant Youth and School's Worker covers the school and Messy Church activities described below. It also covers giving talks at special services, such as the Sunday Christingle service. Leading Junior Church and Youth Group are unpaid roles.

Messy Church

Messy Church meets on the second Thursday of the month in term time after school. We have an established, competent and enthusiastic team of helpers, which means the sessions run smoothly and efficiently. We always welcome additional help. We are very pleased that all our sessions in 2023 were held in the church, with no disruptions due to building work. It is not necessary to attend for the whole session.

Messy Church is church in a relaxed environment. Each Messy Church session has a Bible-based theme and is divided into three parts, creativity, celebration and hospitality. We therefore have lots of fun with craft activities, painting and often making something to eat. This is followed by a short period of worship, concentrating on the theme and Bible passage. We finish with a shared meal.

In 2023 we have had up to 21 children attend a session, all accompanied by a responsible adult, this has led to up to 40 people sharing the meal.

We held a Messy Church session on Maundy Thursday in 2023, as the Good Friday morning activity the previous year was not well attended. Messy Church on Maundy Thursday was reasonably well attended and regarded as very successful. We cannot repeat that this year, as the school breaks up on Maundy Thursday so the church is in use for their Easter service.

School activities

Throughout 2023 the Youth and School's Worker has led most of the school assemblies on a Thursday, and also run a session at play time on a Thursday morning after assembly when the children can come and sit with me and write prayers or talk about any concerns. This is immediately after assembly and is very popular with KS1 children.

Elizabeth Woodford kindly gave the talk at the school Easter service. The Youth and School's Worker gave the talk at the school harvest service and also the KS2 Christmas service, which this year was a Christingle service.

The children and staff are very welcoming.

Rev'd Martha and the Youth and School's Worker have termly meetings with the head teacher Adrian King. The growing partnerships covenant between parish and school has been discussed. (This was signed in January 2024 by the Head Teacher and Incumbent.)

Junior Church

Junior Church continues to meet in term-time during the 10 am service, this is supported by an enthusiastic and competent team of parental help, one of whom has started to lead the sessions. We have had an average attendance of 7 children per week (same as in 2022) from 21 on the register. Some of the young people who have moved to secondary school come to help occasionally at Junior Church; their help is appreciated.

Junior Church continues to help with the Let's Celebrate services.

We held our annual Christingle service in December, which was well attended.

Youth Group

The youth group has met on Mondays during term time.

We have had a varied programme with many different activities, including a celebratory BBQ kindly hosted by Lindsay and Iain Campbell in their lovely garden.

For the first time for many years Lavant Churches sent a group to participate fully in Maycamp at Plumpton Race Course. We joined with the youth groups from St John's Southbourne, Immanuel Church and St Paul's Chichester. Maycamp was greatly enjoyed by the young people and leaders attending - with glorious weather and cold nights.

We are very grateful for the helpers, but have struggled to find replacements for the leaders and helpers who have had to leave for various reasons. We have managed to run a session most weeks in term time. More helpers would be welcomed to bring new ideas and generally help to ensure that we can continue to offer youth group every week. Help doesn't need to be every week.

We have had an average weekly attendance of 5 over the year. Although there are 17 young people on the register, only a few of them attend most weeks; some attend very occasionally.

Thank you to volunteers

None of these activities would be possible without the help of many volunteers, some of whom help at more than one activity. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged with sincere thanks.

Lavant News

All the activities are reported in Lavant News and to the PCC meetings.

Organist and Choirmaster Report

Summary statement:

The past Year has seen some significant change, but all in all things continue to function without any significant hindrances.

Organs:

Regrettably, in the past year the organ at St Nicholas has proven to have effectively finished its functional life. Since then, a digital keyboard with an organ setting has been used to varied results, and hymn selections have been adapting accordingly. It is hoped that some day soon we may be able to begin fund raising for a replacement organ, but as most things it will take a lot of time and forward planning. There is no current time estimate for when this could start.

The organ at St Mary's continues to be a wonderful instrument for enhancing service.

Choir:

The average attendance is 8-12 choristers at full attendance.

We have continued to provide anthems for major feast services, as well as psalms when relevant.

Recruiting has regrettably been slow and we have lost a stalwart member of the choir with Phil Binns' passing. As organist I am thinking about more avenues to recruit choristers, and suspect that a beginners' workshop or sing along may be idea to get the ball rolling.

As organist I would like to thank everyone for their assistance in making things run smoothly at Lavant Churches from my musical perspective.

Grave Concern Report

This report is very similar to previous years and like last year at no time did we have a full turnout. The group consists of some 7 active members now down from 8 last year and although this sounds a lot, we all have other essential commitments as well. The core group is a dedicated team but would benefit from more volunteers to spread the workload a little. The group is effective with everyone involved working very well together.

