

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council of Great Barr

For the year ended 31st December 2023

The Parochial Church Council of Great Barr Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2023

Objectives and Activities

The Parochial Church Council of Great Barr (the PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Reverend Colin Such, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of St. Margaret's Church together with the church hall and churchyard and for the decoration of the Vicarage when occupied by the incumbent.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at Great Barr. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer, scripture, music and sacrament. Also, through nonsacramental activities of hospitality and fellowship we aim to reach non churched members of the community.

Public Benefit

The trustees of the PCC are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit and have had regard to it in their administration of the Charity. The trustees believe that, by promoting the work of the Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Great Barr it helps to promote the whole mission of the Church (pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical) more effectively, within the Ecclesiastical Parish, and that in doing so it provides a benefit to the public by:

- Providing facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for its members and for anyone who wishes to benefit from what the Church offers; and
- Promoting Christian values and service by members of the Church in and to their communities, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.
- The Charity also has the responsibility of maintaining the Parish Church of St. Margaret, in Chapel Lane, the support of our Church School (St. Margaret's CE (A) Primary School, Birmingham Road, Great Barr) and the sponsorship of the associated Scout and Guide groups.

Achievements and Performance

Church attendance

The Electoral Roll increased slightly for 2023 from 211 names to 215.

The average adult Sunday attendance for 2023 decreased to 42 (*56 in 2022*).

The average number of children attending increased to **16** (*11*) through C@Ch (Children in Church) and the Uniformed Organisations.

The average attendance at the Thursday morning Communion service rose from around 12 to 20 regulars.

Easter was better with 110 attending (*100 in 2022*) and 141 at Christmas (*149*).

There were **15** (17 in 2022) **baptisms**, **7** (8) weddings, 0 (0) blessings of marriage & **0** (0) marriage thanksgivings during the year as well as **19** (8) Funerals in church and **6** (7) at the Crematorium & **26** (8) Committals or Interment of Ashes.

Review of the Year

The PCC met six times during 2023. There were many upheavals throughout the year with the church still recovering from the restrictions imposed during the pandemic. The first phase of quinquennial works had been completed but more are needed in the years to come. The Communion Cup was reintroduced having been suspended during Covid. Finances were a constant concern throughout the year but social events continued with events planned for the coronation of King Charles III. The annual meeting took place on 21st May 2023. Rev Rutter retired as from 31st August 2023 and in September 2023 Rev Colin Such was appointed as Minister in Charge, to oversee the governance of the church and the PCC, and Preb Ian Cardinal, as Pastoral Support Priest, to work together to help guide the church through a difficult time of transition.

Fabric

General Maintenance and repair of the building is an ongoing problem but thankfully there were no major problems this year. The refurbishment of the roof, together with the rainwater goods and stonework in 2019 means that the exterior of the church is sound and should not require much maintenance for some time.

One of the items highlighted in the 2021 Quinquennial Report for urgent action is the upgrade of the lighting system to replace existing lighting fixtures with LCD equivalents. This would not only make the system safer but should be more efficient and reduce electricity usage. We were hoping that this would be done this year but unfortunately this has not been possible. The main cause of delay is being able to employ an electrician with access to suitable scaffolding to deal with high level installations that can be moved around the church at a price we can afford. Another area needing attention is internal decoration, particularly where water penetration in the past has caused the plaster to peel, exposing bare stonework. The architect's provisional estimation of the cost of redecoration is in the region of £50,000 and at present we cannot afford this.

Maintenance of the churchyard is another major expense, but we do have an obligation to keep the churchyard in reasonable condition. Mark Room, our part time contractor, is employed for 20 hours a week mainly to look after the ashes site and the newer burial plots, and the rest of the site where possible. The area close to the church is maintained mainly by our dedicated volunteers, Chris and Brenda Bird, and the lawn mown by Vic Wiles. The trees surrounding the churchyard are nearly all subject to Tree Preservation Orders and so must be maintained regularly to ensure they remain structurally safe.

Thanks to the help of many volunteers the churchyard remained beautiful throughout the year and in fact were awarded two awards from Lichfield Diocese for their high standards of maintenance and conservation: a Gold Award for Lichfield Churchyards and a Nature Friendly Award. The churchyard was also commended for its general standard of maintenance particularly because it is the second largest churchyard in the Diocese and therefore is harder to maintain than other smaller churchyards. Special thanks go to Mark for his efforts and also to Chris and Brenda Bird who turn up every week to maintain the front drive and the area at the rear of the Meeting Room. Thanks also to Vic Wiles for mowing the front lawn and all the other volunteers who give their time freely to help the church.

