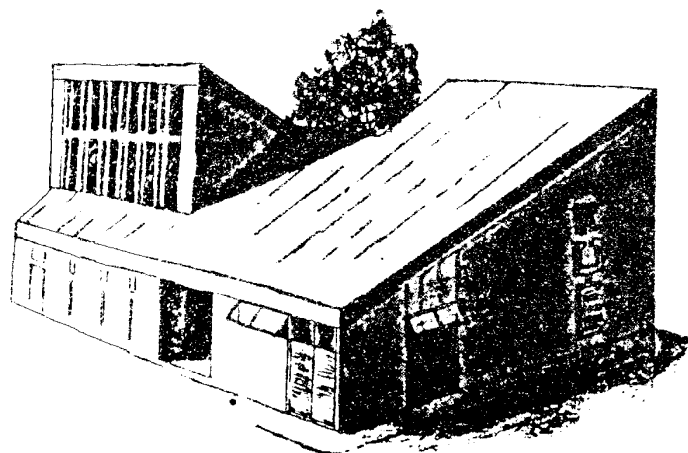
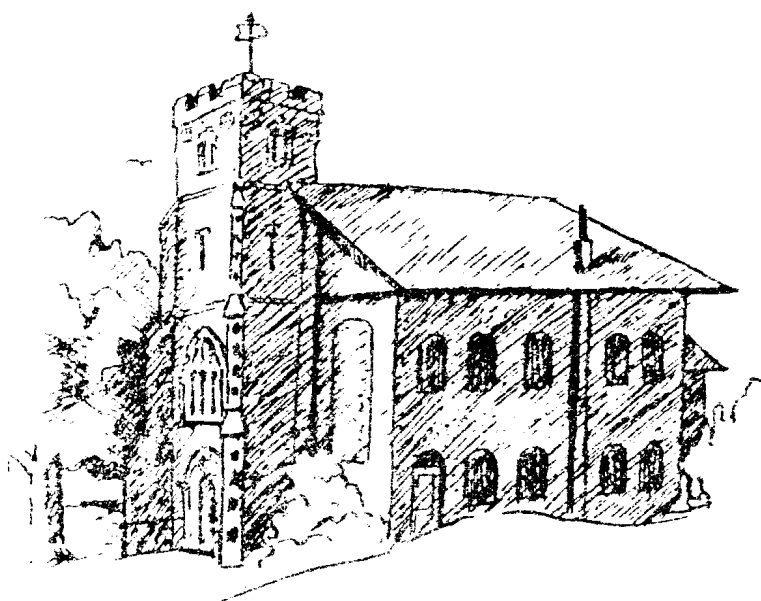


Parish of Rochester
St Peter with St Margaret



ANNUAL REPORT
2022



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Parish of Rochester Annual Report for 2022 - Introduction

Administrative Information

This report is for the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Rochester (the PCC), registered with the Charity Commission as charity number 1132260. The PCC is a body corporate, and the governing documents of the PCC are the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended and the Church Representation Rules 2017. This report covers the period from 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022.

The Parish of Rochester is in the Church of England diocese of Rochester. The correspondence address is St Peter's Church Parish Centre, Delce Road, Rochester, ME1 2EH.

Aims, Objectives and Activities of the PCC

The PCC is responsible for working with the incumbent, the Reverend Dr Joel Love, in promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of churches and other properties in the parish, which are currently:

- The St Peter's Church Parish Centre, Delce Road, Rochester
- St. Margaret's Church, St Margaret's Street, Rochester
- The Matthews Memorial Hall, Castle Avenue, Rochester
- A residential property at Hathaway Court, The Esplanade, Rochester

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to enjoy full participation in the parish community. The PCC, through its committees and groups, maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions as to how our services can involve the social groups that live within our parish.

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to deliver the responsibilities of the PCC in our parish community through, amongst other things:

- Worship and prayer
- Teaching and learning about God
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish and those involved with the church
- Mission and outreach work to our community and beyond
- Working with other churches
- Working with other community organisations for the benefit of the local area

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the buildings listed above. Please see all detailed reports in this annual report for information on how our activities are planned, managed and carried out.

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At the Parish of Rochester, the PCC consists of the incumbent (the vicar), an ordinand, a Licenced Lay Minister, the two churchwardens elected at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners, and two Deanery Synod representatives and nine ordinary members elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. Three deputy churchwardens, and honorary treasurer and an honorary secretary are appointed by the PCC and may be co-opted to the PCC if they are not already elected members.

All those who attend our services or are otherwise involved in the life of the church are encouraged to register on the electoral roll.

PCC Members During 2022

Ex Officio Members (throughout 2022 unless otherwise noted)

The Reverend Dr Joel Love (Vicar)

The Reverend Mark Ball (Associate Priest) October onwards

The Reverend Ruth Teruel-Pyrke (Curate) September onwards

Mr Peter Cornell (Churchwarden)

Mr Douglas Seth-Smith (Churchwarden)

Mrs Angela Cornell (Deanery Synod Representative)

Mr Michael O'Connor (Deanery Synod Representative)

Honorary Treasurer

Michael O'Connor

Elected Members serving until April 2022

Mr David Porter

Mr Alex Sime

Elected Members serving throughout 2022

Mr Aidan Dooley

Mrs Pam Moss (Deputy Churchwarden)

Mr Stuart Pearson (Deputy Churchwarden)

Mr David Porter

Mr John Portman (Deputy Churchwarden)

Mrs Bonnie Chandler

Mrs Joy Wilson

Elected Members serving from April 2022

Mrs Monica Aldridge

Minutes of The Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Held at St Peter's Church and on Zoom simultaneously on Sunday 15th May 2022

Election of Officers

A resolution was passed to rescind the rule that churchwardens should only stand for seven years continuously. Proposed by Christine Seth Smith, seconded by John Portman. Carried unanimously.

Churchwardens (Charity Trustees) for one year only

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Douglas Seth Smith | Proposed by Pam Moss
Seconded by Bonnie Chandler |
| 2. Peter Cornell | Proposed by Pam Moss
Seconded by Nicky Timlick |

Elected unanimously.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Held at St Peter's Church and on Zoom simultaneously on Sunday 15th May 2022

1. **Apologies.** Kevin Russell, Angie Cornell, Jacqui Ravenhill, David Porter, Sheila Porter, Pam Boarer, Irene Ewells and Derrick Solly.
Present (in Church). Rev Joel Love (chair), Stuart Pearson, Rachel Pearce, John Portman, Pam Moss, Peter Cornell, Alan Moss, Douglas Seth Smith, Aidan Dooley, Christine Seth Smith, Joy Wilson, Bonnie Chandler, Michael O'Connor, Monica Aldridge and Miriam Dooley.
Present (via Zoom). Nicky Timlick, Jayne Pearson and Sally Bragg.
2. **Minutes of previous meeting**
The minutes were agreed as a true record. Proposed by Joel Love, seconded by Peter Cornell. Carried unanimously.
3. **Matters Arising**
Pop In and Neighbours no longer exist.
The Financial report for 2020 was included by mistake. The correct report will be appended to the annual report held on file in the parish office and circulated to anyone requesting to see it.
4. **Election of PCC members**
Monica Aldridge. Proposed by Jayne Pearson, seconded by Pam Moss. Carried unanimously.
5. **Appointment of an Independent Examiner**
Michael O'Connor proposed that Rob Trice continue, seconded by Pam Moss. Carried unanimously.
6. **Reports**
All reports were handed in on time for the second consecutive year. There were no queries.

7. A.O.B.

Joel asked for feedback about what we have done well as a church so that we can continue go forward. There were many responses to this: the beer festival, Royal Wedding viewing party for Prince William and Kate Middleton, Zoom worship, Walsum partnership, home communion, the theatre Shakespeare production in St Margaret's churchyard, Postman Pat advertising a fete, Lectio Divina, the start of the dementia groups and the support given by both church and community, Zoom morning prayer, prayer ministry, the Pilgrimage and the organising of it by Robin Alexander, how the church has pulled together in times of grief and joy, how well the Cluster works, Pimms and Hymns, Fireworks and bonfire parties, exhibitions held at St Margaret's organised by the Friends of St Peter and St Margaret's.

8. Date of next APCM

Tba – probably next April or May

We ended with The Grace

Vicar's Report

Sharing ministry: In 2022 we strengthened our links with St Matthew's, Borstal (and with St Justus through the Mission Cluster). In September, the Revd Ruth Teruel Pyrke was ordained to a curacy across both Rochester and Borstal parishes. In October, the Revd Mark Ball was licensed to serve as Associate Priest in both parishes. Joel carried out Ministerial Development Reviews for our LLMs: Christine Seth-Smith, Karen Taylor-Barrett and Paul Barrett. All three of them expressed a desire to minister across the Cluster. The LLMs and clergy have formed a ministry team which meets to pray together and share ideas for preaching, outreach, and strategy.

