



ANNUAL REPORT

AND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

OF THE

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Incumbent:
The Revd James Findlay

Bankers:
HSBC Bank plc
165-167 High Street
Poole
BH15 1AU

Independent Examiner:
Mr John Roper
26 Pine Drive
St Ives
Ringwood
Hants
BH24 2LN

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ST PAUL'S CHURCH, THROOP

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

Administrative Information

St Paul's Church is situated in Landford Way, Throop, Bournemouth. It is part of the Diocese of Winchester within the Church of England. The correspondence address is St Paul's Vicarage, Chesildene Avenue, Bournemouth, BH8 0AZ

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission. Our Charity Number is 1131699.

The PCC complies with the duties under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

The PCC complies with the Law contained in the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018.

PCC members who have served from 30th April 2023 until the date this report was approved are:

Incumbent:	Revd James Findlay	
Clergy:	Revd Ben Coulter (ex-officio) Revd Chris Dodgson (ex-officio)	
Wardens:	Jenny Powell Stephen Bendell	
Treasurer:	David Penfold	
PCC Treasury Liaison Officer:	Revd Chris Dodgson	
Deanery Synod Representatives:	Claire Saunders	David James
PCC Elected Members:	David James Gill Schiel Andy Renton Ali Watts Mark Arnold (co-opted)	Claire Saunders Averil Bowyer Kathy Blake Kerry Lawford Stuart Calvert (co-opted)
Ex-Officio Members:	Andy Saunders	

Structure, governance and management

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

All PCC Members are required to undergo Safeguarding Training to Level C1 and must have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check.

Objectives and Activities

St. Paul's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the church premises of St. Paul's Throop.

The PCC also operates with a number of sub-committees who meet on a regular basis and submit minutes to the PCC for approval. The members of these sub-committees for 2023 are:

PCC Sub-Groups 2023

Standing Committee

Revd Jim Findlay (Priest-in-Charge), Jenny Powell & Stephen Bendell (Church Wardens), Gill Schiel, Claire Saunders & Chris Dodgson.

Fabric and Maintenance

Stephen Bendell & Gordon Cox

Safeguarding Officer

Pippa Fisher

Data Protection Officer

Chris Dodgson

Church Attendance:

There were 137 Parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll at the end of 2023 of which 52 were resident in the Parish.

Average Sunday morning attendance for 2023 when attended in person was 30 under 16 years of age and 98 over 16 years.

PCC Review of the Year

The PCC met 7 times during 2023. The PCC was pleased to welcome the following new members in 2023: –

Kathy Blake, Mark Arnold (co-opted), Stuart Calvert (co-opted) and Steve Bendell.

St Paul's was pleased to support continued participation of food donations at Harvest for Bournemouth Foodbank.

At the January PCC meeting, it was agreed a social media strategy would be formulated and the Barbara Rose rent review was discussed. With regard to the budget it was agreed that our giving be more missional-focussed and communication around giving would improve. Members were to research and prayerfully consider their stance re Living in Love and Faith.

In February, Revd Jim updated members on the pause of the potential merger with Holy Epiphany. An increase to the rent for Barbara Rose Pre-School was agreed. Discussion took place around the House of Bishop's proposal and Synod's response and then spent some time in prayer.

In March, the PCC approved giving notice to leave the Energy Basket and find alternative utility provision. The annual report for the APCM was approved. The book that Revd Jim is writing was discussed - PCC agreed to fund the first print run with potential profits going to St Paul's. Purchase of a fridge/freezer for the kitchen was agreed. Nathan Bendell attended to talk members through his 2 year plan for children/youth work. Plans for a Coronation Day Jamboree were discussed. Repairs to the intruder alarm and bi-fold doors were authorised.

At the May PCC meeting, Chris Dodgson encouraged members to look at and take heed of the Data Sharing Agreement on our website and ensure paper and electronic records are secure. Taking on a 12 month contract with Perfect Clarity for utilities was agreed as was the formulation of an Environmental Policy. The Appointment of PCC officers was conducted as well as approval of electoral roll additions. It was agreed that a working party would work on a job description for the Director of Music role. New areas of responsibility for each PCC member were also agreed. A quarterly dementia friendly worship service was approved, as was a pamper and pizza event for the Childminders group.

On 5th June, the Standing Committee approved David James being made Primary User for online banking.

At the June PCC meeting, new PCC members were urged to speak to Jim Page about a DBS check and training. Stuart Griffiths was approved as book keeper and Gordon Cox as Gift Aid Secretary. The church office is to be remodelled to fit in a 3rd person. Following discussion it was agreed that we would look to register the cafe with the Food Standards Agency, and that St Paul's would bear the cost of training. It was also agreed to run an Alpha course in the autumn. Revision of Mission Partners was discussed.

The July PCC meeting was cancelled to allow members to progress their various areas of responsibility.

On 10th August, the Standing Committee approved a month-long trial of holding the Bournemouth Recycle food surplus on our premises.

At the September PCC meeting, it was agreed that the remaining funds in this year's discretionary fund be given to Phoebe Arnold working for Friends International. Revision of our Mission Partners was discussed as was Revd Jim's proposal regarding 40-40-40. Members agreed that the extension flooring be replaced. The food surplus trial was deemed a success and would be confirmed, with an agreement that Revd Ben would look into the infrastructure.

Due to illness of both the Vicar and PCC Secretary, the October meeting had to be cancelled. However members were approached electronically to approve David Penfold as Treasurer replacement - all were in favour.

In November, Katie Hodgkinson advised that it had been agreed that her curacy would move to St Andrew's Bennett Road. PCC approved adopting the suite of safeguarding docs. Purchase and installation of a new screen to replace the broken projector was discussed and agreed. Discussion took place around staff salaries. An Environmental Policy was approved and Revd Jim updated members on 40-40-40 plans.

On 22nd December, the Standing Committee approved a deep clean of St Paul's gutters, valleys and pipes.

And our Deanery Synod Representatives regularly reported to the PCC throughout the year on the workings of the Synod.

The Annual Report was drawn up by Mrs Kerry Lawford, PCC Secretary and approved by the PCC of St Paul's Throop on

and signed on its behalf by Rev James Findlay (PCC Chair)

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'James Findlay'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a stylized 'F'. A horizontal line is drawn across the page below the signature.

Financial Review 2023

The total income for the year ended 31 December 2023 across all Funds was £162,830 [2022: £201,796]. Regular Giving and freewill offertory increased by over 3% compared with 2022 (not including Single Donations). The PCC gives thanks to the Lord for the generosity of our church family. Pledges received for the Children & Youth Minister Fund amounted to £10,308 [2022: £14,832] and the PCC also gives grateful thanks to the Joseph Rank Trust for their award of a £30,000 Grant over three years: these funds have secured the position of our Children & Youth Minister until 2025.

Resources expended amounted to £163,771 [2022: £212,088]. Net incoming resources for the year generated a total deficit of £941 [2022 deficit: £10,292].

2023 was an exciting year for our finances and the way in which we were able to serve the Lord through our financial activities, for which the PCC acknowledges with gratitude the servant-hearted giving of our church family in terms of talents, time, and money. 2024 will be a challenging year as we struggle with the increase in staffing costs, coupled with the general rising costs of consumables across the board, from office supplies to coffee. We trust in God's unfailing goodness to guide us through and to equip us financially to continue our mission to Love Like Jesus, Live Like Jesus, and Lead to Jesus.