Worship and Prayer

Not all services resumed since the pandemic and with the retirement of Rev Rutter the opportunity to restore services remained limited. As such services were limited to a Thursday morning BCP Communion, Children in Church (ably led by Georgina) fortnightly on a Sunday at 9.30am and the main Sunday service at 11am alternating between BCP Matins and Common Worship Communion. Retired and Deanery Clergy very kindly stepped in to take services following Rev Rutter's retirement and we are very grateful to them and also to Preb Ian Cardinal as Pastoral Support priest. New congregational service books were introduced for the Sunday services, the choir resumed singing whilst robed in the choir stalls and the Common Worship Lectionary adopted for use at the Sunday services whilst the Thursday service uses the BCP provision for the previous Sunday (save on major feast and holy days.)

Throughout 2023, as well as the Intercessions within our weekly worship services (according to the prayer rota), Jose Broomhead had continued to pray regularly for our Church, Parish and individuals requesting specific items of prayer (the telephone contact number is in the Parish Magazine under "Pray Together" for those wishing to make requests).

In addition, we have returned and continue with our Service of Spiritual Wholeness (started by Martin & Val Rutter and now led by Jose and Alan Humpage), that takes place on the first Saturday of the month in church at 10.30 am. All are welcome to a time of prayer and reflection on scripture, whilst being still in the presence of our God and listening to His voice.

Deanery Synod

Deanery meetings began in February at St. Peter's, Stafford Street with talks on Shaping for Mission and the Greenhouse Project (Fresh Expressions). It was noted that the deanery officers (Secretary, Treasurer and Lay Chair) were all standing down and nominations were needed to replace these three long serving members. The May meeting took place at St. Martin's Church, Sutton Road, with a talk given by Revd Paul Thomas, Archdeacon of Salop on "The kingdom of God". The Archdeacon's Visitation took place at All Saints', Bloxwich on 6th June and the summer Eucharist at St. Paul's, the crossing on 5th July. Synod met again on 7th September at St. Thomas, Aldridge for an interesting and interactive talk on "Difference" and reconciliation. The year ended with the Advent Reflection given by the Archdeacon of Walsall at St. John's, Walsall Wood.

Bible Study

The Bible study switched from being online to live from the start of September, studying the Gospel of St Luke. In 2024 we shall start studying the Book of Genesis. All are welcome once a fortnight for about an hour and a half in an informal atmosphere (no exam!).

William Horrell

Choir and music.

Following some disruption in the aftermath of the vicar's retirement the choir were "back in business" for Christmas. Ably led by Sheila the choir seeks to augment our worship on Sunday mornings and at other special events. In order to provide some certainty, given the lack of a vicar and the opportunities for confusion when visiting clergy kindly help out, Rev'd Such took over the selection of hymns and the schedule of services. We thank Sheila for her continued playing and hope to grow our choir and music ministry in the year ahead.

Financial Review

2023 was another difficult year for the PCC financially. We were almost entirely reliant on regular donations via the monthly and weekly envelopes or Direct Debit/ Standing Order commitments by member of the congregation for which we are very grateful. This has helped considerably to maintain some form of income stream, but more is needed so we encourage anyone who can to increase their regular donations. We would also ask that anyone who pays income tax and is able to do so gives permission for Gift Aid to be claimed by the church on their donations.as this effectively adds 25p to every £1 donated.

Our investments continue to provide healthy returns, but any sales of shares reduce the value of our investment and consequently reduces the dividends payable.

We do receive help in the form of grants from St Margaret's School towards the cost of employing the Children's Worker, and the Great Barr Church Lands Trust have been very generous with grants to help in various maintenance projects for the church and churchyard, and hopefully they will continue to support the church.

We were able to hold some fund-raising activities during in the year, raising nearly £3,600 in total. A particular successful event was the Afternoon Tea with music provided by Trevor Davies and Paul Chester and tea prepared and served by Brenda Hatfield and her ladies at the Memorial Hall that raised £455. The Easter Treasure Hunt organised by Chris and Brenda Bird, with additional activities for the children

provided by Georgina and Louise from Children @ Church raised £116. The Summer Fete raised £1,291 and the Summer Draw £305, the Christmas Fayre raised £802 and the Christmas Hamper Draw £158. The return of the Brass Band Concert with a new band was very well received and raised £423.

Despite our best efforts to cut back on unnecessary expenditure costs still increased and will continue to increase. The main problem areas are:

1. Parish Share Payments

The Parish Share (now known as Common Fund) for 2023 was originally set at £59,315 but following a meeting with the Diocesan Board of Finance a Special Agreement was agreed to reduce the amount by £16,315 to £43,000. The PCC however were in arrears for previous years of £78,101. The Diocese proposed that if the PCC paid the revised amount of £43,000 for 2023 plus a further £3,500 towards the arrears then the Board would write off £10,500 of the outstanding debt. We managed to pay the full amount as requested. It has further been agreed that if the PCC pay the full amount of the 2024 Common Share of £43,860 plus a further £3,330 towards the outstanding arrears then the remainder of the debt will be written off and we will be free of debt. It is imperative that we meet this target to be debt free.

