

ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH

WATFORD

Mildred Avenue, Watford WD18 7DY

Annual Report

and

Financial Statements

of the

Parochial Church Council for the year

ended 31st December 2023

Incumbent

The Revd Dr Geoffrey Calvert

Bank:

Barclays Bank

High Street

Watford

WD17 2BE

Independent Examiner:

Karen Pryse

18 Frankland Road

Croxley Green

WD3 3AU

St Michael and All Angels PCC is a Registered Charity No 1132010

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St Michael and All Angels Church, Watford
Annual Report for the Year January to December 2023

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE VICARAGE

Dear Friends,

This will be my last Annual Report as Vicar of St Michael's, as I have announced my retirement to take effect in 2024. I hope you will forgive me looking back over a longer period than one year, as I shall have been parish priest here for 15 years by the end of September. It has been a privilege and joy to be the Vicar of St Michael's and to share that time with so many lovely Christian people, some of whom are still with us on here on earth, and some with us in another place. I have shared the COVID period with the people here, and all the changes that have taken place in Church life in that period. I would like to pay tribute to all those who have worked hard and prayed hard for the Church, in official positions, and in ways less noticeable but equally valuable. I would like to pay tribute to those who have been my colleagues in licensed ministry, Fr George Ochola, Fr Stephen Mephram, Dr Martin Heath, Mrs Violet Allen Smith, and Mrs Bridget Russell-Calvert. I would also like to pay tribute to those I have worked with as Churchwardens, Treasurers, PCC Secretaries, members of PCC and committees, other roles and responsibilities, and most of all those who have faithfully worshipped week by week. I shall miss St Michael's and whoever follows me as the parish priest will be fortunate to minister here.

Fr Geoff

FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS

We welcome you to the annual report for 2023 after another busy year.

As Churchwardens we are charged with looking after the members of the congregation, the incumbent and the property of the church while representing the congregation and maintaining unity and peace.

We give thanks that 2023 has been a good year when we have been able to plan with more certainty. We have been able to hold all our Sunday services, plus most of our midweek services, in our beautiful church and continue to livestream for those unable to attend in person.

Sadly during the year we have lost some long-standing members of our church family but as the cycle of life continues we have joyfully welcomed some new members. We are always very grateful for the quiet commitment of many within the congregation who work tirelessly to support the life of our church.

In October Father Geoff announced that he will be retiring in 2024 after fifteen years of service to our parish. We thank him for his ministry and wish him a very happy retirement full of adventures of all the things he likes to do and places to see.

During the year we welcomed Father Stephen as Associate Priest and thank him for all that he does.

We pray that we will be guided in the year ahead as we look towards the responsibilities we will face.

Elizabeth Watkin and Valerie Blacklock

Aims and Purposes

St Michael and All Angels PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Rev. Dr Geoffrey Calvert, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral evangelical, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibilities for the maintenance of the Curate's House, 57 Whippendell Road, Watford and Littlebury Hall. In addition, it owns and has responsibilities, as defined in the Lease, for the West Watford Multi-Cultural Community Centre formerly known as St. Michael's Hall.

Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our Church and become part of our parish community at St Michael's. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. Activities for the year have been undertaken in the light of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

We seek to enable members of the community to engage with the Christian faith through:

Worship, prayer and study,
Provision of pastoral care,
Missionary and outreach work,
Support of local organisations.

The Church building at St Michael's and the ancillary buildings are the essential resources for this work to take place, although the ability to livestream services and use the internet in various ways has been very important in 2023.

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). The House of Bishops' Guidance Documents "Protecting all God's Children" "Policy for safeguarding adults in the Church of England" and "Promoting a Safer Church", have been issued to PCC members and are available from the Vicar on request. Those requiring a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) disclosure have received them, and the ongoing programme of Church of England online safeguarding training for those who require this continues. The PCC has reviewed its Safeguarding policies one for Children and one for Vulnerable Adults following new Church of England guidance.

Ministry

The Vicar is supported and assisted in ministry by colleagues, both ordained and lay, the Revd Stephen Mephram as Associate Priest, and Bridget Russell-Calvert as reader.