It is PCC policy to endeavour to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least three months unrestricted payments, which is equivalent to £31,000. This is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. The cash balance of £45,181 held on unrestricted (including designated) funds at the year end, together with the amounts payable to and by the PCC, was in excess of this target.

The PCC has sufficient reserves, organised into general funds, designated, and restricted funds, as described in Note 6 to the Accounts. The Trustees have assessed and consider that the PCC can continue its operations and meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least the next twelve months.

Responsibilities of the members of the PCC in relation to the Accounts

The PCC is responsible for all parish finance, its management and control, including the appointment of a Treasurer. Its legal responsibilities include:

- Keeping proper accounting records, which are sufficient to show and explain all the PCC's transactions and must include a record of all relevant assets and liabilities. The records must:
 - show and explain all the PCC's transactions;
 - disclose the PCC's financial position at any time;
 - enable the required accounts to be prepared;
 - show on a day-to-day basis all receipts and payments and what they were for;
 - include a record of all assets and liabilities.
- Ensuring that the finances of the PCC are under its control and only delegated if the PCC can ensure that its wishes will be followed.
- Preparing annual accounts and a report, which shall be presented to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the requirements of the Church Representation Rules.
- Arranging for an independent examination of the Accounts.

Approved by the PCC and signed on its behalf by:



David Penfold: Treasurer

Dated: _____ 8.5.24 _____



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	St Paul's PCC Bournemouth		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2023	Charity no	1131699
Set out on pages	A3 to A12		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

Signed: **J Roper**

Date: **03 May 2024**

Name: John Roper

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body (if any):

ACMA, CGMA, MCICM

Address:

26 Pine Drive, St Ives
Ringwood
BH24 2LN

Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 December 2023

		Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
	Notes					
Incoming resources						
Donations and legacies		114,494	500	22,498	137,492	187,499
Income from charitable activities		9,858	1,709		11,567	4,479
Other trading activities		12,942			12,942	9,747
Investment income		1	583	245	829	71
Total incoming resources	2	137,294	2,792	22,743	162,830	201,796
Resources expended						
Expenditure on charitable activities		123,579	15,583	24,608	163,771	212,088
Total resources expended	3	123,579	15,583	24,608	163,771	212,088
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers		13,715	(12,791)	(1,865)	(941)	(10,292)
Transfers between funds in/(out)	6b	(19,617)	10,957	8,660	-	-
Net movement in funds		(5,902)	(1,834)	6,795	(941)	(10,292)
Funds at 1 January		15,873	37,044	13,975	66,892	77,184
Funds at 31 December		9,971	35,210	20,770	65,952	66,892
Represented by						
Unrestricted:	General fund	9,971			9,971	15,873
Designated:	Building Fund		14,607		14,607	6,456
	Development Fund		14,964		14,964	25,207
	Reserves Fund		4,739		4,739	4,485
	Vicars					
	Discretionary Fund		900		900	896
Restricted:	Children & Youth Ministry Fund			20,770	20,770	13,975
		9,971	35,210	20,770	65,952	66,892

Balance Sheet

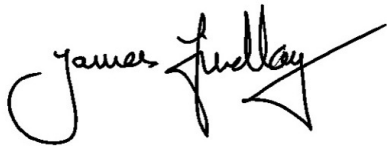
For the year ended 31 December 2023

St Paul's PCC, Throop, Bournemouth

Balance Sheet detailed

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Current Assets			
Cash at bank		64,473	31,018
Debtors & Prepayments	4	3,788	48,849
		68,261	79,867
Liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	5	2,309	12,975
		65,952	66,892
Net Current Assets	7	65,952	66,892
Represented by Funds			
Unrestricted	6b	9,971	15,873
Designated	6b	14,607	6,456
		14,964	25,207
		4,739	4,485
		900	896
Restricted	6b	20,770	13,975
		65,952	66,892

Approved for issue by the Parochial Church Council and signed on its behalf by:



Rev James Findlay (Chairman)



David Penfold (Treasurer)

Dated 8.5.24

Charity Commission Registration no: 1131699

Notes to the accounts

31 December 2023

1. Accounting policies

Basis of financial statements

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 Accounts have been prepared on the Accruals Basis.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are income funds that are to be spent on the PCC's general purposes.

Designated funds are general funds set aside by the PCC for use in the future. Project funds are designated for particular projects for administration purposes only. Designated funds remain unrestricted and the PCC may move any surplus to other general funds.

Restricted funds comprise revenue donations or grants for a specific PCC activity intended by the donor.

Where these funds have unspent balances, interest on their pooled investment is apportioned to the individual funds on an average balance basis.

Incoming resources

Planned giving, collections and similar donations are generally 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 entitled to the use of the resources, their ultimate receipt is considered reasonably certain, and the amounts due are readily quantifiable. Interest is accounted for as and when received. 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 Common Mission Fund expected to be paid over is accounted for when due. All other expenditure is generally recognised when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

Fixed assets

Movable church furnishings held by the vicar and churchwardens on trust for the PCC are listed in the church's inventory, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time).

New fixtures, fittings, and equipment used within the church premises with a purchase cost of £10,000 or more are depreciated on a straight-line basis over each asset's estimated useful life. Individual items of equipment with a purchase price of less than £10,000 are written off when the asset is acquired.

Expenditure on replacements and renewals, which do not constitute a new class of asset, is written off in the year of expense.

Notes to the accounts

31 December 2023

2. Incoming resources

Incoming resources

Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<u>Donations and grants</u>					
Regular giving: bank	17,775			17,775	17,692
Regular giving: PGS	62,155			62,155	58,091
Open Plate inc Pink GA Envs	5,940			5,940	6,924
Refreshments	1,258			1,258	2,520
CYF Ministry Donations			10,308	10,308	14,832
Single Donations	8,675	400		9,075	53,351
Special Appeals					200
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	18,691	100	2,190	20,981	22,064
[a] Grants: external			10,000	10,000	11,825
Donations and grants Totals	114,494	500	22,498	137,492	187,499
<u>Income from charitable activities</u>					
Parochial Fees	288			288	438
Little Lambs Income	1,237			1,237	53
Cafe receipts	3,477			3,477	1,350
Children & Youthwork Income					606
Special Events Receipts	1,615			1,615	1,972
Miscellaneous Income	3,242	1,709		4,951	60
Income from charitable activities Totals	9,858	1,709	-	11,567	4,479
<u>Other trading activities</u>					
[b] Rent & services: Barbara Rose	9,398			9,398	8,354
Rent: other	3,544			3,544	1,393
Other trading activities Totals	12,942	-	-	12,942	9,747
<u>Investments</u>					
Bank interest		583	245	828	71
Other interest received	1	-	0	1	
Investments Totals	1	583	245	829	71
Income and endowments Grand totals	137,294	2,792	22,743	162,830	201,796

[a] External Grants of £10,000 received from the Joseph Rank Trust for the Children & Youth Minister Fund, being part of a total grant of £30,000 payable over three years.

[b] The rate of rental charged to the Barbara Rose Christian Preschool increased from £7,568 to £8,800. The balance of income comprised: amounts reimbursed to the PCC for the Preschool's use of the Toshiba photocopier/printer; and 50% of the costs of carpet cleaning.