2. Gas and Electricity

Gas and electricity costs continue to rise and are likely to get much worse in the future. The Treasurer has agreed new contracts for both Gas and Electricity. The Electricity contract is for 2 years from 1st January 2024 at a fixed rate based on advice from our adviser. The price is higher than last year as expected but is still the lowest available from a main supplier. The gas contract is for 3 years from April 2024 and is in fact cheaper than we are currently paying.

3. Staff Costs

After the Parish Share contribution, of which much has been said before, Staff costs are probably our biggest expenditure. The salaries of our 3 Part time employees are affected by the minimum wage arrangements determined by the government plus the corresponding tax and National Insurance contributions and pension plans. I cannot see that we can cut down on the hours we employ our staff without severely reducing the service they provide.

Charitable Activities

We have not been able to provide the level of financial help to charities that we normally support but we still managed to raise £203 for the Children's Society via the collection boxes and £227 and from the Christingle service. Gifts donated for Harvest Festival were given to St. Basil's charity for the homeless and the Food Bank. We took part in Operation Christmas Child organised by Samaritan's Purse in the shoebox appeal providing gift boxes for struggling families and acted as a collection point for others involved in the scheme. We donated £200 to the Samaritans Purse Turkey Earthquake Appeal to help those families affected by the earthquake. £73 was raised for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, £115 for the MacMillan Cancer Care Fund through a coffee morning, and the Children at Church raised £103 for the Mercy Ships appeal. The Beavers raised £110 for the RNLI.

Not all activities provided are just for fund-raising and community activities are just as important. The church hosted the Parkinson Society annual service again this year and the carol service for the Q3 Community Choir, both events much appreciated by the communities involved. The return of the tea and coffee sessions after the services has been welcomed as it provides an opportunity for church members and others to meet and socialise, something that is becoming more difficult for some these days.

2024 looks like being another challenging year financially but with the continued help and support of the church family we will manage to meet all our commitments and hopefully extend our support for the local community.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on free reserves (net current assets) which equates to at least three months unrestricted payments. This is equivalent to £10,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies.

Investment Policy

The charity is granted power to invest in suitable investments under the PCC Powers Measure 1956 and the Trustees Act 2000. As a charity, the Trustees have a duty of care to take such advice as is appropriate before investments are undertaken. This advice is sought from the Central Board of Finance (CCLA) in London.

The charity's investment policies are based on two key principles: -

- Ethical Investment – this includes ensuring that investments are held in companies which have high standards of corporate governance and act in a responsible way towards stakeholders.
- Long-term responsibilities – the trustees are aware of their long-term responsibilities in respect of the Restricted and Unrestricted reserves and as a result follow a prudent approach to investment decisions.

Investment policy for long-term funds is aimed primarily at generating a sustainable income, with due regard to the need for the preservation of capital value, and the possible need to realise investments to meet operational needs. The charity does not have a policy of generating income at excessive or high risk – known as “purchasing income”, where high returns are guaranteed at the expense of capital.

In summary, the charity has an overall policy to maximise income while preserving the real value of its funds. Due to the nature of the charity, an ethical investment policy is taken into consideration when investments are made:

The charity follows the Ethical Investment Advisory policy as recommended by the Lichfield Diocese which includes the following:

“We aim to invest in companies that:

- * will develop their business in the interests of shareholders;
- * demonstrate responsible employment practices;
- * are conscientious concerning issues of corporate governance, the environment and human rights;
- * are sensitive to the community in which they operate.”

Planned giving, collections and donations are the main sources of fund raising along with tax recoverable.

Safeguarding

The PCC believe they have fulfilled their duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Reporting Serious Incidents

A Serious Incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant harm to the charity's beneficiaries, employees, office holders, volunteers or to others who come into contact with the charity through its work, loss of the charity's money or assets, damage to the charity's property or harm to the charity's work or reputation.

The trustees are not aware of any Serious Incidents in the last year.

Fundraising

The PCC takes its fundraising responsibilities seriously and is very grateful to all donors – whether regular or occasional – for their support of the church and church events. PCC supporters are never taken for granted. The PCC takes full responsibility for fundraising and do not use commercial organisations or professional fundraisers. All money raised is either by donations, fundraising events, special appeals or legacies for which the PCC are most grateful.