In September we welcomed a new diocesan bishop, Jonathan Gibbs, who has already been inside St Margaret's several times. Several members of the clergy helped with services over the course of the year, including Sue Brewer, Neil Bunker, Helen Burn, Liz Chapman, Hugh Grear, Alan Le Grys, Stephen Padfield, Adam Pyrke, Neil Thompson, and Archdeacon Andy Wooding Jones. Our Area Dean, Martyn Saunders, also took a funeral for us while Joel was ill with Covid. We were very sad to say goodbye to Revd Lindsay Llewellyn Macduff, who has supported ministry in the parish for the past 8 years.

St Margaret's hosted a memorable deanery synod meeting this year (with Champagne and canapes). Joel is also on the deanery standing committee and attends diocesan synod *ex officio* because he is a diocesan rep on General Synod.

Pastoral care: Our team of lay assistants make home visits and bring communion to individuals and groups of people living in care homes such as: Winchester House, Watts's Almshouses, Sherwood House, and the French Hospital (La Providence). For part of 2022, Joel continued to bring communion to residents of Elizabeth House, but this stopped when one of them died and another moved out of the area. The pastoral care team is aware of more than 40 individuals whom we are visiting, contacting, or for whom we are praying on a regular basis. If you are aware of anyone needing pastoral care, please speak to Joel.

Coffee Shop continues to be a hub for people to gather, make friends, and find support. It is now listed on warmspaces.org. Listening Volunteers are often available to sit with people, although we have not been able to offer this service every week. Donations from several individuals have enabled us to help households in the parish with their gas and electricity. Joel has also provided support for couples having marital problems, individuals experiencing poor mental health, and people who are struggling with alcohol and drug dependency. He has also received training on intergenerational ministry, trauma awareness, and working with conflict.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and 2022 saw the roll-out of new domestic abuse awareness training and modern slavery awareness training. These courses are available online via the diocesan website. Please take them! Those with responsibilities for recruitment have also undertaken safer recruitment training. A 'Lessons Learned' report was also published in 2022, looking at safeguarding failures within the diocese in recent years.

Our pastoral ministry was also expressed through the 12 funerals, one wedding, one blessing, and one renewal of vows that took place.

Wider community: The PCC took the decision to close the Matthews Memorial Hall so that it can be sold, and the money used to redevelop the Parish Centre for community use. This meant that the Hall was available to be used as a collection and distribution centre to support Ukrainian relief efforts. The Trustees of John Baynard's Charity voted to give all of their funds to support a mental health project within the Oasis Secure School that will soon be opening within the Rochester prisons and YOI complex. The second annual Local Heroes Awards sadly had to be cancelled when one of the main organisers lost his dad and had to become the full-time carer for

his mother. We marked the Queen's Jubilee with a tea party in June, and in September we marked her death and funeral with a book of condolences and services of prayers and commemoration.

The PCC has recently begun to think about the contested heritage that might be present in our Church buildings and churchyards (for example surrounding John Newton and the Transatlantic slave trade). We joined an event at Rochester Cathedral that was themed around racial justice, and we have also begun examining the records that we hold in the parish archive. If anyone is interested in helping with this project, please speak to Joel.

We continue to offer dementia-friendly worship and other dementia services in conjunction with the Cluster. The Cluster also supports local families, groups, and initiatives through the Without Walls charity. As a parish, we have identified children and families, intergenerational worship, Eco Church, and outreach to the whole community as core parts of our vision. Joel has been involved in strategic conversations about the Rochester Riverside development and the ABC Centre in Shorts Way.

Growing together: Ruth has developed a monthly 'Family Time & Toast' initiative, which has seen new families worshipping with us and some families returning for the first time post-Covid. We have also welcomed new people at our Sunday services and were especially pleased with the numbers in attendance at our Christmas services. One sign of growth is that we now need more welcomers and tea & coffee volunteers. Please speak to Monica if you can help in one of these roles.

Morning prayer continues to meet online on weekdays, frequently with 7-8 people joining in. We offered additional evening services for prayer during Holy Week and Advent this year, as well as online bible studies (with St Justus) and a bible study/supper club in the parish. Joel also offered a film Quiet Day at 65 Maidstone Road in Chatham, and several film nights at the vicarage. In the new year we are hoping to offer an even broader range of prayer and bible study groups, as well as an evangelistic 'Pub Theology' event.

We encourage people to access spiritual direction and spiritual development courses through the diocese. For example, Christine Seth-Smith made the Exercises of St Ignatius with a small group led by Susanne Carlsson and Geoff Burn this year. Joel sees people for spiritual direction on a regular basis and is a tutor on the course that trains spiritual directors. If you are curious about spiritual direction, please speak to Joel, who will point you towards Susanne Carlsson, the Spiritual Adviser for the diocese.

In 2022, we baptised 20 individuals and prepared one young person for confirmation. In 2023 we will be joining the confirmations at the Cathedral's vigil service on Easter day. We will also be admitting children to communion on 11 June, the Sunday after Corpus Christi.

Communications: Over 100 people receive Joel's MailChimp mailings, and many more access the website and Facebook page (with thanks to Alan Moss, John Noakes, and Gary Ward). We also have a parish Instagram account. There have been problems with the sound quality on our Zoom and YouTube broadcasts of Sunday services, but we continue to work on this. We also need more volunteers to operate the system at St Peter's and St Margaret's. For those who are not aware, Joel's landline has now been disconnected but his mobile number appears on the weekly news sheet.

Inclusive Church: Several members of our congregation are involved at 'A Seat at the Table', which is a worshipping community of explicit welcome for LGBT+ people and allies that meets at Rochester Cathedral and online. Joel continues to support people as a chaplain to the *Living in Love and Faith* process, including through a special Trans Day of Remembrance service, a very

popular 'Eurovision Eucharist' at St Margaret's, a Christmas Eve 'thought for the day' on Medway Pride Radio, and by addressing deanery synods, church groups, and Canterbury Open Table.

Developing leaders: Hearing and Speaking God's Word courses were run in the Medway Towns this year, and members of our congregation were encouraged to attend. Another course is planned to run in May 2023. Those who have completed the course are allowed to preach from time to time in their churches. Joel is also involved in the training of Licensed Lay Ministers and is an MDR reviewer. If you want to know more about Licensed Lay Ministry, please speak to one of our LLMs.

In terms of your vicar's ministerial development, this year Joel attended the Windsor Leadership Programme for emerging leaders. He participates in regular reflective practice and supervision groups, and he is taking the Ignatian Enrichment course offered by the London Jesuit Centre. Joel's sabbatical has been postponed for another year (probably to 2024). Joel has been videoed for a student project on Towards a Plastic Free Medway, and he presented a Radio 4 programme called 'God knows I'm Gay'. A healthy vicar is a happy vicar, and this year Joel also joined the Cathedrals' Cycle relay on the leg from Rochester to Southwark.

What's next? The parish buildings development group continues to work on plans for the Parish Centre. We want to make our buildings as welcoming and useful to the community as possible, while maintaining our green space and even becoming more environmentally sustainable.

It is now time to renew many of our parish policies and risk assessments. You can help by suggesting things for us to think about in your area of ministry, or by volunteering to look over some of these documents for us.

We are looking for a wide range of voices and viewpoints on the PCC, so please consider standing for election. And if you want to know more about the role of Churchwarden, please speak to Peter or Douglas. Most importantly, we need your ideas! How can we adapt in order to connect with our community and serve its needs as Jesus would? How can we grow in our faith and encourage each other to follow Jesus more closely in the year ahead?

Rev. Dr Joel Love

Curate's Report

I would describe my time as Curate to date using the following words: deacon, servant, busy, baptism, funeral, visits, Germany, inspiring, nervous, exciting, fun, and sad. Since my ordination in September, I have had the privilege of building on the areas of ministry I have been previously involved with (Family Time, Bible Study Supper Club, baptism preparation, music group), and adding to them the occasional offices (baptisms and funerals) an ecumenical partnership project, and more pastoral visits. This has been a steep learning curve with Father Joel and many of the church family covering, encouraging, and guiding me. I found it especially inspiring to organise a Back-to-School Service with our LLM Christine Seth-Smith and it was so encouraging to see so many families attend the service and go up to receive an anointing from Reverend Neil Thompson ahead of their start to the school year. Equally wonderful was our visit to Germany to strengthen and affirm our links with Walsum and I look forward to planning their visit to us in the spring. Many of my new responsibilities have begun with an invitation from Father Joel to take something on followed by a 'if you think I'm ready' response. This has encouraged me to be stretched and continue to rely on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and the strength and energy needed to take on the task. This has also helped me to really explore my role as a deacon and with each new experience increased my sense of calling to priestly ministry in God's church.