Notes to the accounts

31 December 2023

3. Resources expended

Resources expended

<i>Expenditure on charitable activities</i>	<i>Notes</i>	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
[a] Mission Tithe 10%		7,772			7,772	7,488
[b] Mission Tithe 2.5%		40			40	798
Giving to relief & development agencies					-	299
Vicar's Discretionary Fund Disbursements			227		227	-
Common Mission Fund: WDBF		53,007			53,007	51,826
[c] Church salaries		23,806	4,316	24,608	52,730	54,666
Thank you gifts & honoraria		515			515	374
[d] Incumbent's expenses		301			301	1,039
Vicarage Expenses		392			392	
Ministry Team & Pastoral Team Expenses		191			191	49
Parish Training, courses, ref books		211			211	214
Children & Youth Work Expenses		1,099			1,099	1,480
Little Lambs Expenses		245			245	187
Special Events Expenses		1,248			1,248	1,827
Home Mission & Evangelism		625			625	374
Telephone & Broadband		1,815			1,815	1,371
Admin inc stnry/pstge/copier		1,414			1,414	1,167
IT costs & equipment		439			439	2,290
Subscriptions & Licences		2,366			2,366	2,698
Insurance		1,750			1,750	1,644
[e] Equipment Purchases & Furnishings		3,089	2,218		5,307	5,094
Fabric & Maintenance		3,807	2,034		5,841	9,233
Cleaning		325			325	397
Church Garden		570			570	-
Miscellaneous Expenses		336			336	24
Housekeeping Purchases		2,836			2,836	1,948
Governance costs					-	103
Bank & card charges		178			178	151
Professional Fees: payroll and accounts		531			531	1,576
Sunday & other Service Expenses		281			281	142
Electricity		6,331			6,331	3,608
Gas		6,208			6,208	3,478
Water		460			460	543
Commercial Waste charges		1,390			1,390	1,398
Books: cost of books for resale					-	54
[f] Church Major Repairs: Installation			6,789		6,789	54,548
Expenditure on charitable activities Totals		123,579	15,583	24,608	163,771	212,088

[a] The 10% Mission Tithe totalling £8,272 was disbursed equally between our four Mission Partners: Crosslinks; OMF; Faithworks Wessex; and the PACE Trust. A grant of £500 was received for Dementia-friendly services

[b] Payment of £39.99 made for expenses related to 'Hope into Action House'.

[c] PCC members received no remuneration during the year [2022 - £nil].

The salary costs of the Children & Youth Minister are paid from the Children & Youth Ministry Fund; the salary costs of the Church Administrator and the Verger are paid from the General Fund; the salary costs of the Music Director are paid from the Development Fund.

[d] Incumbent's expenses are not related to his office as Chairman of the PCC.

No other members of the PCC were reimbursed for expenses specifically relating to the PCC. Expenses incurred by PCC members unrelated to their services as such are not disclosable.

[e] New items of other equipment purchased include: an Industrial Dishwasher and Fridge Freezer plus other small items of equipment for the new church kitchen.

[f] Church major repairs covers the costs for solid flooring in the church extension

Notes to the accounts

31 December 2023

4. Debtors & Prepayments

	2023	2022
	£	£
General Fund		
HMRC Gift Aid & GASDS recoverable	2,321	771
Donations for kitchen refurbishment	-	1,765
Other Debtors & Prepayments	609	235
	<u>2,930</u>	<u>2,771</u>
Building Fund		6,456
Donations for kitchen refurbishment	-	<u>6,456</u>
Development Fund		35,000
Donations for kitchen refurbishment	-	<u>35,000</u>
Reserves Fund		4,479
Donations for kitchen refurbishment	-	<u>4,479</u>
Children & Youth Ministry Fund		143
HMRC Gift Aid & GASDS recoverable	<u>857</u>	<u>143</u>
Totals	<u>3,788</u>	<u>48,849</u>

Notes to the accounts

31 December 2023

5. Creditors & Accruals: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
General Fund		
Other Creditors & Accruals	2,159	2,833
	<u>2,159</u>	<u>2,833</u>
Development Fund		10,000
Home Refurb: kitchen refurbishment final payment	-	<u>10,000</u>
Agency Collections	150	142
Third party agency collections	<u>150</u>	<u>142</u>
Totals	<u>2,309</u>	<u>12,975</u>

6. Funds

a) Fund descriptions

Funds which are held by the PCC for general purposes (and which have not been restricted by the donors) are unrestricted.

The PCC has set aside certain funds (designated funds) for particular projects. These funds may be redesignated by the PCC as necessary.

The PCC's restricted funds comprise donations held for purposes specified by the donors.

Where these funds have unspent balances, interest on their investment is apportioned to the individual funds.

Unrestricted Fund:

The General Fund is not subject to any restrictions regarding its use and is available for application on the general purposes of the PCC

Designated Funds:

The Building Fund is held to meet major expenses on the fabric of the church buildings and grounds.

The Development Fund is assigned for all current development projects of the PCC related to mission development and outreach.

The Reserves Fund is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash-flow and to meet any emergency expenditure.

Notes to the accounts

31 December 2023

6.a) Fund descriptions: continued

The Vicar's Discretionary Fund is assigned for the discretionary use of the Priest in Charge for the alleviation of pastoral need.

Restricted Fund:

The Children & Youth Ministry Fund was established in 2019 and exists to support the salary of a full-time Children & Youth Minister. This fund comprises donations received from within the church family of St Paul's Throop, together with associated Gift Aid repayments where appropriate, and a Grant from the Joseph Rank Trust.

6.b) Fund details

St Paul's PCC, Throop, Bournemouth

Balance Sheet detailed

1st January 2023 to 31 December 2023

Fund Details

Fund	Balances at 1 January 2023	Incoming resources	Outgoing resource	Transfers	Balances at 31 December 2023
General Fund					
Unrestricted	15873	137294	123579	(19,617)	9971
Children and Youth Ministry Fund					
Restricted	13975	22743	24608	8660	20770
Building Fund					
Designated	6456	185	2034	10000	14607
Development Development					
Designated	25207	2350	13323	730	14964
Reserve Fund					
Designated	4485	254	0	0	4739
Vicars Discretionary Fund					
Designated	896	4	227	227	900
Totals	66892	162830	163771	0	65952

6.c) Transfer between funds - notes

£10,000 was moved from the General Fund to Building Fund to reflect operating surplus during 2023. Some outgoings from the General Account in the second half of 2023 related to expenses from Designated funds, effectively resulting in transfers from the General Fund to these Designated Funds. Specifically - CYF Fund : £8,660, Development Fund : £730, Vicars Discretionary Fund : £227.