Review of the Year

This year has been a particularly difficult year for wardens and the whole church community due in part to the retirement at the end of August of our vicar Martin. Since Martin's retirement we have been helped and supported by 2 Pastoral Support Clergy appointed by the Archdeacon, namely Revd Colin Such appointed Minister in Charge, and Preb Ian Cardinal as Pastoral Support Clergy. Both Colin and Ian have been extremely supportive during the church's preparation for the official Interregnum when we can look for a new vicar. Even with the support from Colin and Ian the load on the Churchwardens has increased considerably. June is spending a lot of time trying to find local ministers to officiate at church services, a job not being made easier because of the number of other churches going through similar problems reducing the pool of potential ministers available to help. Thanks go to all current and retired ministers who have stepped in to take services and keep the church going in this difficult time. Things are picking up and attendances in church are slowly getting back to normal.

The church continues to provide a strong and comforting spiritual and pastoral service to our regular congregation and to the local community, including those who may only attend church occasionally, that is much appreciated as evidenced by the many letters and comments received. Examples of such letters include the following: "Thank you for being a big part in making our wedding day special and for welcoming us into your beautiful church"; "Thank you for all the care and support you all gave to us throughout the sad time we went through earlier this year. The church service left us feeling very peaceful. We really appreciate your attention to detail, kindness and above all a sense of humour which helped us keep a sense of normality – Thank You".

The Wardens have been supported by many members of the church community without whose help it would be much harder. William Horrell has taken on the responsibility as Deputy Chair of the PCC and regularly assists the minister administer communion and on occasions has led the service when no official member of the clergy was available. Heather Allen, our Parish Administrator, worked tirelessly in the background making sure everything ran smoothly in the office. Her workload has increased significantly since Martin Rutters retirement as a lot of the administrative work previously done by Martin is now her responsibility. Lisa Comley-Burke has come in regularly as a volunteer to help Heather in the office and help Peter with some aspects of Finance and book-keeping. Sheila Ward continues to stand in as volunteer organist and choir leader in the absence of a permanent appointment to this post and we thank her for this. Gillian Savage has also stood in as organist when Sheila was unable to attend. Diane Cooke has assumed responsibility for cleaning the church and meeting room for which we are extremely grateful. Bill Knight continued to perform his duties as vergers with enthusiasm and diligence. Thanks also to Mr and Mrs Bird who keep the top of the churchyard in order, to Sheila Carrington for her flower arranging and Carol Adams for the cards. Thanks go to all these valued members of our team and to everyone who has supported us in so many ways.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve as Churchwardens again this year, and we thank the PCC, Dennis Clive and Vic Wiles (Deputy Wardens), and all the other people who have helped us support the church and the Vicar.

Future Plans

Our immediate plans are to find a new vicar. We hope to put together the parish profile and job and person specifications as soon as we can and advertise the post in the hope that a new incumbent will be in post by next year. In the meantime we seek to continue and grow our links with the schools and youth organisations.

Risk Management

The Church Wardens carry out regular Health and Safety Reviews and regularly inspect premises for potential hazards. We have safeguarding policies in place for child protection and for work with vulnerable adults, including rigorous DBS checking of staff and volunteers. Our insurances are reviewed annually to ensure adequate cover. An informal review of any new risks which may impact the work of the Church in the Parish is ongoing.

Structure, Governance and Management

The PCC is a Body Corporate established by the Church of England and is a Charity registered with the Charity Commission. The PCC is governed by the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended that came into effect on 2nd January 1957, and the Church Representation Rules (contained in Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended).

The method of appointment of the PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The Council comprises the Incumbent, the Churchwardens, those elected to the Deanery Synod, and other members who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, by those on the Electoral Roll. The PCC members receive training from courses run by the Diocese. Members of the congregation are always urged to join the Electoral Roll, and to stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance in the parish, and for all financial matters. The PCC meet six times a year. Given its responsibilities, the PCC has a number of sub committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life. Each reports back to the PCC with the minutes of their meetings.

Reference and Administrative details

St. Margaret's Church is situated in Chapel Lane, Great Barr. It is part of the Diocese of Lichfield, within the Church of England. The Correspondence address is:

The Parish Office, St. Margaret's Church, Chapel Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 7BA

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission. Charity No. 1132892. Our website address is: <https://www.stmargaretsgreatbarr.org.uk>

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2023 until the date this report was approved were:

Ex Officio Members

Vicar	Revd Preb MC Rutter (Chairman – Retired 31/8/23)
Minister in Charge	The Reverend Colin Such (Chairman – Appointed 27/9/23)
Reader	Mrs VA Rutter (Retired 31/8/23)
Churchwardens	Mrs JA Aubrook Mr PJ Clark (also Treasurer)
Deanery Synod reps	Mr A Humpage Mrs M Humpage
Elected Members	Mr S Borgazzi (PCC secretary from 11/12/23) Mr M Room (also paid as part time churchyard maintenance contractor) Mr V Wiles (also Deputy Warden) Mrs C Aston Mrs B Hatfield (PSO)