More recently I have been involved with organising a Prayer Away Day for the prayer ministry teams across our churches. This was a powerful and equipping time with some of the participants commenting on how good it was to leave their comfort zones and try something new. I have also continued my IME2 training since my ordination joining the cohort of curates from Rochester Diocese on a regular basis and the cohort of Canterbury Diocese curates on training weekends and teaching days. This has added an extra element of planning and study but has been manageable so far.

I want to express sincere gratitude for the way, I was newly welcomed as curate during the beautiful celebration at St Margaret's church after my ordination. I also want to thank you for caring for my soul with your prayers, and comforting words after the death of my father Francisco and for allowing me time and space to grieve. This has been a living example to me of God's Holy Spirit at work within the body.

Reverend Ruth Teruel-Pyrke - February 2023

Churchwarden's Report

Having struggled with Covid in the last few years, we seem to have gained a new momentum in 2022. Joel Love, our Vicar, continues to work very hard and draws people together in the parish. His workload was increased in June 2021 when he became Priest-in-Charge at St Matthew's, Borstal. However, this had the benefit of helping both parishes to work more closely together.

In September we were delighted to welcome Ruth Teruel-Pyrke as our Curate after her ordination in Rochester Cathedral; and in October, Mark Ball was appointed as our part-time Associate Priest. This has made a significant difference and their collective duties cover three churches – St Peter's, St Margaret's and St Matthew's. We are indebted to them all for their leadership, inspiration and ministry skills, and they are supported by our Licensed Lay Ministers - Christine Seth-Smith, and Paul and Karen Barrett. We are also blessed to have several ordained ministers residing in the parish, who help us out on occasions, often at short notice.

However, the Church does not run itself without the hard work of so many members of our congregation. My grateful thanks go to all members of the PCC, fellow churchwardens, the servers, welcomers, organists, lay assistants, readers and intercessors. Also, to those who serve refreshments, flower arrangers, bell ringers, cleaners, plus those who deal with administration and finance – to name but a few! Other members of the congregation support us through prayer.

I am pleased to say that we have had more people (and families) joining us in church. Family Time and Toast at St Peter's on the first Sunday of each month has been re-energised by Ruth and her team of helpers. At the beginning of the month, it is lovely to go into church to find a real buzz and a happy atmosphere.

Last June, a newly formed music group (consisting of instrumentalists and singers) led the worship songs for our Pentecost service. Since September they have continued to do this on the first Sunday of each month, introducing us to a few new songs as well as playing and singing traditional hymns.

Also, in September a new bishop, the Right Reverend Dr Jonathan Gibbs, was appointed to the Diocese of Rochester. He has already shown a friendly interest in our church, and we hope to welcome him here in the not-too-distant future.

In December, it was with sadness that we said goodbye to Lindsay Llewelyn-MacDuff (the former Bishop's chaplain) as she moved to the Benefice of Penshurst, Fordcombe and the Chiddingstone churches. We were so grateful to her for the many services she took, especially the 9am BCP service at St Margaret's.

Douglas Seth-Smith

PCC Secretary's Report

The PCC met six times in 2022, on Zoom until September when we were able to have a physical face to face meeting.

January Many of the hall hirers have returned and St Peter's is at full capacity for lets. The bishop has given permission for the common cup to be used at communion, but the PCC decided not to do so at this time. It was agreed that we will have the usual procession with a donkey on Palm Sunday and that we should add another hymn and the Gloria in services. Mission and Outreach will continue to be run by the PCC for the moment. It was suggested that we give out packets of wildflower seeds for Mothering Sunday. Prayer ministry will begin again now. A Lent course will be held on Zoom, following a Lectio Divina style. Douglas has contacted the crematorium regarding the dangerous state of the urn on top of one of the monuments at St Margaret's.

March The PCC agreed that a new computer should be bought for St Margaret's and a new thurible as the old one has rusted. Douglas is still getting quotes for repairing storm damage to the roof at St Margaret's. Mask wearing will be encouraged but not obligatory at services from Easter, but there will still be "safe" spaces with two metres distance. Water Aid is the focus for Lent, and we will be collecting Easter eggs for those leaving care together with the Rotary club and a local charity. PCC and all church volunteers to do minimum safeguarding training on diocesan website.

May Anthony Hammill from the Diocesan Office presented a power point about welcoming and supporting Ruth Pyrke when she joins us as curate in September. The PCC agreed the purchase of a new printer for the Parish office. Hand sanitising is still in use, but all other Covid restrictions have been lifted. Communion wine is now being offered for those who wish to take it. We have helped fundraise for the Wisdom Hospice, Water Aid and Christian Aid. We are also promoting the sale of Gill Solly's book, "The Ring of Love". Rochester Local Heroes is looking for sponsorship. The start of this year's award will be starting out with an event at St Margaret's. We have one candidate for confirmation in July. We have allowed the Matthew Memorial Hall to be used as a collection point for the Ukrainian appeal. The role of Associate Vicar is to be re-advertised.

July Due to a recent accident involving a fall from the floor at the end of the pews at St Margaret's it was decided to put yellow warning tape at the edges of the floor by each pew, as we cannot make any physical change to the pews due to the large void underneath. The sale of the Matthew Memorial Hall was discussed. The PCC agreed that we could be hosts during Coffee Shop if Without Walls are successful in their bid for a grant for laptops and iPads for those who are isolated and have no access to IT, for promotion and people to run it.

September The Treasurer reported that we are under budget for income but more under budget for expenditure, though utility bills are expected to increase. A final letter has been sent to Merondon Glass regarding the broken glass at St Margaret's. Harvest Festival and Toy service will be monetary donations again this year. Christmas services will be back to normal. It was agreed that we should start to physically take the collection and take up the bread and wine. It was suggested that carpet should be put up the side aisles at St Margaret's to cover the grilles which can be a trip hazard. This will be put to the Buildings Committee. The sale of Matthew Memorial Hall was discussed, and it was proposed that a temporary second hall should be built in the garden at St Peter's as a stopgap. This will be put to the Buildings Committee. The overgrown state of the alley around the Matthew Memorial Hall and the back yard was discussed and a working party was set up to clear it.

November The safeguarding team noted that we need to adopt the following documents: Parish Safeguarding Policy, social media Acceptable Use Policy and Responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations Policy. The budget for next year was accepted. We will be passing a heating surcharge on to hall hirers. We have a new printer in the office which is now set up and working. We are taking Merondon Designs to County Court as we have had no response from them. The Volunteer policy was adopted by the PCC. Joel suggested that we gift our archives to Medway Archives as Karina no longer wishes to continue as Parish Archivist. Douglas will get a quote for carpeting the side aisles at St Margaret's. Michael is working on the problems with the speakers at St Margaret's so that music can be heard when watching services online. The PCC agreed that we should be included in an Inclusive Church directory.

Monica Aldridge, PCC Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Report for the Financial Year 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022.

Financial Review

The cash balance on the general account at the beginning of the period was £7013. Total receipts on unrestricted funds amounted to £75,418. This is up £13,311 from 2021 and up £7075 from 2020, but still down £17,920 from 2019 showing that there is still some way to go before recovery achieves pre-pandemic levels. Gift aid recovered accounted for £5,597 (down £158 from 2021 and showing a pleasing improvement in the tax effectiveness of donations). The freehold property at Hathaway Court, which the PCC lets to private tenants, provided a gross income of £14,375 over the year which is at the upper end of the range of expectation.

A total of £78,896 was spent from unrestricted funds to provide the Christian ministry in the parish, in all its forms. This included a parish offering to the diocese of £34,000, which provides for (amongst other things) stipends, housing and training for the clergy, and funding of diocesan activities (including a contribution to the national Anglican Church).

The cash balance on the general account at the end of the period was £13,534.

During 2022 the PCC received the Independent Examiner's management letter for 2021 and this contained no reservations about the state or management of the parish finances except for a concern that the Rochester Diocesan Society and Board of Finance was not managing the Goodwin Legacy in a way that maximised the benefit to the parish.

Reserves Policy

It is the PCC's policy to maintain a balance of unrestricted reserve funds which equates to at least nine months payments from all funds during a typical year, which is approximately £65,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. The total value of the reserve fund on 31st December 2022 was £56,132.