Dr Martin Heath, Emeritus Reader, also supports the Church's Mission in a number of ways, including preaching. Other members of the congregation engage in pastoral care, and there is a Pastoral Care Group which supports the Vicar in this area of the Church's ministry.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Ex-officio members

Incumbent:	The Revd Dr Geoffrey Calvert (Chairman)
Licensed Ministers	The Revd Stephen Mephram (Associate Priest) Mrs Bridget Russell-Calvert (Reader)
Churchwardens	Mrs Elizabeth Watkin Mrs Valerie Blacklock

(Two Vacancies for Deanery Synod Representatives)

Elected Members

To serve to 2024 Mr Andrew Kiddle, Mr Duncan Turton

To serve to 2025 Mr Simon Fowle, Cllr Mark Watkin

To serve to 2026 Mrs Sylvia Moring, Mrs Jane Talbot, Mrs Gillian Heath, Mrs Julie Bye

Non-trustee officers appointed by PCC

Honorary Treasurer – Mr Duncan Turton
Electoral Roll Officer – Mr Simon Fowle
Safeguarding Officer – Mrs Bridget Russell-Calvert
Data Controller – The Revd Geoffrey Calvert
PCC Secretary – Simon Fowle
Annual Report Compilation – Mrs Julie and Mr Stephen Bye

Non-trustee advisors appointed by PCC

Insurance advisor – Mr Duncan Turton

COMMITTEES

Committees

The PCC operates through a number of committees, which meet between full meetings of the PCC. The committees have continued to function during 2023, using video conferencing and in person meetings.

Standing Committee:

This is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. The Vicar, the Wardens, the Secretary and the Treasurer constitute the Standing Committee.

Finance Committee:

- Oversees the financial dimension of the work of St. Michael and All Angels by monitoring income and expenditure, budgeting, and initiating and authorising fundraising activities.

(A fuller set of terms of reference for the Finance Committee is available on request)

Estates Committee:

- Attends to matters relating to the fabric of the church, halls, grounds and the curate's house (57 Whippendell Road)
- Oversees the management of Littlebury Hall.

Mission Committee:

- Seeks to foster support for the life and mission of the worldwide Church through prayer, publicity, events and visiting speakers;
- To make recommendations to the PCC for the annual allocation of mission & charitable giving.

Social Committee:

- The committee fosters contact with all organisations associated with St. Michael and All Angels, providing catering for parish functions and supports other activities where appropriate

Children and Young Families Network:

- Fosters Christian growth among young people in the age group 0 – 18 years.

St Michael and All Angels Church, Watford

MISSION ACTION PLAN

(A new Mission Action Plan is in Preparation)

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

St Michael & All Angels Church is located in the residential area of West Watford. It is a large building built over 100 years ago to enable the people of West Watford to attend Christian worship. In recent years the local population has become multi-ethnic. There is still a good number of Christians who attend St Michael's Church for worship on Sundays although half of our Electoral Roll members live outside the Parish.

Our core act of Sunday Worship, at 9.30am, involves many people, who support it as musicians, servers, readers, intercessors, sidespersons, and Children's Church leaders, by providing weekly leaflets, and in many other ways. People from many different sections of the local and wider community are welcomed.

The Toddler Church is thriving, with few sessions where there are fewer than 20 children present, and a lovely supportive group of parents, grandparents and carers.

We act as a collection point for the Watford Food Bank, and a distribution point on Wednesday mornings. Many thanks to the volunteers who enable us to do this. Numbers of people needing Food Bank have continued to grow, to the point where we have to have a van bring the food boxes to us for distribution.

Laurance Haines School and Chater Infants School have harvest and Christmas celebrations in Church, and St Anthony's School have their Lent retreat days in Church. Care Home services take place at The Chase.

The church building is adaptable, particularly as it does not have pews, and both church members and other local people take advantage of its size for social activities. Church members particularly welcome non churchgoers to this type of activity as it brings them inside our lovely church building.

The Church is used by the St Gregorios congregation of the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church on two Sundays a month.

There is an exercise class in Church on Tuesday evenings, attended by church members and members of the local community.

During the year, St Michael's ministered to the local community through services of Baptism, Marriage and Funerals. 4 of our young people have been confirmed during 2023.

The church is a member of Churches Together in Watford and of Christians Across Watford.

Our Christmas Fair in 2023 provided an occasion to raise funds in a welcoming and friendly atmosphere.

10% of our Planned Giving is earmarked for Mission Giving (described later in the Annual Report).