Miss P Millward
Mrs R Smith
Mr D Clive (Co-opted as from 12/7/23)
Mr T W Horrell
Mrs K Underwood
Mrs C Adams
Mrs J Thynne

[Ms Heather Allen Minute Secretary resigned 12/7/23]

Approved by the PCC on 7th March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

.....
Reverend Colin Such (Chairman)

.....
(Vice Chairman/Secretary etc)

Charity Number 1132892

**The Parish of St Margarets Church
Great Barr**

**Accounts for the Year ended
31st December 2023**

FRESSE (SORP) Compliant

Worley Pritchard & Co
Accountants
34 Hydes Road
Wednesbury
West Midlands
WS10 9SY

**The Parish of St Margarets Church
Great Barr**

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

I report to the trustees of St Margaret's Church, Great Barr Parochial Church Council (Charity No1132892) on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023 set out on pages 2-9.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and 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(2) 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) on the Charities Act, and
- . To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- . to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- . to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

have not been met; or

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

Signed: _____

Date : 6th March 2024

Worley Pritchard & Co
Accountants
34 Hydes Road
Wednesbury
West Midlands
WS10 9SY

**The Parish of St Margarets Church
Great Barr**

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

Statement of Financial Activities

	note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
Incoming Resources					
Donations and Legacies	2a	75,657	1,112	76,769	57,040
Charitable Activities	2b	27,903		27,903	18,689
Other Trading Activities	2c	674		674	682
Investments	2d	5,419		5,419	6,064
Other	2e	642		642	77
Total		110,295	1,112	111,407	82,552
Resources Expended					
Raising Funds	3a	463			94
Charitable Activities	3b	92,014	987		132,579
Other	3c	1,307			772
Total		93,784	987	94,771	133,445
Net gain/(losses) on investment		16,783		16,783	-26,990
Net Income/(Expenditure)		16,511	125	16,636	-50,893
Transfer between Funds		0	0		0
Net Movements in Funds		33,294	125	33,419	-77,883
Total Funds brought forward 1st January 2023		116,796	4,682	121,478	199,361
Total Funds carried forward 31st December 2023		150,090	4,807	154,897	121,478

The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

Balance Sheet

	notes	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	5(a)	0	0
Investment Assets	5(b)	<u>186,411</u>	<u>189,628</u>
		<u>186,411</u>	<u>189,628</u>
Current Assets			
Bank current account		9,034	17,733
Cash		73	112
Lichfield Diocese Board of Finance		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
		<u>9,107</u>	<u>17,845</u>
Liabilities due in one year	6		
Creditors		-55,154	-86,931
Debtors		<u>14,533</u>	<u>936</u>
		<u>-40,621</u>	<u>-85,995</u>
Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)		<u>-31,514</u>	<u>-68,150</u>
Liabilities due after one year			
Creditors		0	0
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Net Assets		<u>154,897</u>	<u>121,478</u>
Parish Funds			
Unrestricted Funds		150,090	116,796
Restricted Funds		4,807	4,682
Total		<u>154,897</u>	<u>121,478</u>

The attached notes form part of these financial statements

Approved by the PCC on2024 and signed by

.....Colin Such, Minister in charge

The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Notes to Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

1

Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (SORP) and applicable accounting standards (FRSSE) or (FRS102).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

Description of Funds

Restricted funds comprise of two elements :-

- a) income from trusts or endowments which may be expended only on those restricted objects provided in the terms of the trust or bequest
- b) donations or grants received for a specific object or invited by the PCC for a specific object. The funds may only be expended on the specific object for which they were given. Any balance remaining unspent at the end of each year must be carried forward as a balance on that fund. The PCC does not usually invest separately for each fund. Where there is no separate investment, interest is apportioned to individual funds on an average balance basis.

Unrestricted funds are income funds which are to be spent on the PCC's general purpose.

Incoming Resources

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

Resources Expended

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

Fixed Assets

Consecrated and benefice property is not included in the accounts by s.10(2)(a)&(C) of the Charities Act 2011.

Moveable church furnishings held by the Vicar and Churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal are inalienable property, listed in the Church's inventory, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time). For anything acquired prior to 2000 there is insufficient cost information available and therefore such assets are not valued in the financial statements.