As now and reported last year we could do with more volunteers so, before the start of the mowing season a short appeal notice will be prepared for insertion into the Lavant News and or the Pew Sheet. The sheet recently distributed identifying church voluntary activities needing more support hasn't, so far, lead to any new recruits.

At the end of last season, a new battery-operated mower was bought financed in part by the PCC and the Lavant fete committee which will be a great asset and used to mow the more difficult areas of the churchyard. The three mowers and two strimmers will have to be serviced ready for the season starting in April 2024. The border by the west door has had the blighted box removed and replanted with roses.

Study Group

The group started early in 2023, meeting on the first and third Thursdays of each month. Over the course of the year we worked through the study booklet *Listening to God*.

This year we are watching *The Chosen*, the Netflix dramatisation of the life and ministry of Christ and are discussing the films with the aid of a booklet.

We have enjoyed sharing God's Word and getting to know each other better.

Hire of Venues

A new Booking Secretary, Clare Morrison, took over from Sue Jackson in August. The role of Secretary includes all aspects of dealing with bookings for St Nicholas Church, the Lavant Room and St Mary's Church. These venues are hired for various reasons, including meetings, funeral wakes, a craft event and the Lavant Environmental Group. Revenue from the bookings is variable and we hope more bookings will be made in the coming year.

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod consists of members of the clergy together with laity members from parishes within the Deanery. There were two meetings of the Deanery Synod during 2023: March 1st at St George's Whyke and June 15th at St James Birdham. There was also a Deanery finance meeting on September 22nd.

The meeting in March included a presentation on online safety, initial discussions of the Deanery Mission Action Plan, and reports from the General Synod and Diocesan Synod. The latter reported that expenditure was exceeding income and it was difficult to see where further savings could be made. The number of curacies had been reduced, but an increase in parish share was required. At the June meeting, there was further discussion on the Deanery Mission Action Plan. There was a consensus on the need to use widely what we already have and think about where we can share resources. The Diocesan Synod report included discussions on the progress made in 'Living in Love and Faith', and a presentation on the vision for racial justice. The General Synod also discussed LLF, and other regulatory issues.

The finance meeting in September addressed the monetary concerns of the Deanery. 2023 is still forecast as a deficit budget and parishes are encouraged to pay as much as they can, increasing by the cost of inflation if possible.

Weekly Email Newsletter

We send a newsletter to about 305 [301 in 2022] people each week, a third or so are not regular members of our church but they like to keep in touch with our activities. Production of the email is shared by 3 volunteers who each take responsibility for producing the newsletter for a month at a time. Overall, the open rate has stayed steady this year at about 49-57% [compared to the sector average of 22%].

Trustees Annual Report

Structure, governance and management of the charity

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is registered with the Charity Commission as required by the Charities Act 2011. Its governing document is the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

During the year the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

Ex Officio member

Incumbent: The Rev'd Martha Weatherill - Chairman

Elected Wardens: Mrs Georgina Bill
Mr Iain Campbell

Elected Members: Mrs Caroline Loten
Mrs Jenny Quest
Mrs Deecie Tester
Mrs C Blades

Co-opted Mrs S Sims - Secretary
Mr M Kingsford

Deanery Synod Mrs Sue Tostevin

Membership of the PCC is determined under the Church Representation Rules and consists of certain ex-officio members (the incumbent), the churchwardens (elected annually and who by resolution of the PCC may serve for a maximum of 6 years in succession) and members of the Deanery Synod (elected to serve for 3 years) and 12 members of the church who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) to serve for a period of 3 years before seeking re-election for a further 3 year period only. Members are warmly encouraged to stand for election to the PCC and we try to ensure a balance of skills and experience where possible.

This Trustees' Annual Report was **approved** by the PCC and signed on their behalf by The Reverend Martha Weatherill - PCC Chairman

Signed: Reverend M Weatherill

Date: 17 March 2024

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Lavant

St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant

Pook Lane, East Lavant, PO18 0AH

Registered Charity no. 1131684

For the year ended 31st December 2023

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St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant

registered charity number 1131684

Summary of Financial Receipts and Payments

The financial effect of our activities during the year can be summarised as follows