During 2023 negotiations took place for leasing of Littlebury Hall as a martial arts training gym.

As a Christian Church, St Michael's seeks to welcome and minister to a wide variety of people from our local and wider communities, giving them a place to belong and find fellowship and understanding. We aim to do this through a wide variety of worship and other activities on Sundays and during the week so that people can find a place here whatever part of the community they belong to.

During late 2022 we held the funeral of Pat Beach, and in early 2023 that of Dennis Beach. Later on in 2023 we also held the funeral of June Arnold. Another of our wider Church family who died in 2023 was Keith Levinson.

Fr Geoff

ELECTORAL ROLL

After the revision of the Electoral Roll in May 2023, there were 69 on the Roll. The 69 comprised 44 Resident and 25 non-Resident.

At 31st December 2023, the year-end total was 67, of which 44 were Resident and 23 non-Resident, which is 2 fewer than as at 31.12.22.

Simon Fowle

Electoral Roll Officer

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Parochial Church Council of St Michael and All Angels, Watford (Charity Commission Registration Number 1132010).

Introduction

The Parochial Church Council presents the Report and accounts of St Michael and All angels, Watford for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Notes to the Accounts

1. Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of Accounting

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and in Accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for Accounting by charities.

(b) Planned Giving and Tax Recoverable

have been treated as Income when actually received.

(c) Depreciation

Equipment, fixture and fittings are depreciated at between 15% and 25% per annum on a straight line basis. From 1 January 2013, assets have been capitalised only when the initial cost exceeds £3,000

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our overall funds have decreased during 2023 from £95,073 to £89,114. Total incoming funds were £92,356. That is a slight increase on the 2022 figure of £91,822.

Our main sources of regular income were:

1. Rental income (St Michael's Hall, Littlebury Hall, and the Curate's House) - £41,158 (2022: £41,527)
2. Giving by Church Members and supporters (including Tax Repaid under Gift Aid) £35,707 – (2022: £39,698).

Our total expenditure ("Resources used"), was £99,578 (2022: £104,052)

Our biggest item of expenditure remains the Diocesan Quota, which in 2023 was £52,737. We are not expecting any significant increase in the parish share in 2024.

We had bank and deposit balances of £55,632 at 31st December 2023.

The Future

After several years where Covid affected the finances of St Michael's, and all churches, the pattern now seems to have stabilised. PCC will continue to seek new revenue streams and maintain those that we now have. It remains pleasing that a more diverse set of income streams has become available to PCC.

The condition of our buildings remains the most significant financial issue confronting PCC.

Duncan Turton

Treasurer

BALANCE SHEET

<u>Parochial Church Council of St Michael and All Angels Watford</u>			
		2023	2022
<u>Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2023</u>	Note	£	£
<u>Fixed Assets</u>			
<u>Tangible Fixed Assets</u>			
Equipment, fixtures and fittings	3d and 8	0	0
Functional freehold property - Curate's House			
57 Whippendell Road Watford (at cost)	4a	12,575	12,575
Littlebury Hall, Mildred Avenue, Watford (at cost)	4a	5,065	5,065
St Michael's Hall, Durban Road, Watford (cost not known)			
<u>Investment Assets</u>	4c	14,999	13,736
		32,639	31,376
<u>Current Assets</u>			
Debtors and Prepayments		843	1,767
Short Term Deposits		38,300	37,111
Cash at Bank and at Hand		17,332	25,007
		56,475	63,885
Sundry Creditors and Accruals		0	(188)
Liabilities Sundry Creditors and Accruals		0	(188)
Net Current Assets		56,475	63,697
<u>Net Assets</u>	11	89,114	95,073
<u>Funds</u>			
<u>Unrestricted</u>			
General Funds		80,966	85,155
Major Works Fund		3,323	4,995
Flower Fund		361	361
Vicar/Churchwarden's Emergency Fund		916	916
Organ Fund		245	245
		85,811	91,672
<u>Restricted</u>			
Major Works Fund		642	642
General Fund		2,661	2,759
		3,303	3,401
		89,114	95,073
Approved by the Parochial Church Council on XX March 2024			
Signed			