The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

2 Income and Endowments from:

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£
Donations and Legacies				
2a Voluntary Income/Receipts				
Tax efficient planned giving	21,151			21,162
Other planned giving	0			0
Collections at services	3,049			2,906
All other giving and voluntary receipts including special appeals	14,818	1,112		6,209
Gift Aid Recovered	13,988			4,829
Legacies received	0			0
Grants	22,651			21,934
	<u>75,657</u>	<u>1,112</u>	<u>76,769</u>	<u>57,040</u>
Charitable Activities				
2b Church Activities				
Statutory Fees (retained by PCC)	23,531			14,595
Fundraising Activities	4,372			4,094
	<u>27,903</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>27,903</u>	<u>18,689</u>
Other Trading Activities				
2c Activities for Generating Fund				
Church Hall Hire	0			60
Parish Magazine	674			622
	<u>674</u>		<u>674</u>	<u>682</u>
Investments				
2d				
Dividends	5,419			6,064
Rent received				0
	<u>5,419</u>		<u>5,419</u>	<u>6,064</u>
Other				
2e				
	642			77
	<u>642</u>		<u>642</u>	<u>77</u>
Total	<u>110,295</u>	<u>1,112</u>	<u>111,407</u>	<u>82,552</u>

The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
		£	£	£	£
3	EXPENDITURE ON:				
	Raising Funds				
	3a				
	<i>Costs of Generating Income</i>				
	Garden Fete	130			94
	Other fundraising expenses	333			0
		463		463	94
	Charitable Activities				
	3b				
	<i>Church Activities</i>				
	Mission giving and donations		987		729
	Diocesan Parish Share	7,107			59,315
	Salaries/Wages	33,798			30,346
	Clergy and Staff Expenses	2,256			1,375
	<i>Church Expenses</i>				
	Church running expenses	25,339			25,490
	Church Expenses (Mission and Evangelism)	494			417
	Church utility bills	14,978			9,111
	Cost of trading	6,200			4,303
	<i>Major Capital Expenditure</i>				
	Major Repairs to the Church				0
	Major Repairs to Church Hall				0
	New Building Work				0
	<i>Governance Costs</i>	1,842			1,493
		92,014	987	93,001	132,579
	Other				
	3c				
		1,307			772
		1,307		1,307	772
	Total	93,784	987	94,771	133,445

The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
4(a) Staff Costs		
Salaries	33,798	30,346

During the year the PCC employed 3 staff; a vergers, a parish worker and a church office administrator.

4(b) PCC Costs

The following payments were made to members of the PCC during the financial year

P Clark	Donations	£400
H Allen	Stationery & Postage	£1,139
J Aubrook	Mothring Sunday Flowers	£50
J Aubrook	Fund Raising Expenses	£163
Rev M Rutter	Vicar's Expenses	£310
M Room	Churchyard Upkeep	£12,884
M Room	Grave Digging	£720

5(a) Fixed Assets

Investment property

	Freehold Buildings £	Church Equipment £	Total £
At Cost or Valuation			
As at 1 Jan 2023	0	0	0
Additions in the Year			
Disposal in the Year	0		0
Value at 31 Dec 2023	0	0	0
Accumulated Depreciation			
As at 1 Jan 2023	0	0	0
Charge for the Year			
As at 31 Dec 2023	0	0	0
Net Book Value 31/12/23	0	0	0
Net Book Value 01/01/23	0	0	0

5(b) Investments

	01/01/2023	Additions	Disposals	Transfers	Change in Market Value	31/12/2023
Unrestricted funds						
Investments	189,628	0	-20,000		16,783	186,411
Restricted funds						
Investments	0	0			0	0
Total	189,628	0	-20,000	0	16,783	186,411

**The Parish of St Margarets Church
Great Barr**

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

6 Liabilities	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts falling due in one year		
Accruals of Utilities	2,760	774
Accrual of pension and HMRC	633	513
Debtor		0
HMRC Gift Aid refund due	-14,533	-936
Other Creditors and accruals	13,053	7,543
Parish Share	38,708	78,101
	<u>40,621</u>	<u>85,995</u>
Amounts falling due after one year		
Parish Share	0	0
	<u>40,621</u>	<u>85,995</u>

7 Analysis of Net Assets

	General		
	Unrestricted	Restricted	
	Funds	Funds	Total
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	0	0	0
Investment Assets	186,411	0	186,411
Current Assets	4,300	4,807	9,107
Current Liabilities	-40,621	0	-40,621
	<u>150,090</u>	<u>4,807</u>	<u>154,897</u>

8 Funds Reconciliation

	Reserves	Incoming	Resources	Investment	Transfer	Reserves
	at 1/1/23	Resources	Expended	Gains/Losses	between funds	at 31/12/23
	£	£	£	£		£
Unrestricted Funds	116,796	110,295	-93,784	16,783		150,090
Restricted Funds	4,682	1,112	-987			4,807
Total Funds	<u>121,478</u>	<u>111,407</u>	<u>-94,771</u>	<u>16,783</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>154,897</u>