Notes to the accounts

31 December 2023

7. Assets & Liabilities by Fund

St Paul's PCC, Throop, Bournemouth

Statement of Assets and Liabilities (by fund)
as at: 31 December 2023

		2023 Balance £	2022 Balance £
Unrestricted Funds			
General Fund			
	HSBC Current A/C	9,350	15,935
	Debtors & Prepayments	2,930	2,771
		12,280	18,706
	Creditors: Amount falling due in one year	(2,159)	(2,833)
		10,121	15,873
Designated Funds			
Building Fund			
	HSBC Current A/C	14,607	-
	Debtors & Prepayments	-	6,456
		14,607	6,456
Development Fund			
	HSBC Current A/C	14,964	207
	Debtors & Prepayments		35,000
		14,964	35,207
	Creditors: Amount falling due in one year		(10,000)
		14,964	25,207
Reserves Fund			
	HSBC Current A/C	4,739	6
	Debtors & Prepayments		4,479
		4,739	4,485
Vicars Discretionary Fund			
	HSBC Current A/C	900	896
		900	896
Restricted Funds			
Children and Youth Ministry Fund			
	HSBC Current A/C	19,913	13,832
	Debtors & Prepayments	857	143
		20,770	13,975
	Creditors: Amount falling due in one year	-	-
		20,770	13,975
Agency Collection: Restricted			
	HSBC Current A/C	-	142
	Agency collections payable	(150)	(142)
		(150)	-
Totals all Funds		65,952	66,892

Notes to the accounts

31 December 2023

8. Related Party Transactions

Apart from the reimbursement of expenses, as disclosed in Note 3, and funds received as Agent as shown in Note 9, there were no related party transactions during the year.

9. Funds received as Agent

From time to time the PCC may act as Agent to facilitate collections for third parties. As the PCC does not hold legal title to these collections, such funds are not required to be shown in the Statement of Financial Activities or on the Balance Sheet. During 2023 the following collections/fees on behalf of third parties were banked and duly paid on:

Description	Related Party?	Amount received £	Amount paid out £	Balance held at Year End £
FAITHWORKS WESSEX HOMELESS donation	Yes	90.00	90.00	NIL
Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance: Parochial Fees [payable quarterly in arrears]	Yes	721.00	871.00	150.00 [Paid to WDBF on 16 January 2024]



REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

2023

CHURCHWARDENS

It has been extremely encouraging to see our numbers grow again this year in both adults and children. The fact we are a welcoming church has been mentioned on many occasions and none more so than at the newcomers lunch held in November.

The food distribution service introduced this year has proved to be very successful and we would like to thank Ben and others who have worked so hard to make it happen.

In June, Ben Coulter and Chris Dodgson were licensed and Katie Hodgkinson was ordained at Winchester Cathedral. We were sorry to say goodbye to Katie so soon but it was in the best interests of all parties as Jim explained at the time.

As we look ahead to 2024, the 40/40/40 theme will be a main focus as we also look to, amongst other things, help our building which is beginning to show its age. Some work has been completed, some has started and other work is planned.

We could not do as much at St. Paul's if it were not for the many volunteers who work alongside our paid staff. It would be wrong to name names and there is always the danger of missing somebody out but please accept our heartfelt thanks for all you do. No one offering to help is ever likely to be turned away! Thanks to Jim and the ministry team who continue to guide St. Paul's in what are challenging times.

Steve Bendell and Jenny Powell, Churchwardens

BOURNEMOUTH DEANERY SYNOD

Deanery Synod meetings have been limited over the past year, with some restructuring of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee still ongoing. There remains a need both for a Lay Chair and Treasurer. Despite this, meeting dates for the coming year are set and we therefore look forward to increased engagement and activity moving forwards.

Deanery Synod members: Claire Saunders & David James

SAFEGUARDING

In line with our Diocesan safeguarding goal, policies and procedures, 'we are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within our community'.

The PCC has complied with the duty to have "due regard" to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance.

Pippa Fisher was appointed as the new Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) for St Paul's at the PCC in November 2023, taking over from Jim Page. She is also the new DBS Officer too.

Nathan Bendell has taken on the role as Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

Jim, Nathan and Pippa will all be undertaking courses in 2024 to prepare them for these new roles and keep their training up to date.

DBS checks need to continue to be completed every 3 years. Please can everyone be diligent and help those who run our systems by checking their DBS forms to ensure that they are in date. If you need to renew, contact the PSO via safeguarding@stpaulsthroop.com and you will be sent a link with a code to enter in order that you can complete the process.

The Diocese has also requested that anyone involved in certain roles connected with church activity, lay and ordained, should undertake specific safeguarding training. The training is the Church of England Safeguarding Basic Awareness and the Foundations Pathway which can be found on the Winchester Diocese website under the Safeguarding Training tab. There are other courses provided that your role may have to undertake, as advised by the Diocese - please check with Pippa Fisher, PSO, for guidance.

Your team / group leader will be in touch to ensure that everyone is complying with the new guidelines set out by the Diocese. The Safeguarding Basic Awareness course must be completed within three months of starting your new position, ideally it can be completed before starting. If you are having issues completing the training online, please talk to Pippa and she will be able to direct you to courses which are coming up. Again, your diligence in assisting those who run our systems would be greatly appreciated.

There have been no disclosures made to the Safeguarding Team during 2023.

Please remain vigilant and if you suspect someone is at risk, please report it. Pippa Fisher's (PSO) office number is 01202 525525. Diocesan Safeguarding Manager is Jackie Rowlands: 01962 737317 or mobile: 07921 865374. Other contact details relevant to this area can be found on the safeguarding tab of our website homepage.

Pippa Fisher and Jim Findlay

DATA PROTECTION

I suspect this report will read very similarly to last year's report. I'm happy to say that I have not been made aware of any mishaps with our (your!) data, and we remain compliant with requirements of the law.

The same as last year, though - I'd like to take the opportunity to remind the Church of our responsibilities as processors of data, and also of our rights as the subjects of the data held.

As a church we have a duty to collect information about our members. We have a duty of care to keep personal data up to date, by storing and destroying it securely; by only collecting the data we need for our specific purposes, and only sharing it with those that have a legal right of access.

Under Data Protection law, you have a right to know exactly what information is held about you, and you have a right to request that St Paul's PCC erase your data if you withdraw your consent for that information to be stored, and for your data to be corrected if it is discovered that the information held is inaccurate.

Your personal data is treated as strictly confidential and will only be shared with other members of the church or for purposes connected with the church. We will only ever share your data with third parties outside of the parish with your consent.

Further details are available on the church website – via our privacy notice:

<https://stpaulsthoop.com/privacy-policy/>

I do have one ask though – if you are responsible for lists of contact details for people you have contact with on behalf of the church – please can I encourage a little spring cleaning? Please check your distribution lists, and the details of those you are contacting. Are they still members of the church? Do they still want to be on the list you hold? If not – then you may be in the position of needing to delete their details. If you are unsure, need advice or wish to discuss a Data Protection issue with me, please feel free to contact me at:

chrisdodgson@stpaulsthoop.com

Revd Chris Dodgson

HOUSEKEEPING

I would like to say a big thank you to all of you who are on the drinks and cleaning rotas, without all of you it wouldn't happen. God bless you all in 2024,

Andrew Sirmulis

FABRIC AND MAINTENANCE

There is no doubting our building is in need of some TLC as it is starting to show signs of its age. The new flooring in the extension area is underway and will be completed in February 2024.

The Fire Drill carried out in October showed the current system is in urgent need of an upgrade and this very necessary work will be carried out as soon as our circumstances allow.

Ongoing maintenance to various areas in the building and the grounds are carried out by Gordon, our Verger, with the help of other willing volunteers, and my very grateful thanks goes to all of them.

If 40/40/40 is the success we all hope it will be, our building should be in a much better state of repair, which will be of benefit to all who use it during the coming year.

Steve Bendell

SOUND AND VISION

The sound and vision team is in its strongest position for a few years. There are six of us (the same as last year) but David Penfold is now fully trained on the PC, which has made a big difference. So thank you to him, Ian Tyrell, Andy Renton, Nathaniel Smith and Stephen Lodge for your faithful service.