In following the COVID-19 pandemic, the reserve fund has been depleted by approximately £5000 per year on average to fund the deficit created by the shortfall in income, and a similar value is forecast for 2023. If income does not return to normal levels within the next three or four years, it is clear that a significant restructuring will be needed.

Conclusions

The parish finances in 2022 continued to be negatively affected by the aftermath of the pandemic, but income is recovering, and we remain a people of hope. The overall deficit in 2022 had reduced to £3,478 which is encouraging.

The PCC chose to set a deficit budget for 2022, to retain the employments of the parish's three part time staff and to make an ambitious increased parish offer to the to help the Diocese of Rochester with its budgetary challenges.

We continue to be most grateful for all donations received, but particularly for regular giving by standing order and other regular giving schemes because this provides a firm basis for financial planning and often the added benefit of gift-aid tax recovery. In addition, the Friends of the Churches of St Margaret of Antioch & St Peter, and the Dorothy Knight Trust, provide continuing support.

There are signs of recovery, and our hall and church hiring programme feels more or less normal now, and we look forward to continuing improvement in 2023 when we have many activities planned which not only raise vital funds but are also of themselves a part of the mission of the Church. If you are able, please support these events however you can, with time, money, effort and ideas.

Michael O'Connor, Honorary Treasurer

06 May 2023

Deanery Synod Representatives' Report

Due to the arrival of the new Bishop of Rochester, there were only two ordinary meetings of the Rochester Deanery Synod in 2022, on Tuesday 22 March and Wednesday 29 June, followed by a joint deanery meeting on 19th October to introduce Bishop Jonathan and his vision for our diocese, and to learn a little more about him.

March Deanery Synod:

- We heard from Dylan Turner (a “growth enabler”) who explained that his job is to encourage people to share stories and delivering on that talked about various positive initiatives being taken by churches in the deanery, for example St. Stephen’s had been on a Creative in Creation walk for the Spring Equinox.
- General Synod met in February and Lord Boateng spoke compellingly on the importance of Racial Justice. There was a presentation from the national Safeguarding Team and Review Team and a request for an external enquiry which was rejected. There was group work on the Difference Course and the Pastoral Principles of Living in Love and Faith. Canterbury Diocesan Synod brought a proposal for changes to the make-up of their Crown Nomination Commission (which decides how the archbishop of Canterbury is chosen), to include more voices from the worldwide Anglican Communion. We will hear more about this in future synods.
- Diocesan Synod met in March when Bishop Simon gave an inspiring address on the importance of taking time to pray, in a world where everything has become instantaneous. There was a Living in Love and Faith listening exercise. Diocesan Synod also voted to adopt a Total Returns policy where interest on capital is released to fund projects. Paddock Wood Deanery Synod asked why we cannot offer communion wine in individual cups. As there is no clear answer, and some opinions are to the contrary, this question will be sent up to General Synod.

June deanery synod:

- We heard from Liz Mulling (the “generous giving officer”) who opened by saying that there are 2,400 verses in the Bible that mention generosity, giving and money. Only love is mentioned more. Following this Liz reviewed the options for churches to promote generous giving, and in particular the “Parish Giving” scheme which is a centralised direct debit.
- Diocesan Synod met in June and the minutes are available on the Diocesan website. Bishop Simon gave an address on encouragement. There was a presentation on Everyday Faith by Nick Shepherd on how we can be whole life disciples. Julia Burton-Jones spoke about the Anna Chaplaincy and how their work is growing and spreading. The Bishop’s Council approved the Total Returns Policy which basically allows the church to release any interest on capital to be used for Mission and Ministry.

October joint deanery meeting:

- This took place at St Matthew's Church, Wigmore, and started with a speech by Bishop Jonathan, which centred on his three elements of vision of the diocese which are to grow, change, and serve, although Jonathan was keen to point out that these are not in any particular order. There was an opportunity to ask our new bishop questions and a time for socialising afterwards.

Michael O'Connor

Deanery Synod Representative

12 March 2023

Safeguarding Report 2022

Safeguarding Meetings

The Safeguarding Team have met twice this year. We worked on completing the 'Parish Dashboard' on safeguarding and are working our way through to complete its components.

Policies

The Parish Safeguarding Policy has been adopted by the PCC as has the Practice Guidance for Responding to Safeguarding Concerns. A social media Acceptable Use Policy is still under consideration by the PCC. These are in addition to The Promoting a Safer Church Policy.

Safeguarding Concerns

There are some ongoing areas of concern that are being monitored and recorded. If you have any doubts or worries about any issues regarding safeguarding of yourself or others, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Training

There has been some progress in this area. There are still some people who need to complete their training and others who need to renew their training. They have been notified. We have one new volunteer who is going through the process of being safely recruited. If you do decide to volunteer for a role in the parish, remember to ask Jayne for an application pack.

It is the responsibility of us all, to be as well informed as possible for our roles and responsibilities in the parish. Some people may need to renew their DBS checks soon. Martin will contact people where necessary.

I would like to thank Kevin Holloway (safeguarding adults), Martin Bament (safer recruitment lead) and Joel for their work in the past year.

Nicky Timlick

APCM Report (Safeguarding adults)

Everyone within church has a responsibility for safeguarding but this is underpinned by some important principles. Empowerment is one of those principles, enabling vulnerable adults to make an informed choice as best they can without undue influence from anyone else. Prevention is also a key principle ensuring those who have been identified as vulnerable are not victims of neglect or abuse. It is also important to be proportional, some situations may only incur a small amount of intervention if a safeguarding issue has been identified whereas if a serious situation has arisen, then the appropriate response should be given. Working in partnership with other organisations can also help mitigate against the potential for abuse and raise awareness surrounding safeguarding issues. If a vulnerable adult or child has been identified and at risk from abuse or neglect, then sharing that information with other agencies in the community can help protect that individual. Finally, accountability is such an important component in terms of safeguarding in church and anywhere else in the community, as everyone should share the responsibility of being conscious to safeguarding issues and who may be at risk.

K Holloway (Safeguarding adults lead)

Cluster Report

The Cluster and Without Walls committees meet regularly every 2 months as an opportunity to discuss items of interest that have been happening in the three parishes, to advertise future events, to share ideas and to mutually support each other where we can. Dementia activities and services for example are open to everyone across the Cluster wherever they are actually held and now the pandemic lockdowns are hopefully behind us there are plans for specific monthly Cluster events to restart over the next year including a Eurovision Eucharist and a Rogation Walk incorporating a Pub Crawl!

Without Walls has again been successful in raising money from various grant giving bodies which have allowed for trips organised by Emma Gates for underprivileged families to London and the coast as well as the purchase of IT equipment to support an initiative proposed by John Portman to encourage the use of computers among the elderly for communication, shopping etc. Without Walls only raises money for specific purchases and projects so please do let us know if you have an idea useful in the Parish or the Cluster that requires some financial backing.

Gary Ward

CTIM

Churches Together in Medway continues to work to further the spread of the Christian faith throughout Medway. The regular activities, Leaders' Breakfasts, Prayer Meetings, Saints Alive have continued and the group have continued to look for other ways to help Medway's Christian communities to work together. After 11 years I have decided to step down from the role of treasurer and they are looking for another volunteer.

Peter Cornell

Walsum Partnership

We have maintained our partnership with the Church in Walsum-Aldenrade mainly through WhatsApp and email contact this year. Our monthly prayer meetings on Zoom ended because it was difficult to find a time that worked for everyone (especially with the hour's difference).

In October, Joel and Ruth visited Walsum so that new members of the clergy on each side could get to know each other and the partnership. Ruth (from Rochester) and Pastor Sabine Roeser-Blase are both excited about what comes next. While we were there, we got to participate in their Sunday worship and began to plan their visit to Rochester in April 2023

Joel has translated some content from Pastors Austen & Ulla Brandt and shared it through the MailChimp mailing list.

Rev Dr Joel Love

Buildings Report

Our two church buildings continue to be used for worship and other activities especially as Covid rules have relaxed. Working parties have only taken place once in each church. The brass in both churches has been cleaned periodically by kind volunteers.

Outside firms have contracts to maintain the gas, kitchen and communication services.

The heating has been used less in both churches which has made a significant saving on energy bills. Thank you to everyone for dressing up warmly!

St Peter`s Church

The garden was used in the summer for Queen Elizabeth`s Platinum Jubilee Tea which was a great community event. In November we were able to hold the Bazaar in the church building which raised significant sums for our parish funds. The printer has given many years of faithful service but has needed replacing as parts are no longer available.