Rev. Geoffrey Calvert, Vicar			
Mrs E Watkin, Churchwarden			

FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Parochial Church Council of St Michael and All Angels Watford						
Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2023						
	Note	Unrestricted General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 Total Funds	2022 Total Funds
<u>Incoming Resources</u>						
Incoming Resources from Donors	2a	35,707	0	0	35,707	39,698
Other Voluntary Incoming Resources	2b	3,311	0	0	3,311	3,838
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	2c	49,667	0	0	49,667	47,364
Other ordinary incoming resources	2d	1,833	0	0	1,833	0
Income from investments	2e	1,838	0	0	1,838	922
Vicar and Churchwardens fund	2e	0	0	0	0	0
Total Incoming Resources		92,356	0	0	92,356	91,822
<u>Resources Used</u>						
Grants	3a	3,010	0	0	3,010	3,310
Activities Directly relating to the work of the church	3b	89,321	0	0	89,321	99,795
Generating Funds and Publicity	3c	0	0	0	0	55
Church Management and administration	3d	7,247	0	0	7,247	892
Total Resources Used		99,578	0	0	99,578	104,052
Net Incoming Resources		(7,222)	0	0	(7,222)	(12,230)
Unrealised Gains/(losses) on investments		3,033	(1,672)	(99)	1,263	(1,851)
Net Movements in Investments		3,033	(1,672)	(99)	1,263	(1,851)
Net Movements in Funds		(4,189)	(1,672)	(99)	(5,959)	(14,081)
Balances Carried Forward at 31/12/22		85,155	6,517	3,401	95,073	109,154
Balances Carried Forward at 31/12/23		80,966	4,846	3,303	89,114	95,073

FINANCIAL NOTES

Parochial Church Council of St Michael and All Angels Watford							
Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023							
	Note	Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 Total Funds	2022 Total Funds	
Incoming Resources							
2a	Incoming Resources from donors						
	Planned Giving and collections at services	26,349			26,349	28,189	
	Tax Recovered (Gift Aid)	7,139			7,139	7,255	
	Missions/charitable giving	0			0	0	
	Grants towards Quinquennial repair costs	0			0	0	
	Grant towards War Memorial refurbishment	0			0	0	
	Donations - General	2,219		0	2,219	4,254	
	Donations – Flower Fund	0	0		0	0	
		35,707	0	0	35,707	39,698	
2b	Other Voluntary incoming Resources						
	Legacies	6	0		0	0	
	Fair, Market and other fund raising		3,311		3,311	3,838	
			3,311	0	0	3,311	3,838
2c	Income from Charitable and ancillary trading						
	Sword Magazine		0		0	0	
	Rental Income from Curate's House	7	21,210		21,210	20,082	
	Funeral and Wedding Fees		2,982		2,982	2,260	
	Church Hire Fees		5,310		5,310	3,577	
	Littlebury Hall – Lettings		9,448		9,448	10,945	
	St Michael's Rent		10,500		10,500	10,500	
	Other income – sale of assets		217		217	0	
			49,667	0	0	49,667	47,364
2d	Other Ordinary Incoming Resources						
	Insurance Claims		0		0	0	
	Recoverable VAT		1,833		1,833	0	
			1,833		1,833	0	
2e	Income from investments						
	Church		1,838	0	1,838	922	
	Vicar/Churchwardens Fund		0		0	0	
			1,838	0	0	1,838	922

	Total Incoming Resources		92,356	0	0	92,356	91,822

Parochial Church Council of St Michael and All Angels Watford

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 (Continued)

	Resources Used	Note	Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 Total Funds	2022 Total Funds
3a	Grants						
	Missions at home and abroad and charitable giving		3,010			3,010	3,310
			3,010	0	0	3,010	3,310
3b	Activities directly relating to the work of the church:						
	Ministry Diocesan Quota		52,737			52,737	51,764
	Ministry Clergy Expenses		944			944	632
	Curate house expenses		838			838	18,460
	Church Running Expenses inc Cleaning		9,401			9,401	9,591
	Insurance – Church		5,313			5,313	4,885
	Repairs and Maintenance		6,518			6,518	2,307
	Music		2,333			2,333	2,017
	Sanctuary Expenses		637			637	538
	Children's Church and Youth work		197			197	342
	Purchase of flowers		0	0		0	0
	Littlebury Hall expenses		2,472			2,472	1,521
	Sword Magazine, Messenger and See Round		0			0	0
	Organ repairs		2,126			2,126	398
	Major Church Repairs: Quinquennial		2,660			2,660	4,589
	Costs of War Memorial		0			0	0
	Church Gardening Expenses		1,502			1,502	1,271
	Parochial Fees Payable to DBF		1,643			1,643	1,480
			89,321	0	0	89,321	99,795
3c	Generating Funds and Publicity		0			0	55
			0	0	0	0	55
3d	Church management and admin						
	Printing, copying and stationery inc. maintenance of copier		323			323	474
	General expenses		6,924			6,924	418
	Depreciation		0		0	0	0
			7,247	0	0	7,247	892
	Total Resources Used		99,578	0	0	99,578	104,052