On the technical side of things, the projector that we have been using for almost 20 years failed and could not be repaired. And so the decision was taken to replace it with a flatscreen TV which we hope will give a clearer and more consistent display. Thank you to Stephen for sourcing this. As a result, we had to re-cable all of the other screens; thank you Gordon for your invaluable help with this. We still need to connect the lounge TV and finish tidying up; hopefully this will be done by the time of the APCM.

This year we need to repair or replace the hearing loop, which has not been working for some time.

David James

LITTLE LAMBS



The numbers attending Little Lambs each week remains fairly constant, between 40 and 50 families attending. Many come very regularly and have made new friends, whilst others are seen less frequently. Most weeks 3 or 4 new families arrive, many from well outside our local postcode. The vast majority who arrive have come because they have been told by friends that Little Lambs is a friendly group with good facilities. We continue to have many attending who have English as an additional language.

For many years Little Lambs has been a group for babies and children under 3 years of age. In the Autumn Term the team began to discuss whether we could provide for children up to the age when they start school. We decided that we would keep the first session for under 3s and offer the second session from newborn to school age. This would enable those attending to have greater choice. This idea was put to the parents and other carers who bring children, and was overwhelmingly positively received. As from January 2024 this arrangement will be trialled.

At the beginning of each meeting the team meet to pray for each other, for those who come along that they might sense the love of God and for any needs as they arise. We now also meet, after we have cleared away, to reflect on the morning and to give God thanks for all He has done. Please pray for Little Lambs. We continue to offer a valuable service to the community, a safe and stimulating place to play, but we are more than that. Little Lambs is a way of sharing God's love in a practical way to those who know Him and those who are yet to encounter Him. The team offer a listening ear to those who need someone to talk to, and prayer, either face to face or through the prayer request box, for those who would like it. We are clear that we are a Christian group of helpers but we are equally clear that all are welcome.

It is a privilege to be part of the Little Lambs Team.

Jenny Powell, Ian & Sue Tyrrell

PASTORAL CARE

The past year has seen the pastoral team continuing to offer support to those who are struggling for any number of reasons including illness, bereavement, financial worries, marital or relationship difficulties, work or family issues, anxiety, depression, loneliness, or those who are struggling spiritually. Because of data protection laws we are only able to contact people whose information is in the Church Directory or who have given permission for us to contact them.

During the year we became aware that we needed to offer support to those who are living with memory loss and those who live with them. We had some training about things we needed to be aware of in church, e.g. appropriate signage, and how we could introduce a suitable church service. We held 2 services, Harvest and Christmas which were well received by the people who attended. We plan to extend the invitation to the wider community via GP surgeries.

It has continued to be a joy to offer home communion. Members of the team regularly share communion with several of our congregation who find it difficult to come to church.

The Pastoral Team operates under the guidance of Revd Jim Findlay and is led by Jenny Powell and Susan Nightingale. Other members are:-

Daniel Austin, Ruth Dodgson, Mags Findlay, Valerie Lodge, Keith Maby, Sue Maby, Jean Moores, Gill Schiel, Debbie Staple, Julie Renton, Kathy Blake and Tracy Reid.

The team has met termly and has benefitted from training by Sharon Prior on dealing with Loneliness and Social Isolation. Drawing from the experiences from a variety of sources we looked at the subject of dementia and we also reviewed the Pastoral Care Handbook and the associated paperwork.

It may be that you would appreciate support or someone to pray with or for you. Whatever your need, the pastoral team at St Paul's is here to help you. In a church of our size, we cannot know all the pastoral needs unless we are told! If you are concerned about someone else, please ensure that person is agreeable to you approaching us and sharing information.

All matters will be dealt with confidentially (subject to safeguarding protocol). We may not have all the answers but we hope to be able to guide you to appropriate resources where necessary.

If you would appreciate pastoral support, please contact in the first instance, Jenny Powell or Susan Nightingale or speak to Pippa in the church office, who will pass on your request:- tel 01202 525525

Jenny Powell/Susan Nightingale

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORK

Sunday Network

We try to start our sessions with a warmup, which is accompanied by music and a lot of silly dancing about and acting silly. These are all just to get the children in a good mood, giving them a run around to burn off energy and getting them ready for the session.

We then do a worship song together - I noticed throughout the year as this has become a norm, the children join in a lot more with the actions and there aren't many at all, if any, that don't join in. We also watch a video to do with the story we are focusing on that week, usually using Saddleback Kids videos. This is because we are aware that different people learn and take in information in different ways.

After that we break into our groups to look into the passage in an age-appropriate study. These usually include a game, re-telling of the story, often with acting, a craft and prayer activity to help reinforce the message that we are trying to convey as well as something to take home to prompt discussion around the dinner table with the rest of the family.

Each month we look at a different theme - we try to alternate between the Old and New Testament. Recently we have looked at things like: Parables of Jesus, Jesus ministry, The kingdom of Israel, People Jesus met & Unwrapping Christmas.

I want to say a big thank you to all our volunteers without whom Sunday Network could not run. They show such enthusiasm and love for the children and their faith. These volunteers include: Jan, Averil, Clare, Charmaine, Simone, Julie, Ali, Hollie and Jack. We could always do with more help though so please be praying and asking God if this is something He wants you to be involved with as well as praying for the spiritual growth of the children.

Connections

Our Connections group meets on a Sunday morning and on a Thursday afternoon. The theme we have been looking at since September is 'Mile Markers'. There are some very important key moments in the Bible and looking at these moments can help us understand the whole story. We have been taking these key moments in order to help the young people understand where these moments come in the grand scheme of God's plan. We have introduced God and Abraham, looked at the Israelites escape from Egypt, seen Joshua become a new leader for Israel and how he lead them into the Promised Land, we have seen the judges and how Ruth lead to David and what kind of King he was, Solomon build the temple and that lasted until God's people were defeated and exiled. We have also seen what happened after the exile and we are just about to start looking at the New Testament and how it ties into what has already happened.

The group has grown and so now on a Thursday evening we split into two groups for the teaching and games aspect of the evening. When teaching the Bible we find it important to make it as practical as possible. This includes games that are tailored to the message we are trying to give, as well as getting them to physically open the Bible so that we can read the word of God together. While one group is studying the other is playing games, some of the favourites are Decaball, Dodgeball, Assassins, Social Rule and Ninja.

I want to say thank you to Joanna, Emily, Olivia-Jane and Izzy who have been leading the group this year. Please pray that God would reveal Himself to these young people as they come to the group and that they would continue to feel it is a place where they can invite their friends to. Also for volunteers.

ID

ID is on a Sunday evening for our 14-18's - this group is a very relaxed group. As we often meet and first have a drink and food before playing games. These can be ones where we sit around or we can end up running around the whole building (since we are the only group in), especially in the summer where we can go outside as well.

This academic year we have been looking at 'Hidden Heroes'. There are lots of people mentioned in the Bible. Some are very well known (Moses, Noah & Jesus' mother Mary) while others only appear briefly or aren't focussed on as much, but make a big impact. These are the people we have been looking at. Examples of this are: Josiah who was king at the age of 8, Ruth who was a loyal friend, Mary Magdalene who was the first to see Jesus after his resurrection, Bezalel who was gifted by God to create the Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant, Tabitha who helped the poor and made a big impact on her community, and more.