St Margaret`s Church

The refurbished organ has been much in use for services, and we have all enjoyed the high quality of the music.

Audio in the building has been a bit temperamental unfortunately and this has sometimes affected live transmission of services on Zoom and YouTube.

The lightbulbs were replaced with more efficient ones during a working party and the outside security lights have been replaced with LED lamps to help keep our costs down.

One of the two boilers needs spare parts which are proving very difficult to source.

The Matthews Memorial Hall

This building is no longer used by the church. However, in March a request was made by a local councillor to use it as a temporary storage depot for Ukrainian donations (after the Russian invasion in February). We are awaiting permission from the Diocese to proceed with the sale of the building. Meanwhile the electricity supply has been disconnected and the water turned off.

67 Hathaway Court

This continues to be occupied by a tenant and is providing a regular income for our parish. Kent Residential Lettings sorted out a contractor to improve the heating system which cost us about a month`s rent.

We need to consider how best to achieve the Church of England goal to become carbon neutral by 2030 for our buildings. Suggestions welcome!

Douglas Seth-Smith

Missional Giving

Date	Event/Beneficiary	Donations
February	Flower Service	Flowers donated by the congregation and given to anyone who needs cheering up
March	Knit, Stitch and Natter	£160.77 raised for the Wisdom Hospice
Lent	WaterAid	£230.09 raised for Water Aid
Easter	Young Lives Foundation	28 Easter Eggs donated
May	Christian Aid	£85.50 raised for Christian Aid
May	Knit, Stitch and Natter	£113.15 raised for the Wisdom Hospice
September	Knit, Stitch and Natter	£103.40 raised for the Wisdom Hospice
October	Harvest Festival	£161.00 raised cash plus online donations to Medway Foodbank
November	Knit, Stitch and Natter	£172.90 raised for the Wisdom Hospice
December and	Toy Service	£153.00 raised in cash for The Children Family Centre in Chatham. £60.00 in online donations to the All Saints' Project
December	Christingle Service	£246.00 raised for the Childrens Society
Jayne Pearson Parish Administrator		

Electoral Roll Report

As of the 31st of December 2022 there were 68 people on the Electoral Roll.

43 were resident in the Parish and 25 were non-resident.

Changes occur when people move into the Parish, get married, die, choose to worship elsewhere or move away.

It should be noted that every six years each parish is required to prepare a new electoral roll when those who habitually attend public worship in this Parish had to reapply to have their names entered onto the roll. This will be in 2025.

Jayne Pearson

Parish Administrator

Pastoral Care

This last year has seen our country start to finally emerge from the Covid 19 pandemic. Of course, we all know that the pandemic had far reaching effects on many of us, our society in general as well as our own church community – we have had to adapt our worship and fellowship during the pandemic and make continued adjustments as we have thankfully had more freedom. Adjustments have been necessary to the ways we have been able to offer support and provide pastoral care. We have been passing through a time of transition and still are.

At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 we set up a WhatsApp group for anyone who could access this form of communication and wanted to be in touch. Even some of the most difficult situations provide fruitfulness and this was something we gained from the pandemic. It kept people in touch and supported, and still has a useful place in our community today.

The Coffee Shop re-emerged in October 2021 with a slow start as Pam mentions, but this has now re-established itself and is once again providing pivotal support to the church and local community as it has done for years. With the recent addition of the Knit, Stitch and Natter group from the Wisdom Hospice it is good to see fresh links being established with the local area. In 2022 we ran a Bereavement Listening course through Acorn Listening and have now re-established the bereavement listening team with some members from the previous team and some new members. We were especially keen to re-establish this as we felt that there may be an increased need for this support following Covid 19.

With the lifting of restrictions and being able to ease ourselves back into a level of normality, John Portman re-established the Carers group at the Coffee Shop as well as his other Dementia support initiatives.

Prayer support has continued throughout through the Prayer chain. Many contacts and support have been offered throughout by phone and we are now once again regularly giving home communion, this is done by a small group of people licensed and trained to give communion at home. The Prayer Ministry team are able to give their support after most of our Sunday services to anyone wishing to have personal prayer or discussion.

Quiz nights have also resumed. Again, this was something that our Parish had run for years. It is so good to see these happening again as people have become more confident at mixing and socialising.

The Pastoral Care team now meets on Zoom every one to two months to discuss Parish needs relating to pastoral care. The Pastoral team is a small core of people who endeavour to ensure people are supported both in practical and social ways as well as spiritually. Much of this support is given from within our church community. As I mentioned, this is a time of transition, but it is also a time of reflection and a time of growth. If you feel that there are ways in which we can improve our pastoral care, please let me know.

Angie Cornell

Caretaker's Report

Though the number of lets at the Parish Centre has increased this year, the general maintenance continues on a when and if needed principle, including the clearing of rubbish and weeds in the car park. This has been a quiet year, but in the Autumn we had two working parties to clear the alley all around the Matthew Memorial Hall, and from the back gate to the fire escape, which entailed a few trips to the tip. We hope to have another working party in the spring to finish clearing the back yard.

Derrick Solly

Dementia Groups

Supporting older people and people living with Dementia.

The Parish of Rochester provides important services which support older people and those living with dementia, as well as their carers and supporters within our local community and further afield. Most of these services were cancelled because of the covid pandemic in March 2020 but were able to restart late in 2021. As some people were initially reluctant to come out to join in public activities the numbers attending were reduced, but by the end of 2022 these have recovered with a number of new people joining. We are encouraged that we continue to be supported by a strong group of volunteers.

The Rochester Dementia Memory Café: The Rochester Memory Café has been running since 2015. It is held in the Parish Centre on the 4th Friday of each month. The Cafe welcomes people living with dementia and their Carers as well as those with other cognitive diseases and disabilities or who have become isolated. It continues to be recognised in Medway as a valuable community service and is supported by Medical and Care professionals. Advice and information are offered, and refreshments are served. The experienced and committed volunteers welcome and support each person attending.

The Rochester Carers Group: The Carers Group is a service for all Carers. It is run in partnership with Carers First. It is held in the morning of the 2nd Tuesday of each month within the Tuesday Coffee Shop. Information, guidance, support and social contact is offered. We offer to support the person being cared for who can also be brought along to be looked after by a volunteer.

Singing for the Memory Medway: The group runs on the second Friday of each month and continues to be well attended. It is for people living with dementia and other cognitive impairments, their carers, and their friends. Sessions are led by experienced singers and folders with the words for more than 30 songs are provided. Refreshments are served during an interval.

Dementia Friendly Gardening Group: The gardening group for people living with dementia and their carers/supporters meets every Friday morning in the gardens of Eastgate House, Rochester. It is organised in partnership with the Adult Education Department and is led by a gardening tutor and 2 volunteers. Gardening tools and equipment are provided. The group maintains the Dementia Sensory Garden and works in other parts of the gardens and on the area in front of the Rochester Hub.

Create Well Medway: Activities led by Music4Wellbeing. Trish Vella-Burrows, Principal Research Fellow at Canterbury Christchurch University, obtained funding to run free music and craft activity sessions each month throughout the year. These sessions are open to older people within the community as well as those living with dementia. Our own volunteers support the sessions by

setting up the room and serving refreshments. It is hoped that these sessions will continue during 2023.

Funding and support. The Frankie Kember Fund, administered the Rotary Club of Rochester, continues to provide funding to help cover the costs of running these services. Donations from participants in the Cafe cover the small room hire charge made for the use of the Parish Centre and the provision of refreshments.

John Portman

Dementia Friendly Worship

These services, held on the second Tuesday of the month at St Justus Church continue to go from strength to strength. They are organised on a rota basis by each church in the Cluster (the Parish of Rochester, St Matthew's and St Justus) and there is a wonderful supportive ethos and rapport between the different churches. The actual service is fairly short (about half an hour) but always includes an imaginative and fun activity which is enjoyed by all. This is followed by tea and cakes and much conversation! Two local Care Homes join us on a regular basis – Shaws Wood in Strood and Friston House in Rochester. We are building links with other Homes, and we hope that they may join us in future.

My grateful thanks to all those who help in many different roles such as making and serving the tea, meeting the minibuses, pushing visitors in wheelchairs into the church building, and generally chatting to people and making them feel welcome. Some people are collected from their homes by car on an individual basis whenever possible.

As an Anna Chaplain I take Home Communion to those who are housebound. It is always a privilege to spend time in this way. I continue to be part of the Anna Chaplaincy Medway Hub run by Julia Burton-Jones.