Restricted funds received and expended

	2023	2023	2022
	received	expended	
Christian Aid	£ 35.00	£0.00	£ -
Childrens society collections	£ 203.00	-£203.00	£ -
Royal British Legion	£ -	-£30.00	£ 30.00
Fabric Fund	£ 50.00		£ -
Turkey Earthquake Appeal	£ 200.00	-£200.00	£ -
Ukrainian Relief		£0.00	-£ 50.00
New Display Stands	£ -	£0.00	£ 500.00
Christingle	£ 226.00	-£226.00	-£ 30.00
RNLI (Beavers Appeal)	£ 110.00	-£110.00	£ -
Children @ Church Appeals	£ 108.00	-£103.00	
McMillan Coffee Morning	£ 115.00	-£115.00	
St Margaret's Guild	£ 65.00		£ 1,071.00
	<u>£ 1,112.00</u>	<u>-£987.00</u>	<u>£ 1,521.00</u>
Other balances			
Childrens Corner	£ 255.00		£ 255.00
Royal British Legion	£ -		£ 30.00
St Margaret's Guild	£ 1,136.00		£ 1,071.00
Fabric Fund	£ 2,876.00		£ 2,826.00
New Display Stands	£ 500.00		£ 500.00
Christian Aid	£ 35.00		£ -
Children @ Church Appeals	£ 5.00		£ -
	<u>£ 4,807.00</u>		<u>£ 4,682.00</u>

**The Parish of St Margarets Church
Great Barr**

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

9 SOFA Comparatives

(previous year)

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Incoming Resources			
Donations & Legacies	54,790	2,250	57,040
Charitable Activities	18,689		18,689
Other Trading Activities	682		682
Investments	6,064		6,064
Other	77		77
	<u>80,302</u>	<u>2,250</u>	<u>82,552</u>
Resources Expended			
Raising Funds	94		94
Charitable Activities	131,850	729	132,579
Other	772		772
	<u>132,716</u>	<u>729</u>	<u>133,445</u>
Net gain/(losses) on investment	<u>-26,990</u>		<u>-26,990</u>
Net Income/(Expenditure)	<u>-52,414</u>	<u>1,521</u>	<u>-50,893</u>
Transfer between Funds	0	0	0
Net Movements in Funds	<u>-79,404</u>	<u>1,521</u>	<u>-77,883</u>
Total Funds brought forward 1/1/22	196,200	3,161	199,361
Total Funds carried forward 31/12/22	<u>116,796</u>	<u>4,682</u>	<u>121,478</u>

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council of Great Barr

For the year ended 31st December 2023

The Parochial Church Council of Great Barr Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2023

Objectives and Activities

The Parochial Church Council of Great Barr (the PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Reverend Colin Such, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of St. Margaret's Church together with the church hall and churchyard and for the decoration of the Vicarage when occupied by the incumbent.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at Great Barr. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer, scripture, music and sacrament. Also, through nonsacramental activities of hospitality and fellowship we aim to reach non churched members of the community.

Public Benefit

The trustees of the PCC are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit and have had regard to it in their administration of the Charity. The trustees believe that, by promoting the work of the Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Great Barr it helps to promote the whole mission of the Church (pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical) more effectively, within the Ecclesiastical Parish, and that in doing so it provides a benefit to the public by:

- Providing facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for its members and for anyone who wishes to benefit from what the Church offers; and
- Promoting Christian values and service by members of the Church in and to their communities, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.
- The Charity also has the responsibility of maintaining the Parish Church of St. Margaret, in Chapel Lane, the support of our Church School (St. Margaret's CE (VA) Primary School, Birmingham Road, Great Barr) and the sponsorship of the associated Scout and Guide groups.

Achievements and Performance

Church attendance

The Electoral Roll increased slightly for 2023 from 211 names to 215.

The average adult Sunday attendance for 2023 decreased to 42 (*56 in 2022*).

The average number of children attending increased to **16** (*11*) through C@Ch (Children in Church) and the Uniformed Organisations.

The average attendance at the Thursday morning Communion service rose from around 12 to 20 regulars.

Easter was better with 110 attending (*100 in 2022*) and 141 at Christmas (*149*).

There were **15** (17 in 2022) **baptisms**, **7** (8) weddings, 0 (0) blessings of marriage & **0** (0) marriage thanksgivings during the year as well as **19** (8) Funerals in church and **6** (7) at the Crematorium & **26** (8) Committals or Interment of Ashes.

Review of the Year

The PCC met six times during 2023. There were many upheavals throughout the year with the church still recovering from the restrictions imposed during the pandemic. The first phase of quinquennial works had been completed but more are needed in the years to come. The Communion Cup was reintroduced having been suspended during Covid. Finances were a constant concern throughout the year but social events continued with events planned for the coronation of King Charles III. The annual meeting took place on 21st May 2023. Rev Rutter retired as from 31st August 2023 and in September 2023 Rev Colin Such was appointed as Minister in Charge, to oversee the governance of the church and the PCC, and Preb Ian Cardinal, as Pastoral Support Priest, to work together to help guide the church through a difficult time of transition.