Thank you to Izzy, Emily, Olivia-Jayne and Ben for your help with this group. It is a wonderful group and one full of laughs. Please pray for the group that their faith would be strengthened and that they would understand the gifts that God has given them and how they can use them for His kingdom and that the group would grow.

Mentoring

This is not compulsory but I have found it to be the most fruitful of all our ministries. We currently have 5 young people being mentored, by myself and our Moorlands students. This is a chance for our young people to get to know a leader on a weekly basis.

We are able to get to know one another, build trust and encourage the young people to know that another adult outside of family is praying for them and there to talk whenever they want. Each young person is different and so we are able to tailor our mentoring sessions to suit that person. The whole hour is different. Some young people like to just talk; others like playing games. Whatever they are into, we accommodate that and build up a joint interest.

Studying the Bible is also built for the person. It all depends on where they are in their faith, what part of the Bible they are interested in, whether they have questions or passages they want to look at. With some we are doing an overview of the Bible and currently in Psalms. Another has wanted to go through questions they had when doing their own personal reading.

Please pray for all the mentors and mentees. It has been wonderful getting to know the young people on a personal level and we want that to continue. Some have been encouraged and trained to take up new roles such as leading others - please pray that continues. We would love to mentor other young people and there is a bit of a waiting list - if this is something you feel called to, please let me know.

Schools work

We are in TBOWA on a weekly basis running a lunch club with PACE called 'Big Questions'. We also get the chance to teach some lessons on 'Who Jesus is' and we have had a termly slot to lead collective worship. We were able to do a Christmas assembly, an assembly on God and science, and one on refugees. We try to make the assemblies as interesting as possible, so we have had teachers dressed as Santa, cooked 'facon' (fake bacon) and served four young people - this was to do with God and science and how they don't have to be opposed but just answer different questions. We asked the young people why the facon was cooking - there were two possible answers. We could have looked at how the gas ignited and caused fire that caused the metal frying pan to heat up etc. or the other answer is because we wanted to feed some people.

With Epiphany School we run a Christian union on a lunch time and have led some collective worships. I recently did one on the boy Jesus lost at the temple. Two days later we had the year 3's & 4's come to St. Paul's for a Christingle service. One child commented that all the people that come into school are here, since Andy, Jim, Ian and myself are often in the school. A big thank you to Julie for her help with the Christian Union.

Each week I get to run an assembly at Barbara Rose. The children seem to really enjoy acting out the story. We have looked recently at some of Jesus' parables.

Recently I was invited in to BSG to the Christian Union to answer questions. Hopefully this will become a regular thing.

Please pray, thanking God for the doors that have opened into schools. May these continue and we see children and young people understanding the gospel and starting a relationship with God.

Events

This last year we have had three main events - a holiday club, light party and nativity. These have been a great way of inviting people in from the community as well as our own church families.

The holiday club was looking at 'Who is Jesus' through the theme of 'Guess Who'. We had lots of upfront fun as well as practical things to do in groups such as team competitions as well as crafts, and thinking about who Jesus is and what He did for us.

The light party was an alternative to Halloween. It was well attended with games, crafts, food and up front activities that were messy. It is really good to be able to open this up to children so that we can share the word of God in a friendly and fun way. The volunteers were brilliant whether running groups or setting up the lounge to become a carnival. The young people took on this challenge and did it better than I would have made it.

The nativity was a big community event with the whole building being turned into an interactive Bethlehem village, along with a performance put on by the children from our church. People from the community as well as our congregation could come and watch, experience and hear about the gift of Jesus at Christmas time. We also had a Christingle.

As always none of these could run without a lot of help from the people of the church; thank you to everyone who helped in all of these. Please be praying that the next events would go as well as these did and that we would see some families who come to the events interested in other things we do at St. Paul's on a regular basis.

We also had Youth Alpha alongside regular Alpha, but see Jim's report for more details.

Nathan Bendell

WORSHIP SERVICES

2023 has been a much more settled year as the lockdowns and the pandemic recede into the past. Those events have left an impact upon us in as much as we continue to live stream and maintain a provision of services and sermons on Facebook, our own website and on YouTube. I believe the numbers using that provision has shrunk considerably, but they are proving to be a helpful 'shop window' for St. Paul's. By far and away the best 'shop window', however, is our provision of worship and teaching across the week at our church building. We offer a variety of services and approaches including Breakfast Church, Sofa Sunday, Sunday Live, Holy Communion and our more regular offering of Morning and Evening Praise. I wholeheartedly believe that what is offered is excellent and that we are blessed with a superb ministry team, to whom I am extremely grateful.

Our journey with technical back-up in 2023 is still dependent upon a small number of servant hearted people who make it work each week. There are, no doubt, technical challenges to be regularly overcome, but again, I'd like to pay tribute to David James, Ian Tyrrell, David Penfold and Andy Renton who are carrying that responsibility. A particular challenge across 2023 was the death of our projector and a period with no central screen. David James, Stephen Lodge and Gordon Cox helped install the new screen, which is already benefiting the congregation. Please take time to encourage the technical team for the incredible work that they do. We're all quick to notice when something doesn't work, but let's be quicker to thank them for the immense work they do! That's true of those who support us with the sound system too. Ian Tyrrell, Stephen Lodge, Andy Renton, and Nathaniel Smith hold that fort each week. Again, it's not always straightforward and yet they maintain our worship with what they do. Huge thanks go to them and I'd encourage you to encourage them!

There's a new pattern to our corporate prayer life too. We have Prayer meetings at 9am on a Monday morning, 5pm on a Tuesday evening as well as at 7.30am on a Wednesday morning. They each contribute something valuable to our rhythm of prayer, holding us and our ministries before the Lord. They are special times. They are very simple, and they only last for half an hour. If you haven't come yet, please try to prioritise these opportunities for corporate prayer and come and be blessed with others in prayer.

2023 saw a change in the role of Director of Music and having someone in that role continues to bless our fellowship. Ian and Amy Price have stepped into that role (after advertising, application and interview) and they have continued to embed a culture of team and rehearsal amongst the musicians, they're creating opportunities to recruit new musicians into the fold and continue to encourage a balanced approach to our music that includes and values the familiar but also introduces us to the new. I know that they have had a positive impact on the team since taking over and we are seeing the fruit of their work in our services with a more integrated approach between music, liturgy and prayer. The 'Sing for Joy' community choir is stronger than ever and growing in confidence. This is the result of Amy taking up the reins from Abi and helping them all to develop and grow. Please take time to speak to our musicians and singers at the end of a service. There's a lot of work that sits behind what we see each week!

Personally, it's a great joy to worship together each Sunday. It's a huge encouragement to see our Sunday Evening services grow in number of worshippers too (around 30 each week!). These evening services are special – if you haven't been along yet, make it a priority!

Revd Jim Findlay

GRAPEVINE



Grapevine continued through 2023 with around 15-20 people joining us on the first and third Thursday of the month. We have been gathering together firstly for fellowship over a cuppa and cake, supported by the Café team. We have then moved into the worship area for a variety of talks and activities over the year. These have included: Quizzes, hearing about Marion and Ian's travels in the Orkneys, two fascinating talks by Mary Graham on Bournemouth Sanatorium and Doctors of Note in History, a Springtime Songs of Praise, Coronation celebrations, hearing about Katie's journey to curacy, Nathan's work with the youth, Sue's Desert Island Discs, making Christmas decorations with Carole and meals out at Harry Ramsden's and The Lynton Court. As in the previous year we have also included a gospel thought for the day at the start of our sessions.