Parochial Church Council of St Michael and All Angels Watford

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 (Continued)						
		Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 Total Funds	2022 Total Funds
4	Fixed Assets for use by the PCC					
4a	Tangible Assets					
	Tangible Fixed Assets at Cost	17,640			17,640	17,640
	Functional freehold properties					
	It is not considered appropriate to make a provision for these assets					
4b	Equipment, Fixtures and fittings	0			0	0
	See note 8	17,640	0	0	17,640	17,640
4c	The investments comprise the following:	375 CBF Fixed Interest Securities Fund – Income shares	610 CBF Investment Fund Income Shares	461 CBF Fixed Interest Securities Fund – Income Shares		
		General	Designated	Restricted	Total	Total
	Investments (value at 31/12/23)	543	13,789	667	14,999	13,887

5	<u>Remuneration and Expenses</u>		
	<u>Members of the Church Council/Connected Persons:</u>		
	Zero payment in 2023.		
6	<u>Legacies pending</u>		
	One legacy is pending, though PCC understands that the amount to be realised is likely to be low, if anything.		
7	<u>57 Whippendell Road</u>		
	The property has been, since February 2022, let out at a commercial rate. There are no arrears as at year end 2023.		
8	<u>Equipment Fixtures and Fittings</u>		
	Net Balance 1/1/2023	0	
	Additions	0	
	Depreciation	-	
	Net Balance 31/12/2023	0	
9	<u>Contingent Liability</u>		
	There are no contingent liabilities		
10	<u>Insurance</u>		
	Properties are insured on a replacement basis for the sums indicated – the sums relate to the 2023 insurance policies:		
	St Michael's Church, Mildred Avenue/Durban Road, Watford		£19,280,000.00
	Littlebury Hall, Mildred Avenue, Watford		£451,640.00
	57 Whippendell Road, Watford		£427,283.00
	St Michael's Hall, Durban Road		£587,469.00
11	<u>Analysis of Net Assets</u>		
	Fixed Assets		
	Properties	17,640	
	Investments	14,999	
	Equipment, fixtures and fittings	0	
	Current Assets	56,475	
		89,114	
	Less		
	Current Liabilities	-	
	Net Assets	89,114	

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent Examiner's report to the Parochial Church Council of St Michael and All Angels, Watford (Charity Number 1132010).

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on the following pages.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees 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:

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

Basis of this report

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:

i. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or

ii. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Ms Karen Pryse
Croxley, Herts.
March 2024

MISSION AND CHARITABLE GIVING

ST MICHAEL AND ALL AND ANGELS CHURCH WATFORD

Mission and charitable giving for year ended 31 December 2023

St Michael's Church allocates 10 percent of its planned giving each year to local, national and international agencies whose work it seeks to support. The following list shows the charities to which we allocated funds in 2023.

The Trussell Trust (Food Banks)	£450.00
Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy	£450.00
Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust	£450.00
Mission Aviation Fellowship	£450.00
Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership	£450.00
Alzheimer's Society	£450.00
USPG (International Anglican Mission Agency)	£450.00
TOTAL	£3,150.00

We have also given to Christian Aid and Children's Society through fundraising during the year.

Other Special Collections and Fund Raising

Christmas Fair	1,628
Lent Lunch	300
Pop-up sale	276
Quiz	526
Nu Works Theatre Group	185
TOTAL	£2,915

ANGELIC COFFEE

Fr Geoff

CHILDREN & YOUNG FAMILIES NETWORK

The last year has welcomed more families into our wonderful Church space. This has happened through various workshops, musicals, crib service, our annual sports day in the park and, of course, our ever growing vibrant Monday morning toddler Church.