Christine Seth-Smith

Eco Church

During the last year we have made progress with the Wildflower Meadow in St Margaret's churchyard, but this has not been without its setbacks. To encourage as many wildflowers as possible, the meadow is only meant to be cut one a year in September (as a maximum). However, Medway Council (Norse) cut it in March 2022 along with the rest of the churchyard, and then unfortunately repeated their mistake in May! They apologised and have since produced a couple of brightly coloured signs which help to demarcate the meadow area for both the grass cutters and the public.

The idea of the Wildflower Meadow has attracted the interest of the local community and there is a rectangular bed in the middle of it, where 'bee friendly' plants are being grown by a keen advocate of the meadow. We thank him for his effort and pleasing results.

In the autumn we planted Yellow Rattle seeds in the meadow (my grateful thanks to the enthusiastic volunteers who helped with this). Our hope is that the Yellow Rattle will curtail the growth of the grass giving more room for the plants to grow. Hopefully, next summer our tally of plants (carried out by a member of the local community) will have increased!

In June once again, we participated in 'Churches Count on Nature'. Fewer people participated than in 2021 but the Coyle family kindly led the initiative at St Margaret's. A week later Lindsey Ward and I enjoyed a happy morning noting the wildlife in the garden at St Peter's.

Christine Seth-Smith

Steeple Keeper's Report

This year I am pleased to report that the bells and ropes at St Margaret's Church have continued to be in reasonably good order. Friday practice nights and Sunday morning ringing have increased since Covid restrictions were lifted.

The hot summer weather made the treble bell feel different, and on investigation I found that one of the nuts holding the wheel to the frame was more than finger loose and leaving the wheel insecure. This was fixed by re-tightening and checking all the similar nuts on the bell wheel, followed by a check on all the other bells, some of which also needed tightening.

On the occasion of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September we were entitled to use both sets of muffles, which we did just before her funeral, when the bells were rung by the band at St Margaret's.

I noticed that the clapper for the tenor bell was wobbling more than the other bells when I removed the muffles for Remembrance Sunday 2022. This has now been rectified by two of our ringers with replacement spacers to stop the wobble.

Douglas Seth-Smith

Bellringers' Report

St Margaret's bellringers have continued to ring regularly on practice nights and for Sunday service at St Margaret's throughout the year. Practice nights are well attended, and we regularly have between 10 and 12 ringers comprised of St Margaret's home band plus ringers from Higham, Cuxton and Rochester Cathedral. This year we have welcomed back Jeremy Jarvis and Ray Cowley to practice nights on a more regular basis, and we have been training a couple of new ringers, April (Higham) and Thomas (St Margaret's). On practice nights we focus on call changes, plain hunt, Bob and Grandsire Doubles, and we do often have enough competent ringers to attempt eight bell methods. Derna and Phil continue to support ringing at Higham, High Halstow and Frindsbury at their monthly practices.

We have been able to conduct service ringing on most St Margaret's Sundays thanks to regular Sunday ringers Phil Brown, Jayne Vousden, Alan Moss, Phil Jordan and Jeremy Jarvis. However, it is difficult to acquire stand-in ringers when any of the regular band are not available due to the timing of services clashing with surrounding towers. In order to resolve this issue, we do need support to recruit locally into the St Margaret's band, ideally from the church congregation, to enable us to increase our membership and to ring more consistently on Sundays.

While we have not run any separate social events or tower tours since COVID, Jayne is now planning a ringers' meal and a tower tour for later in the coming year.

Derna Brown

Parish Buildings Development Group

Report (for the year ending 31 December 2022) to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023

So far as the re-development of the Parish Centre and the sale of the Matthews Memorial Hall are concerned, the position at the end of 2022 remains much as it was in last year's annual report. The development company which had been recommended by the diocese as a possible partner in a future redevelopment scheme concluded that their proposed scheme – a mixed use of church and apartments – would not after all be viable. Other options were to be considered by the diocese and we await their conclusions.

Alan Moss

Chairman

Family Time Report

Family Time has become a regularly attended Sunday activity in the lives of many families in our parish and it has been really exciting to build on the success of the last year. As with the previous pattern, Family Time has been running on the first Sunday of each month during term-time which has enabled families and our volunteer team to have time off during holiday periods. This has also helped with sustainability. The themes explored are usually in line with the readings for each Sunday and there are elements of Sung Worship, Bible Stories, Craft and Activities and Prayer (and breakfast) throughout our 45 minutes together. Most recently Reverend Mark encouraged some of the family time families to take part in the All-Age Eucharist Service at St Peter's which was a great success. This has highlighted a possible pathway for timings to merge a little closer so that Family Time can enjoy regular participation in All Age services, while still enjoying the activities currently running.

It must be stated that this activity would not be possible without the help of volunteers and families welcoming and serving each other whenever possible. Our volunteer team has also grown a little and we are grateful to God for that provision.

Rev Ruth Teruel-Pyrke

Flowers in St Margaret's and St Peter's

As Covid restrictions eased and church attendance grew we gradually increased the amount of flowers in our buildings. This brought some colour back and marked more optimistic times. The greatest joy was decorating St Margaret's for a wedding in April when the sun shone, and everything looked wonderful. Since then, we have continued to put some modest flowers in both churches but recently increased our efforts for Harvest and Remembrance Sunday then culminating in a big splash for Christmas. Once again donations towards the cost of the flowers were made in remembrance of departed loved ones particularly from the family of Peggy Murray who did the flowers in St Peter's for many years. We had valued assistance from a number of helpers both experienced and beginners. We just about managed to stave off hypothermia due to the boiler in St Margaret's not working properly! We were all delighted with the results in both churches.

Leading up to Christmas Lindsey organised a workshop making Christmas table decorations which about 14 people attended and enjoyed. The results were splendid and raised funds of over £200 for the work of the Parish.

Donations for flowers are always welcome and arrangements can be done to celebrate the life of a loved one. If anybody wishes to join us in decorating our churches then they are always welcome whether experienced or a beginner. Being able to use flowers to celebrate God's Creation and thank Him for the beautiful world He has given us is a privilege. We hope that seeing them has lifted your spirits and given you joy and hope during a challenging 2022.

Julia and Lindsey

Gardening

A lot has been happening in the gardens this year; the front and back grass have been mown regularly thanks to Gordon and Stuart.

Jayne and I met every Tuesday to cut back the overgrown shrubs, clear the ivy from the fences and prune the roses. We also tidied up Nigel's Memorial garden and have planted bulbs, shrubs and a rose bush donated by John Portman in Memory of Shirley. The result being a much tidier garden.

Jayne and I have very much enjoyed working together on the gardens. We aim to continue our 'garden rescue' in 2023.

Pat Price

Stewardship Report

Thank you to all who give to the Parish in any way; financial or with their time and talents and often, all three!

- As of 31st December 2022, we had 38 individuals/couples who had signed up to regular planned giving via a monthly or quarterly standing order.
- 29 of these had signed a Gift Aid declaration.

In 2022 we successfully reclaimed tax paid by members of this congregation totalling £5597.01.

This is effectively free money for the Parish, and I would ask that if you are a taxpayer, are making your donations via standing order and if you haven't already done so, that you sign a Gift Aid declaration.

As always, I would respectfully ask that you continue to review your giving to the Parish throughout the year and if you are currently making your donation on a Sunday morning via the collection plate or Sum Up machine that you consider setting up a regular standing order. Standing orders enable us to budget more effectively and your contribution continues to be received whether you are in church or not. Once again, thank you for your continuing support. It is very much appreciated.

The Responsibility Is Ours!

Jayne Pearson

Parish Administrator

For more information about making a regular contribution via standing order and/or signing up to gift aid, please contact me in the Parish office: office@parishofrochester.org.uk

Prayer Ministry

The Prayer Ministry team continues to provide the opportunity for people to be prayed with in a confidential manner. Members of the team are available after the Sunday service to spend time in prayer and conversation with anyone from the congregation who requests this support.

As a church we also have a Prayer list in our Pew sheet of people who we are encouraged to pray for during the service and during the week. There is also a Prayer Chain. This is a group of people who will pray for people regularly if they have someone or themselves that they feel would benefit from the support of prayer. Anyone is welcome to ask for prayer support in any of these ways.

Angie Cornell

St Margaret at Troy Town School (and other Schools)

Joel is a governor at St Margaret at Troy Town with responsibility for well-being, worship and Religious Education. Joel and Ruth regularly lead collective worship both in school and at St Margaret's Church. In December, they did a double act in front of the whole school, with a large orange puppet named 'Chris Tingle'.