	<i>Unrestricted</i>		<i>Restricted Fund/s</i>	<i>Endowed Fund/s</i>	<i>Total All Funds 2023</i>	<i>Total All Funds 2022</i>	<i>Notes</i>
	<i>General Fund</i>	<i>Designated Funds</i>					
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Income and endowments from:							
Donations, grants and legacies	80,822	5,079	24,553	-	110,454	216,214	
Charitable activities	7,336	-	480	-	7,816	8,939	
Other trading activities	9,868	-	-	-	9,868	10,715	
Investments	267	-	-	-	267	265	
Total received	98,293	5,079	25,033	-	128,405	236,133	3
Expenditure on:							
Fund-raising	-241	-	-	-	241	500	
Charitable costs	92,954	13,717	32,543	-	139,214	266,185	
Trading costs	5,969	-	-	-	5,969	5,536	
Fixed Assets	1,270	-	15,761	-	17,031	-	
Total paid	100,434	13,717	48,304	-	162,455	272,221	5
Net income or (net expenditure)	(2,141)	(8,638)	(23,271)	-	(34,050)	(36,088)	
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Net movement in funds	-	-	-	-	-	-)	
Bank accounts at 1 January	29,835	18,638	47,164	-	95,637	131,725	
Bank accounts at 31 December	27,694	10,000	23,893	-	61,587	95,637	A&L

St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant

registered charity number 1131684

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Our financial position at the year-end was

	<i>Unrestricted</i>		<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Endowed</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>General</i>	<i>Designated</i>			<i>All Funds</i>	<i>All Funds</i>
	<i>Fund</i>	<i>Funds</i>	<i>Fund/s</i>	<i>Fund/s</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2022</i>
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Assets:						
Bank current account	27,694	10,000	23,893	-	61,587	95,637
Cash	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total bank, cash and deposit accounts	27,694	10,000	23,893	-	61,587	95,637
Debtors & Prepayments	-	-	-	-	-	2,480
Gift Aid recoverable	2,750	-	-	-	2,750	3,100
Debtors	2,750	-	-	-	2,750	5,580
Chancel Trust Income held by DBF	3,598	-	-	-	3,598	3,486
Investment Assets	3,598	-	-	-	3,598	3,486
Asset Purchases	17,031	-	-	-	17,031	-
Fixed Assets	17,031	-	-	-	17,031	-
Total assets	51,073	10,000	23,893	-	84,966	104,703
Liabilities:						
Magazines adverts received in advance	2,724	-	-	-	2,724	2,661
Parish Share	6,566	-	-	-	6,566	-
Utilities etc.	16,500	-	-	-	16,500	2,686
						-
Total liabilities	25,790	-	-	-	25,790	5,347

This Financial Report for the year ended 31st December 2023, including the notes following, was approved by the PCC and signed on its behalf by The Revd. Martha Weatherill, PCC Chairman on 17 March 2024

St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant

registered charity number 1131684

Notes to the Financial Report

1 The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and current Church Accounting Regulations, using the Receipts and Payments basis.

2 The following assets are recognised but not valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities: Movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC, which require a faculty for disposal.

3 Analysis of total received

	Unrestricted		Restricted Fund/s	Endowed Fund/s	Total All Funds 2023	Total All Funds 2022	Notes
	General Fund	Designated Funds					
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Planned giving (excl. tax refunds)	46,244	-	-	-	46,244	44,738	
Loose cash collections/GoodBox	8,971	-	-	-	8,971	7,153	
Donations and Special appeals	9,950	-	600	-	10,550	12,033	
Gift Aid recovered	14,247	-	-	-	14,247	12,408	
Legacies	-	-	6,633	-	6,633	5,000	4
Fund raising	410	-	-	-	410	-	
Grant income	1,000	5,079	17,320	-	23,399	134,782	
Donations and legacies	80,822	5,079	24,553	-	110,454	216,214	
Fees for weddings & funerals	7,336	-	480	-	7,816	8,939	
Charitable activities	7,336	-	480	-	7,816	8,939	
Magazine sales	-	-	-	-	-	95	
Magazine advertising	8,766	-	-	-	8,766	9,582	
Hall lettings	1,102	-	-	-	1,102	501	
Insurance claim	-	-	-	-	-	537	
Other trading activities	9,868	-	-	-	9,868	10,715	
Bank & CBF deposit interest	267	-	-	-	267	265	
Total received on all funds	98,293	5,079	25,033	-	128,405	236,133	

4 A legacy of £6,633 received from the Estate of the late Edward Farrow for the benefit of St Nicholas's Church is held in Restricted Funds (see note 10).