The group has been a great place for friendship, laughter and joy as well as support for one another throughout the year and we have been pleased to welcome some new faces during the year.

Support for the work of TESS in Northern Uganda continued during the year, with donations totalling £300. These donations were transferred to the bank account of Teso Educational Support Services and acknowledged by the UK Manageress, Ruth Dorrell. However, In December 2023, an email with the following surprise news was received:

'The time has come to close one chapter and make way for another. TESS will be closing as a UK registered charity at the end of March 2024. TESS was founded as a sponsorship programme to support young people in Teso to go to school; hundreds of young people have benefitted who would not otherwise have continued in education. The lives they have now built for themselves are truly impressive and their commitment to giving back to the community that supported them is inspiring. With the closure of our core programme, we have decided to close as a charity and make space for the community in Teso and the alumni of TESS to now take the reins in determining the best path for the continued support of young people in the region.'

Therefore, this brings to an end an amazing partnership between St Paul's Church Grapevine Group and TESS, set up by Jean and Paul Moores many years ago, to support this wonderful overseas charity working in Uganda. It has been a privilege to continue this link on Jean's behalf.

Our small team (Marion and Ian Harrison, Carole and Andrew Sirmulis, and Sue Coleman, as well as Katie Hodgkinson in the autumn term) have worked hard to facilitate this group this year and we are grateful to the wider ministry team too for their support at short notice on occasions.

As Sue is moving on in 2024 Jim and Katie met with those attending Grapevine in September to consider the future ministry of Grapevine and what those present wanted most from the group. Since Covid many have missed the focus of eating with one another, and it was felt that there was a preference to focus on fellowship and eating with one another. With this in mind, there will be a change to this provision in 2024, to providing a weekly opportunity (during term time) on a Tuesday to gather together for lunch and fellowship, from 12-2pm, called 'Branching Out'. Grapevine has been a source of friendship, encouragement and blessing to so many over the years and we hope that this development in the ministry will ensure that it continues to be so for all who attend.

Sue Coleman

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

My week-to-week office duties include all the usual paperwork for the Diocese and record offices to deal with and the key communications, rotas and invoices.

Co-ordinating the use of the church building has become an even larger part of my role as St Paul's gets busier and busier (which is great!). We now regularly host a wide variety of events from the tri-weekly Community Café, to pilates, choir, childminder meetups, PACE meetings and larger events/bookings for things like Police Commissioner Elections (May 2023), entertainment (like Bournemouth Youth Marching Band), Barbara Rose Pre-school fundraisers and events; photographers, Services, graduations and fun days and additional users such as Alpha Away Days. Also coordinating off-site activities like the Church Camp.

And then there is all the fun stuff; like risk assessments, stationery orders, coffee and housekeeping supplies and making sure the diary is kept up to date!

I've continued to produce bi-monthly newsletters, the weekly update sheet, morning and evening service sheets, key adverts and posters for events, updated our Facebook page and published social media campaigns for big events like our amazing 'Journey through Bethlehem' on Christmas Eve.

Alongside Jim, I continued to communicate with Tom, our website host and designer to make sure all the resources you need are available online so you can keep up to date with news, access our Online Church and online Calendar of events.

I have continued to organise and coordinate with local charities including Bournemouth Food Bank (The Trussell Trust) and Citygate Church for their Harvest and Christmas Hamper appeals, as well as the Christmas Toy Appeal from the Salvation Army.

2024 will be a busy year with 40:40:40 events to plan and organise and I'm already full of ideas! It's great to be able to plan ways to bring our church family together and invite our community to join us.

I do, as always, feel blessed to be part of this amazing Church Family! x

Pippa Fisher

MUSIC

We were sad to say goodbye to Abi Yelland-Brown as Director of Music in the summer and want to say a huge thank you to her for all that she did both during and immediately after the pandemic to encourage and grow the worship at St Pauls. She and Michael are greatly missed in the music group. We feel privileged to be trusted with taking on this role and are grateful for the groundwork that has already been done, which has made the transition very easy.

St Paul's is blessed to have a fantastic team of talented and creative musicians who are willing to serve God through their role in the worship team and we are pleased that this team is continuing to grow. We have spent time this year considering our role as lead worshippers and how we can better lead the congregation in sung worship as well as considering and rehearsing new material.

"Sing for Joy", the community choir, continues to grow steadily – averaging around 22 people per week - and they are an incredible bunch of enthusiastic and dedicated singers, both from within the church family and the wider community. Our Tuesday rehearsals are a lot of fun, with plenty of hard work and a very eclectic mix of music. A highlight of the year was performing three songs at the carol service. The choir performed fantastically and were very well received. We were also grateful for the opportunity to sing at FestivePoint at Castlepoint over the Christmas period and spread the good news that the birth of Jesus brings to the local community through our songs. This is something we hope to develop further next Christmas.

Our prayer is that as a music team we can encourage people to grow closer to God through our ministry, and that we can ensure that whatever we do points people to Jesus.

Amy and Ian Price, *Director of Music*

HOME GROUPS

St Paul's currently has 7 home groups that serve 70+ members of the church. Sometimes these groups are called "Growth Groups", sometimes "Home Groups", sometimes "Bible Study Groups" (mostly depending on when the group was established, and where the group meets!) - but they all have one thing in common - God's family meets together, studies His Word, prays together, and grows together in discipleship.

At a recent meeting of home group leaders we discussed creating a central list of resources being used across the groups, and having the ability to leave a bit of a review of the resources when they had been used by a group (kind of like "check-a-trade" - but for Bible studies!) - so I will be looking at creating something like that over the next few weeks.

I am aware that there is a need for more groups to be established (there's a bit of a waiting list!) - but what is especially needed is for people who are willing to lead / facilitate those groups. If you feel that God may be prompting you in this area, please do come and speak to me, or Jim so we can explore that with you.

God bless, Revd Chris Dodgson

BARBARA ROSE CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight



During the 2022-23 year, the Setting continued to move away from 'The Covid Era' and entered a more stable period, but absences due to Covid and other illness are still impacting staffing. As usual staff have worked together to fill the gaps and have given extra time to help maintain the efficient running of the setting.

The end of the year party with 'graduation' was a great success and those moving to other schools were well prepared as usual.

Christian content continues on a regular basis supplemented with visits from Nathan our Youth and Children's Minister.

Managing the pre-school on the poor funding provided by the Local Authority continues to be challenging. Aly as usual has done a great job with budgets and forecasts. Laura and 'Friends of Barbara Rose' were able to raise some extra funds this year as the newly upgraded garden was vandalised, but these funds together with help from the community led to a quick restoration.

Projections for 2023-24 year will yet again require a large increase in donations or other fees just to cover even higher employment costs. That being said, our staff are still totally underpaid compared to other areas of education, thanks to inadequate funding. The New Government Provision of Care for all 2-year-olds will also impact as Local Authority payments do not cover the real costs for that age group.

Finally, thanks to Emma (our manager), our great staff and all the Trustees for keeping Barbara Rose one of the most sought-after Pre-Schools in the area.