Ruth, Mark, and Joel also have a relationship with the Pilgrim School in Borstal and with the new Riverside School, as well as St Andrew's School, St Peter's Infants, the King's School, and Trinity School & College.

Rev Dr Joel Love

Servers' Report

Serving duties were able to recommence on Easter Day with only one server in at a time after not having any serving for 2 years since the pandemic and we marked this occasion by having incense as it was a special service to come back to.

David Bacchus and Ray Shuter stepped down from their 8am serving duties and I would like to thank them both for their dedication for many years for this part of service and for getting up early on a Sunday morning.

Richard Coyle also stepped down due to family commitments on Sunday Mornings.

Bonnie is hoping to come back to serving soon and it will be nice to have her back with us.

Now that the 8am services have moved to 9am we do not at present have any servers to cover these services as David, Michael and I serve at the 10.30am Services which at the moment is working well as we are able to cover both churches and do the same Sundays to keep things consistent.

We were able to cover most of the Christmas services and it was absolutely lovely to be able to have a full team of servers for Midnight Mass and to have incense as not having it for 2 years just made it extra special.

We will hopefully continue to have a full team of servers for special services.

I would like to thank all the clergy team for their ongoing support as we are a very small serving team at present, but I am hopeful that we will be to recruit new servers so if you are interested in joining the serving team than please do speak to myself or Joel as full training will be provided.

Jayne Vousden (Head Server).

IT Report

Services on Zoom and YouTube, (barring technical issues!) continue to allow those unable to attend church in person to see and hear Sunday services at both St Margaret's and St Peter's and some of the camera work at St Margaret's might be considered for at least a BAFTA award!

"MailChimp" is now being used to add some sophistication to emailed communications. E Mails from Rev Joel and others now look more professional, allow the addition of smart looking web links to the Parish website and elsewhere if required as well as providing some basic analytics as to numbers reached etc.

Facebook also continues to be used successfully to promote church events at both Parish and Cluster level and the engagement of these often runs to 50 or more likes and comments.

The WhatsApp group which was started as a way to maintain informal contact among members of the congregation during lockdown has more than 45 members and is still very active with wide ranging conversations offering support, information, prayer and often amusement. Dozens of messages are posted weekly. If you have access to the internet and would like to join, please let me know! Rachel again deserves special mention for continuing to suggest ideas for prayer on a daily basis.

Web Stats!

The parishofrochester.org.uk web site updated very kindly for free by John Noakes, a professional web designer continues to be popular.

In the last year we have had...

A total of 9000 unique visits to the site which is the highest we have had since the site first went live back in 2014. This is a significant increase over 2021 when there were approximately 7500 unique visits. The busiest month was February with the least visits seen during August and September.

Most popular pages this year were the Prayers of Intercessions and the Weekly Notices which, as these change frequently is likely to be expected.

62% of visits come via a search engine with Google being the most popular while most of the rest arrive directly with a few being pushed from Facebook and WhatsApp.

Approx 40 users appear to be regulars visiting weekly and in December there were 177 first time users.

67% of visits are via a mobile device of some kind rather than a laptop or desktop computer and just over half of these devices are Apple with a third manufactured by Samsung.

Most searches came from Google.

About 90% of visitors to the site came from the UK with about 60% of these from the Medway, Kent and South London areas but others appear to be located from as far away as Stoke on Trent, Edinburgh and Betws-y-Coed!

Other international visitors have visited the site from such exotic places as Bermuda, Denver, Columbus Ohio and Hyderabad...purpose...unknown!

Website: www.parishofrochester.org.uk

E Mail: office@parishofrochester.org.uk

Parish Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ParishOfRochester>

Cluster Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RochesterClusterOfChurches>

Family Time: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/268342923346343/>

Without Walls Trips: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/479217192446841/?ref=share>

Cluster Partners: St Justus: <https://www.stjustus.org/>

St Matthews: <https://stmatthewsborstal.com/>

Gary Ward

Worship & Music

Holy Week 2022 marked two years since the first lockdown, and we were back to pre-pandemic activities, such as the Palm Sunday procession with a donkey and midweek services and vigils in person. This year we experimented with Lectio and visio divina on the big screen at St Margaret's and we had a theological student on placement with us throughout Holy Week. The Good Friday quiet day at St Peter's was well received, and there was a film night at the Vicarage on Holy Saturday. We hosted a Cluster Ascension Day service at St Margaret's, while St Matthew's held a Cluster service for Ash Wednesday.

Our new Music Group began to play on the first Sunday of each month, and we are grateful to Mary Jeffreys for her work with the choir and instrumentalists on the other Sundays of the month. Mary has been choosing hymns and overseeing the music for 13 years. She also devised a beautiful Taizé Compline for Advent. In the intercessions one Sunday, we sang a chant in Ukrainian in solidarity with the people of that country.

We continued the usual round of services, including Flower Sunday, Back to School, Harvest, the Animal Service, the Act of Remembrance and a memorial service in November, and a lovely Christmas with Nine Lessons & Carols and the Christingle/Crib service back in Church and well attended.

Rev Dr Joel Love

Refreshments After Services

It has been wonderful to supply everyone with tea and coffee etc after services again and my thanks go to Angie Cornell, Joy Wilson, and Irene Ewell for their help in the kitchen. I would also like to thank Betty and Catherine for also coming in and regularly helping with the washing up. We are a happy bunch and would welcome any more volunteers to join us, even once a month – it's not really hard work and is much appreciated.

Monica Aldridge

Welcomers

We have a very small team of welcomers helped out by the Churchwardens. I am happy to say that we have been able as usual to cover all the services this year with a smile and have welcomed quite a few new people into the church.

We are still spread rather thinly and would love volunteers to help us, even just for one service a month. Meanwhile my sincere thanks go to Mark Pearce, Derrick Solly, Joy Wilson and John Portman for their hard work this year.

Monica Aldridge

Welcomer Co-ordinator

The Social Committee Annual Report

This year we were very pleased to hold a few more social events since the start of the pandemic.

Building on last year's success, we held our annual Christmas Bazaar on Friday night only and once again managed to exceed the previous year's total raised, a staggering £2565.05. I would say that this isn't bad for three hours work, but as everyone knows, a huge amount of planning, preparation of the church building, baking, sourcing items for the stalls and clearing away afterwards requires a huge amount of time and effort. Thank you to everyone involved in any way.

In June a Jubilee Cream Tea, organised by the Friends of the Parish and the Rotary Club, was held in St Peter's Garden. Thank you to them and to the members of the congregation who helped out and supported this event. A really lovely afternoon was had by all.

Once again, we opened St Margaret's Church and tower to the public during the Sweeps Festival, Heritage Weekend and Christmas Dickens.

In October we held a Quiz Night which was well attended. Those who participated had a great evening. We are planning to hold three more in 2023.

As always, please keep an eye on the pew sheets for details of upcoming events.

Stuart Pearson

22nd January 2023

Independently Examined Accounts for 2022

Parish of Rochester

Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ending 31st December 2022

		Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2022	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2021
	Note	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources											
Voluntary income	2	40,802	555	360	-	41,717	31,211	442	48,816	-	80,469
Activities for generating funds	2	4,035	-	-	-	4,035	3,047	-	-	-	3,047
Income from investments	2	17,175	64	9	-	17,248	16,464	14	3	-	16,481
Income from church activities	2	19,279	-	-	-	19,279	11,913	-	-	-	11,913
Other incoming resources	2	551	-	-	-	551	3,947	-	-	-	3,947
Total Incoming Resources		81,841	619	369	-	82,829	66,582	456	48,819	-	115,857
Resources expended											
Fund-raising trading costs	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Activities relating to the work of the Church	3	74,670	782	-	-	75,452	75,189	10,659	45,671	-	131,519
Governance costs	3	550	-	-	-	550	525	-	-	-	525
Total Resources Expended		75,220	782	-	-	76,002	75,714	10,659	45,671	-	132,044
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources		6,621	(163)	369	-	6,827	(9,132)	(10,203)	3,148	-	(16,187)
Transfers		(3,700)	3,700	-	-	-	(3,401)	3,401	-	-	-
Gains & Losses on Investments		-	-	-	(9,091)	(9,091)	-	-	-	9,245	9,245
Net Movements in Funds		2,921	3,537	369	(9,091)	(2,264)	(12,533)	(6,802)	3,148	9,245	(6,942)
Balances brought forward at 1st January 2021		57,895	12,810	122,235	252,580	445,520	70,428	19,612	119,087	243,335	452,462
Balances carried forward at 31st December 2021		60,816	16,347	122,604	243,489	443,256	57,895	12,810	122,235	252,580	445,520