After many years, due to lack of resources, our children's Church is not happening but we have plenty of quiet toys and craft boxes at the back of the Church making it a welcome area for families to sit and play whilst still being immersed in the service. This involvement is enhanced by the wonderful skills of James Mepham who aids the smooth running of this as part of his D of E Award. James is supported by his Mum Fiona and his confidence is growing beautifully.

Bridget Russell Calvert continues with our monthly youth discussion group where various topics are discussed, linking current issues including environmental, within the Christian doctrine.

Our fun family Easter and Advent workshops continued this last year when we caught up with families we know and welcomed new ones who enjoyed the activities. A hugely successful workshop was on May 6th when we welcomed many young families, from the community, to come and make all things red, white and blue for their coronation street parties. Thank you to Ranti, Helen, Kirsty, Gillian, Elizabeth T, Josephine and Ruth for their help, love, creativity and support during these workshops.

It is always wonderful when someone is confirmed. In November Megan Cunningham was confirmed by Bishop Jane Mainwaring at St Luke's supported by Father Geoff. Megan appeared confident and proud and it was great to meet her wider family along with Kevin, Gráinne, Aisling and Cían.

Thanks to Elizabeth and Megan who arranged our second family sports day in the park. A small but enthusiastic crowd cheered the children run, jump and dress up as they raced one another winning chocolate and receiving a well-deserved certificate for their skills.

More families from the community came to watch two very talented visiting theatre groups from Melbourne. No one can deny the energy and fun that lit up the Church during their performances of "The Pirate Code" by NuWorks and "A Midsummer night's dream" by Wesley College. Both groups so generously insisted all entry revenue and donations went directly to our Church funds. Thank you so much to The Blacklock and Calvert families who hosted a few of the actors and provided food for the supper we all shared after the performances.

Each Monday morning the Church is ringing to the sound of toddlers having a great time playing, creating and snacking. It is a growing success and not only for the fun time for the toddlers. The adults that the toddler's bring along find it a relaxing supportive space and are keen to help, in one way or another, to maintain this exciting, important and growing weekly event. Plans are being made how to do this amongst the massive change ahead.

Whatever the outcome of these plans, we are sure one of our most successful Church activities will continue to grow and thrive.

Jane Talbot

DEANERY SYNOD

Martin and Vicki Matthews

ESTATES

To keep the church in as best order as we can we, the members of this committee, have had to consider several projects; some with more success than others.

For the church the first project was to have the high level gutters cleared which happened in very wintry weather and cost about £1K. Early in the year the finishing touches were put to the kitchen at the east end. Following our 5-yearly inspection known as the QI, we have been working with our surveyors, Mark Battram Associates, to obtain quotations from stonemasons for the repair work of the parapet over the Lady Chapel. As the cost of materials increased dramatically because of the changing world situation, no-one was prepared to commit to a price. Eventually Mark received a quote for £80K but he thought this was too high so the search continued.

We have problems when water comes into the church when storms blow in from the wrong direction. Now that we have a damp meter we can monitor this more carefully.

It would have been lovely if we could have repaired the peal of bells but at £10K we felt this was too much however, we have hopes that a local resident may be able to help.

Repairing our organ is a constant need. Changes in temperature don't help and when it stopped working in the summer, the blower that provides air to the pipes needed to be repaired – for £1.5K.

The 3 yearly Electrical Inspection identified that we needed work carried out to the circuit panels. The cost of the inspection and the remedial work came to £10K.

Reflecting the increasing concerns over carbon emissions, the Diocesan Advisory Committee asked us to record our energy usage. This has caused us to consider what we might do to work towards achieving this, such as installing solar panels on the roof or air heaters, but as the guidelines keep changing we have not been able to reach a conclusion.

The main concern for Littlebury Hall has been to get the Lease signed with our tenants, the M.C.M.A. All was going well until the agreed terms were passed to the solicitors. Since then, everything has been slow as 'their' solicitor and 'our' solicitor raised points with each other. We hope that it is just about ready for signing.

At St Michaels Hall everything has been relatively quiet apart from a leak in the roof over passageway going to the kitchen which cost £500 to repair.