John Coward - Chairman of Trustees

ALPHA

Our course started on Monday 2nd October and ran for 9 consecutive Monday nights. It was an exciting and dynamic course that covered the following Alpha Course themes: Is there more to life than this? Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die? How can we have faith? Why and how do I pray? How Does God Guide Us? Why and how do I read the Bible? Why and how should I tell others? What about Church?



We also held an Alpha 'away day' that took place in the church, so we didn't really go away! Across that day we covered teaching on the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Each week we presented the material via talks given by members of the team rather than utilising the Alpha video resources. Thanks go to Chris Dodgson, Ben Coulter, Katie Hodkinson, Susan Nightingale, and Sue Coleman for making that possible, providing excellent input. As well as their contributions we also heard testimonies each week of how the Lord had impacted the lives of the team. We heard a series of very moving and powerful testimonies from: Claire Saunders, Julie Renton, Ben Coulter, Chris Dodgson, David James, Sue Coleman, Susan Nightingale, Shane Tripp and Katie Hodkinson.

A very exciting development in our Alpha provision this year was to run the adult course alongside the 'Youth Alpha' course. We had 14 youngsters faithfully attend the whole course and we enjoyed the dynamic of the youth table at the meal times each week. This group was led by Nathan (our Youth and Children's Minister) alongside our Moorlands students (Emily and Olivia Jane).

An Alpha course cannot run effectively without people to provide the meals. Our brand-new kitchen came into its own for the Alpha course as it was expertly used by some very accomplished chefs! This course would not be viable without the generous work of these people: Esther Ferguson, Debbie Staple and Despina Tsirpa, Paul & Anna Reidy, Chris Dodgson, Martin & Kathy Blake, Ian & Sue Tyrell, Trish & Daniel Austin and another bloke who made cottage pie!

Our numbers of participants were encouraging, though a challenge to the caterers! The youth table had 14 participants plus three leaders. There were three adult tables that seated 12 people, three of whom were table leaders, and the others were participants. We were catering for just over 50 people each week. It was a joy to hear the buzz of conversation each week and tackle the questions that were raised. It was also a joy to get to know each other.

The outcomes of the course were also encouraging. Some people have come to faith, while others have had their faith renewed. All benefited from growing in their understanding of what the Christian faith is all about. In due course we'll hear testimonies from those who took part, and you'll hopefully hear first-hand from those who came, took part and were changed.

It was a huge team effort, and it was a joy! It's a big ask for a church to do this on an annual basis, but I'm already looking forward to Alpha 2024. Don't miss out on this exciting missional opportunity – get involved and see the Lord change people as they discover the reality of who He is!

Revd Jim Findlay

COMMUNITY CAFE

The cafe has continued to enjoy regular sessions and having the new kitchen up and running has been an enormous help, in spite of some teething problems especially with the dishwasher!

In the summer holidays we offered Ploughman's lunches, mainly on a pre-order basis, and these were very popular. We had families in the cafe too, and Ros did a wonderful job organising these lunches.



Leading up to Christmas we provided turkey rolls, “pigs in blankets” and brie & cranberry rolls for the non-meat variation. Also on offer was the usual Christmas fayre including home made mince pies and a beautiful Christmas cake.

Several cafe volunteers completed their Hygiene certification at level 2 and 3 in preparation for the cafe to be registered. We also put other measures in place and filled in the application for registration. This will mean that we can legitimately publicise more widely to encourage members of the local community to come in.

A new initiative for 2024 is “Branching Out” which will be held every Tuesday for anyone who would like to have some company over a light lunch between 12 and 2pm.

We are always ready to welcome any new volunteers who would like to help in the cafe.

Our opening times are:

Tuesday 8.45am - 12 noon
Wednesday 1.30pm - 4pm
Thursday 8.45am - 12 noon

Grateful thanks to all who have contributed to making the cafe a success. May we be a beacon of light and love which draws people to Jesus.

Heather Faulkner-Williams

BOURNEMOUTH RECYCLE FOOD SURPLUS DISTRIBUTION

An important moment in the life of St Paul’s church in 2023 was the summer afternoon that Sharon, the leader of Bournemouth Recycle (a local environmental group), dropped into St Paul’s and asked if it would be possible for them to use the St Paul’s building for their weekly food surplus distribution project. This project, which we now host at St Paul’s, is run by a group of Bournemouth Recycle (BR) volunteers who pick up food surplus (that would otherwise be thrown away) from supermarkets and wholesalers in the local area and distribute it out to the public three times a week (on Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday evenings).

Believing this project to align with our calling as a church to care for the environment and to care for our neighbour—as well as opening opportunities for our witness—we set up a trial period in August for this new partnership to see whether it would work. Following some leafleting, we did receive some strong complaints about this new initiative from one particular neighbour, but we were able to respond to his concerns and he has since refrained from complaining about the project. In retrospect, his complaint was very helpful in setting an appropriately high bar for keeping noise and traffic disruption from the project to a minimum, and a peaceful atmosphere around the distribution has been maintained since the project began.

This cordial atmosphere has also helped quieten an initial worry about the clash of this project with the evening service on Sunday evenings. If anything, I think there has been a general appreciation of this overlap—those gathering to distribute or pick up food are a reminder to those gathering to worship of our local community among whom we serve the LORD and the concrete nature of what it means to care for God's good creation, and those gathering to worship are a witness to those who gather to pick up or distribute food surplus of the LORD that we worship and serve at St Paul's church. I am confident that such an overlap is a space within which the Spirit will continue to be at work as we pray for the light of Jesus to shine in this place.

The trial period of this partnership was in this way successful and the initiative was unanimously approved by PCC, with the requirement that an infrastructure should be put in place for St Paul's ministry. In the last months since we started, the project has continued with great success, with a regular 30-60 people coming to pick up food on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. This means that out of St Paul's we have literally tons of food and other goods that would otherwise be thrown away being given to the local community every week, enabling these people to save money on a weekly basis, and providing a space in which local relationships and friendships can be fostered and strengthened. Such relationships include the relationship with the café team, who receive surplus rolls for the weekly café (thank you Kathy Blake for facilitating this!), as well as the youth group who receive a fairly regular supply of fizzy pop!

There have been some bumps on the way, especially with moments of misunderstanding about food that was being kept by BR for future distributions, as well as navigating the Christmas period, a particularly busy period for both St Paul's church and the distribution project. I also remain conscious of the potential slipping of standards of noise and traffic disruption for our neighbours, although we haven't received any formal complaints on this front. We have come through these bumps with a good relationship with BR well intact, with clearer boundaries and understanding about this working relationship, and with a lockable storage cupboard for the use of BR!

In virtue of the efficiency of the BR team in their distribution work, as well as some of the misunderstandings over the last few months, it has been clear to me that a steady, sensitive, and relational approach to St Paul's ministry in and through the food distribution is the way forward, rather than a more programmatic one. We now have a WhatsApp group of those from St Paul's who help with the food distribution or regularly pick up food, with the aim of keeping a regular St Paul's presence at the distribution and building relationships with both BR volunteers and those in the queue. We pray simply that God would be at work in and through these relationships, and that we would have opportunity to share the reason for the hope that we have in Jesus with gentleness and respect.

There is a lot of room for development with this project and this partnership with Bournemouth Recycle in the months and years to come, but 2023 will always be the year in which we got the ball rolling! And for this alone, I am grateful.

Revd Ben Coulter