Parish of Rochester

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	2022 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	2021 £
Fixed Assets											
Fixed assets property	4	-	-	105,575	175,715	281,290	-	-	105,575	175,715	281,290
Investment assets	5	342	-	-	67,774	68,116	342	-	-	76,865	77,207
		342	-	105,575	243,489	349,406	342	-	105,575	252,580	358,497
Current Assets											
Debtors	6	4,079	-	-	-	4,079	4,958	-	-	-	4,958
Short Term Deposits		43,585	16,172	14,991	-	74,748	46,559	12,358	14,981	-	73,898
Cash at bank & in hand		13,360	175	2,038	-	15,573	6,561	452	1,679	-	8,692
		61,024	16,347	17,029	-	94,400	58,078	12,810	16,660	-	87,548
Liabilities falling due within one year	7	(550)	-	-	-	(550)	(525)	-	-	-	(525)
Net Current Assets		60,474	16,347	17,029	-	93,850	57,553	12,810	16,660	-	87,023
Net Assets		60,816	16,347	122,604	243,489	443,256	57,895	12,810	122,235	252,580	445,520
Funds											
Endowment		-	-	-	243,489	243,489	-	-	-	252,580	252,580
Restricted		-	-	122,604	-	122,604	-	-	122,235	-	122,235
Designated		-	16,347	-	-	16,347	-	12,810	-	-	12,810
General		60,816	-	-	-	60,816	57,895	-	-	-	57,895
		60,816	16,347	122,604	243,489	443,256	57,895	12,810	122,235	252,580	445,520

Parish of Rochester

Notes to the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022

2. INCOMING RESOURCES	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Voluntary income</u>					
Planned giving	16,315	-	-	-	16,315
Income tax recovered	4,718	-	-	-	4,718
Non Gift Aid planned giving	3,824	-	360	-	4,184
Collections and other giving	3,973	-	-	-	3,973
Sundry donations	4,425	555	-	-	4,980
Grants - Energy	3,589	-	-	-	3,589
Friends of Rochester	2,097	-	-	-	2,097
CYP Family Time Grant	1,426	-	-	-	1,426
Harvest donations	435	-	-	-	435
<u>Activities for generating funds</u>					
Fetes bazaars etc	4,035	-	-	-	4,035
<u>Income from Investments</u>					
Dividends and interest	2,800	64	9	-	2,873
Hathaway Court Rent	14,375	-	-	-	14,375
<u>Income from church activities</u>					
Hire of Hall & rentals	14,561	-	-	-	14,561
Memorial Book	160	-	-	-	160
Fees	4,558	-	-	-	4,558
<u>Other incoming resources</u>					
Insurance claims	-	-	-	-	-
Other income	551	-	-	-	551
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCE	81,841	619	369	-	82,829

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	2021 Total
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Voluntary income</u>					
Planned giving	23,638	-	-	-	23,638
Income tax recovered	2,757	-	-	-	2,757
Non Gift Aid planned giving	-	-	360	-	360
Collections and other giving	1,987	-	-	-	1,987
Sundry donations	2,829	442	-	-	3,271
Grants	-	-	-	-	-
Friends of Rochester	-	-	48,456	-	48,456
JRS Grant	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Activities for generating funds</u>					
Fetes bazaars etc	3,047	-	-	-	3,047
<u>Income from Investments</u>					
Dividends and interest	2,003	14	3	-	2,020
Hathaway Court Rent	14,461	-	-	-	14,461
<u>Income from church activities</u>					
Hire of Hall & rentals	5,396	-	-	-	5,396
Magazines	-	-	-	-	-
Fees	6,517	-	-	-	6,517
<u>Other incoming resources</u>					
Insurance claims	-	-	-	-	-
Other income	3,947	-	-	-	3,947
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCE	66,582	456	48,819	-	115,857

Parish of Rochester

Notes to the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022

3. RESOURCES USED	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Fund-raising trading costs</u>					
Cost of fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Church activities</u>					
Missionary & charitable giving	610	-	-	-	610
Clergy expenses	4,371	-	-	-	4,371
Parish share	35,816	-	-	-	35,816
Church running expenses	13,258	-	-	-	13,258
Church repairs & maintenance	2,188	-	-	-	2,188
Children & youthwork	-	-	-	-	-
Parish magazine & bookstall	-	-	-	-	-
Other property costs	-	-	-	-	-
Hall Running costs	5,631	-	-	-	5,631
Designated funds payments	-	781	-	-	781
Printing & stationery	-	-	-	-	-
Sundry expenses	12,796	-	-	-	12,796
Development fund	-	-	-	-	-
Organ Repairs	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Governance costs</u>					
Independent Examiner's fee	550	-	-	-	550

TOTAL RESOURCES USED	75,220	781	-	-	76,001
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	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	2021 Total
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Fund-raising trading costs</u>					
Cost of fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Church activities</u>					
Missionary & charitable giving	917	-	-	-	917
Clergy expenses	3,059	-	-	-	3,059
Parish share	39,755	-	-	-	39,755
Church running expenses	9,129	-	-	-	9,129
Church repairs & maintenance	3,433	-	-	-	3,433
Children & youthwork	-	-	-	-	-
Parish magazine & bookstall	-	-	-	-	-
Other property costs	-	-	-	-	-
Hall Running costs	5,849	-	-	-	5,849
Designated funds payments	-	659	-	-	659
Printing & stationery	-	-	-	-	-
Sundry expenses	13,047	-	-	-	13,047
Development fund	-	-	-	-	-
Organ Repairs	-	10,000	45,671	-	55,671
<u>Governance costs</u>					
Independent Examiner's fee	525	-	-	-	525

TOTAL RESOURCES USED	75,714	10,659	45,671	-	132,044
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Parish of Rochester

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022

4. Tangible Fixed Assets	Freehold land & Buildings £	Hathaway Court £	Church Equipment £	Total £
Actual/Deemed Cost				
At 1 January 2022	105,575.00	175,715.00	10,342.00	291,632.00
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2022	<u>105,575.00</u>	<u>175,715.00</u>	<u>10,342.00</u>	<u>291,632.00</u>
Depreciation				
At 1 January 2022	-	-	10,342.00	10,342.00
Charge for the year	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2022	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,342.00</u>	<u>10,342.00</u>
Net Book Value				
At 31 December 2022	<u>105,575.00</u>	<u>175,715.00</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>281,290.00</u>
At 31 December 2021	<u>105,575.00</u>	<u>175,715.00</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>281,290.00</u>

5. Investments

Investments are included at their bid value on 31.12.2022

Endowment

Fabric Reserve Fund

1,164.96 CBF Investment Fund

1,487 CBF Fixed Interest Securities Fund

CBF Investment Fund

2,035.86 CBF Investment Fund shares

**Market
Value
2022
£**

**Market
Value
2021
£**

24,052

27,245

2,031

2,349

42,032

47,613

68,115

77,207

6. Debtors

**2022
£**

**2021
£**

Gift aid tax reclaim

4,079

4,958

4,079

4,958

7. Creditors

**2022
£**

**2021
£**

Independent Examiner's Fee

550

525

550

525

Independent Examiner's Report - David Goodwin Legacy

During the year the Parish received the "final" response from the Charity Commission in connection with the legacy from David Goodwin.

The terms of the Will are clear in that the legacy is to be paid as a Capital Fund to and held by the RDBF, and that the interest on the Capital Fund is to be applied to the ecclesiastical or charitable purposes of the Parish of Rochester.

The Charity Commission in their letter of 25th January 2023 stated that "We do not consider that there are any concerns requiring further regulatory action by the Commission" and "the legacy is in the correct place as defined by the Will and is treated as permanent endowment". The Commission has provided the trustee with guidance on investments and also advised the trustees to set up a clear and transparent application process for the interest earned on the legacy fund.

I comment further as follows:

- 1) I am not satisfied that the Commission decision is just or in line with the wishes of the late David Goodwin. This is not what he would have wanted.
- 2) The assets of the legacy are still held as cash earning a derisory amount of interest. The assets are neither secure nor suitably invested.
- 3) Regardless of the decision, the Commission has provided the trustee with guidance on investments, which suggests that they are not wholly comfortable with the investment of the legacy in current account, but that they have no power to effect a change only to make recommendations.

Bearing in mind the Commission's decision I have no further grounds for qualifying my statement except to say that it is a sad day when a Diocese favours itself above the interest of the parishes it is meant to serve and support.

Finally, I enclose a note of my fees for your kind attention in due course.

With best wishes

Yours Sincerely

Rob W Trice