I am pleased to report that our tenants at 57 Whippendell Road agreed to the increase in rent. A minor problem in the bathroom has been rectified. However, there are still the last little bits of outdoor painting to be finished but this is weather dependent and subject to availability of our decorator. The rental gave us just over £25k, while expenses this year have been just over £5k which among other things covered the electrical inspection and management fee.

We have ensured that all our annual inspections have been carried out. Insurances have been paid, extinguishers and small equipment checked, lighting assessed and day to day problems have been resolved.

One nice little snippet of news is about our piano. A young man (who finished A Levels last year) comes in to practise and when the piano was tuned he, and his teacher, were thrilled with the quality of the instrument and the sound it produced. Thank you Andy Benoy who went to great lengths to find a suitable instrument.

Elizabeth Watkin.

FOOD BANK

The Food Bank service was maintained throughout 2023 by a group led by the Vicar, Mrs Jane Talbot and Mrs Valerie Blacklock, with others in support when needed, to whom we are very grateful. The Food Bank has seen increased use over the year and is a very important support for those who use it. Whilst we wish we could live in a society that doesn't need to have Food Banks, we are glad we are able to support needy people in this way. We provide toiletries and sanitary products through our own resources, and the congregation have been very generous in providing these, for which we are also very grateful.

Fr Geoff

MISSION COMMITTEE

Fr Geoff

MUSIC

Our two organists Mr Tim Hooper and Mr David Degen, and our choir members, have played and sung for us and with us on Sunday mornings throughout the year, on special occasions such as the Christmas Carol Service and Christmas and Easter service, and on occasions throughout the year. Our organists have not just played for us, but on occasion dealt with a non-functioning organ due to electrical failure!

Fr Geoff

We're still standing! Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!*

Our little group of 6 choristers helps to lead the congregation with the hymns and setting of the Mass and, whenever possible, sing an anthem. Thank you for all your support and hanging-on in there. As ever, more singers would be welcome. Many thanks to Tim Hooper and Dave Degan who keep us on our toes who surprise and delight us with their playing.

We were able to have concerts which folk enjoyed and we hope that the orchestras will be back next year.

When one asks an organist about the condition of the instrument the expected reply is that it needs to have a lot of money spent to improve it. When one tries to find someone to give professional advice it becomes 'work in progress'.

*Thanks to Elton John.

Elizabeth Watkin.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The social committee is charged with providing entertainment and fundraising for the church family. We are a small group who welcome suggestions from members of the congregation for events.

During the year our fundraising events were Lent Lunch, a Pop-Up Sale, a Quiz and The Christmas Fair.

The Lent Lunch as usual was a platform for some of The Brownies to work towards their Take Action badge that demonstrates their commitment to Charity, Lending a Hand and Doing a Good Turn. They are a delight to have with us. Their leaders support them and are not averse to helping where necessary for which we are most grateful. All proceeds from this event go to charitable giving. We raised £300 when combined with Norma's sale and a raffle.

The Pop-Up sale raised £276 for church funds.

The Quiz raised £526 for church funds. We are indebted to Chris and June Jones who ran the quiz again this year.

The Christmas Fair raised £1628 for church funds. We received raffle prizes from Bury Lake Young Mariners, Warner Bros, The Grove, Boom Battle Bar, Morrisons and Glow in the Dark Golf. Many thanks to the members of the congregation who donated so generously so we could stock the various sideshows.

In addition to the fundraising events we enjoyed hosting members of the community to a screening of King Charles' Coronation on Saturday 6th May. Jane Talbot organised a wonderful workshop for the children who came along. Fizz, cake and Coronation Quiche was enjoyed after the 9.30 service on Sunday 7th May.

We were treated to a wonderful performance of The Pirate's Code by David Dunne and his Nu Works Theatre group on Monday 3rd July and on Monday 11th September a very energetic performance of A Mid summers night dream by David and his students from Wesley College while on a tour of the UK. They very kindly donated the proceeds of the evening to church funds raising £185. On Tuesday 12th September the church was full of children from St. Anthony's School who enjoyed a brilliant performance of Pinocchio. We look forward to welcoming David and his actors again in the future.

We are most grateful for all the help freely given by members of the congregation to make these events successful and enjoyable.

Valerie Blacklock.

WEDNESDAY MORNING COFFEE

Fr Geoff

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MONTHLY DISCUSSION GROUP

Bridget Russell-Calvert