St Mary with St Nicholas, Lavant

registered charity number 1131684

Notes to the Financial Report

5 Analysis of total paid

	Unrestricted		Restricted	Endowed	Total	Total
	General	Designated			All Funds	All Funds
	Fund	Funds	Fund/s	Fund/s	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Stewardship costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fund raising expenses	241	-	-	-	241	500
Cost of raising funds	241	-	-	-	241	500
Charitable grants and donations:	1,742	-	842	-	2,584	5,692
Parish share to Chichester Diocese	72,229	-	-	-	72,229	77,967
Salaries and honoraria incl NI	-	-	8,730	-	8,730	7,086
Training conferences etc	-	-	-	-	-	314
Other clergy costs	4,112	-	2,373	-	6,485	5,381
Insurance	3,789	-	-	-	3,789	3,217
Water, Gas, Electricity, and Oil	1,004	-	3,072	-	4,076	7,666
Upkeep of services (inc choir)	237	-	3,215	-	3,452	1,736
Major church maintenance	1,712	13,717	6,783	-	22,212	143,956
Upkeep of churchyard (inc Stelae)	878	-	1,663	-	2,541	2,615
Other church maintenance	3,338	-	-	-	3,338	5,808
Children/youth work	-	-	2,168	-	2,168	1,703
Heritage Festival	-	-	3,697	-	3,697	-
Administration and other	3,913	-	-	-	3,913	3,044
Charitable costs	92,954	13,717	32,543	-	139,214	266,185
Magazine printing	5,969	-	-	-	5,969	5,536
Bookstall costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trading costs	5,969	-	-	-	5,969	5,536
Other payments	1,270	-	15,761	-	17,031	-
Total paid on all funds	100,434	13,717	48,304	-	162,455	272,221

St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant

Registered charity number 1131684

Notes to the Financial Report

6 The Parish share to the Chichester Diocese is for the payment of Clergy and other central costs. The full cost of parish ministry amounted in 2023 to £78,795, of which £1,000 was paid in 2022, £72,229 in 2023 and £6,566 in January 2024. Other clergy costs amounted to £6,485.

7 Gift Aid on all donations collected under the Diocese's Parish Giving Scheme has been received. Gift Aid on other qualifying donations received since 30th September is outstanding.

8 Payments to PCC employees:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages, salaries and honoraria	8,930	7,086
	8,930	7,086

9 Payments to PCC members: No payments were made to PCC members during the year other than for reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of the PCC.

10 Statement of Funds

	Balances b/fwd 1 Jan 2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfers, other gains and losses	Balances c/fwd 31 Dec 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted Funds					
Building Fund	6,683	-	6,683	-	-
Heritage Lottery Fund	13,016	7,320	20,336	-	-
Mission Fund	15,820	-	12,100	-	3,720
Youth/Children's Mission	9,250	10,000	7,743	-	11,507
Outreach	-271	-	-	-	-271
St Mary's Garden of Remembrance	669	600	600	-	669
Choir Fund	1,155	480	842	-	1,635
Afghan Refugee Fund	842	-	-	-	-
St Nicholas Fund	-	6,633	-	-	6,633
Total of all restricted funds	47,164	25,033	48,304	-	23,893
General fund	29,835	98,293	100,434	-	27,694
Designated Funds	18,638	5,079	13,717	-	10,000
Total of all unrestricted funds	48,473	103,372	114,151	-	37,694
Total All Funds	95,637	128,405	162,455	-	61,587

St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant

Registered charity number 1131684

Notes to the Financial Report

10 Statement of Funds (cont.)

Restricted funds are not invested permanently but are to be spent within reasonable timescales.

Mission Fund

A further instalment of the Diocesan Board of Finance grant for Youth and Children's work amounting to £10,000 was received in the year.

Heritage Lottery Fund

The charity received the last instalment of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund amounting to £7,320, which with funds brought forward was applied to the purchase of a projector and ancillary equipment and expenditure on the Heritage Festival.

Unrestricted funds are not subject to any donor restrictions and can be spent as the PCC decides

The Income of the Designated Funds amounting to £5,079 represented grants received under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme as compensation for irrecoverable VAT on building work and was applied to major repair work undertaken in 2023. £10,000 remained in designated funds at 31 December 2023

**Independent Examiner's Report
to the PCC of St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant
for the Year Ended 31st December 2023**

This is my report to the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish (PCC) of St Mary with St Nicholas, Lavant, on the annual report for the year ended 31st December 2023 set out on pages 14 to 19.

**Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and examiner**

The PCC members are responsible for the preparation of the annual reports. The PCC members consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

1. examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
2. follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and
3. state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 the 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**

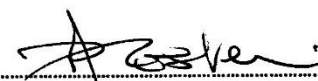
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements to:
 - a. keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - b. prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities 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.

Examiner's signature



Examiner's name

Philip James Iostevin

Date

17 March 2024

Relevant professional
Qualifications(s) or body

CTA

Examiner's address

48 MAPLEHURST ROAD

MANCHESTER M19 6AP