Fabric

General Maintenance and repair of the building is an ongoing problem but thankfully there were no major problems this year. The refurbishment of the roof, together with the rainwater goods and stonework in 2019 means that the exterior of the church is sound and should not require much maintenance for some time.

One of the items highlighted in the 2021 Quinquennial Report for urgent action is the upgrade of the lighting system to replace existing lighting fixtures with LCD equivalents. This would not only make the system safer but should be more efficient and reduce electricity usage. We were hoping that this would be done this year but unfortunately this has not been possible. The main cause of delay is being able to employ an electrician with access to suitable scaffolding to deal with high level installations that can be moved around the church at a price we can afford. Another area needing attention is internal decoration, particularly where water penetration in the past has caused the plaster to peel, exposing bare stonework. The architect's provisional estimation of the cost of redecoration is in the region of £50,000 and at present we cannot afford this.

Maintenance of the churchyard is another major expense, but we do have an obligation to keep the churchyard in reasonable condition. Mark Room, our part time contractor, is employed for 20 hours a week mainly to look after the ashes site and the newer burial plots, and the rest of the site where possible. The area close to the church is maintained mainly by our dedicated volunteers, Chris and Brenda Bird, and the lawn mown by Vic Wiles. The trees surrounding the churchyard are nearly all subject to Tree Preservation Orders and so must be maintained regularly to ensure they remain structurally safe.

Thanks to the help of many volunteers the churchyard remained beautiful throughout the year and in fact were awarded two awards from Lichfield Diocese for their high standards of maintenance and conservation: a Gold Award for Lichfield Churchyards and a Nature Friendly Award. The churchyard was also commended for its general standard of maintenance particularly because it is the second largest churchyard in the Diocese and therefore is harder to maintain than other smaller churchyards. Special thanks go to Mark for his efforts and also to Chris and Brenda Bird who turn up every week to maintain the front drive and the area at the rear of the Meeting Room. Thanks also to Vic Wiles for mowing the front lawn and all the other volunteers who give their time freely to help the church.

Worship and Prayer

Not all services resumed since the pandemic and with the retirement of Rev Rutter the opportunity to restore services remained limited. As such services were limited to a Thursday morning BCP Communion, Children in Church (ably led by Georgina) fortnightly on a Sunday at 9.30am and the main Sunday service at 11am alternating between BCP Matins and Common Worship Communion. Retired and Deanery Clergy very kindly stepped in to take services following Rev Rutter's retirement and we are very grateful to them and also to Preb Ian Cardinal as Pastoral Support priest. New congregational service books were introduced for the Sunday services, the choir resumed singing whilst robed in the choir stalls and the Common Worship Lectionary adopted for use at the Sunday services whilst the Thursday service uses the BCP provision for the previous Sunday (save on major feast and holy days.)

Throughout 2023, as well as the Intercessions within our weekly worship services (according to the prayer rota), Jose Broomhead had continued to pray regularly for our Church, Parish and individuals requesting specific items of prayer (the telephone contact number is in the Parish Magazine under "Pray Together" for those wishing to make requests).

In addition, we have returned and continue with our Service of Spiritual Wholeness (started by Martin & Val Rutter and now led by Jose and Alan Humpage), that takes place on the first Saturday of the month in church at 10.30 am. All are welcome to a time of prayer and reflection on scripture, whilst being still in the presence of our God and listening to His voice.

Deanery Synod

Deanery meetings began in February at St. Peter's, Stafford Street with talks on Shaping for Mission and the Greenhouse Project (Fresh Expressions). It was noted that the deanery officers (Secretary, Treasurer and Lay Chair) were all standing down and nominations were needed to replace these three long serving members. The May meeting took place at St. Martin's Church, Sutton Road, with a talk given by Revd Paul Thomas, Archdeacon of Salop on "The kingdom of God". The Archdeacon's Visitation took place at All Saints', Bloxwich on 6th June and the summer Eucharist at St. Paul's, the crossing on 5th July. Synod met again on 7th September at St. Thomas, Aldridge for an interesting and interactive talk on "Difference" and reconciliation. The year ended with the Advent Reflection given by the Archdeacon of Walsall at St. John's, Walsall Wood.

Bible Study

The Bible study switched from being online to live from the start of September, studying the Gospel of St Luke. In 2024 we shall start studying the Book of Genesis. All are welcome once a fortnight for about an hour and a half in an informal atmosphere (no exam!).

William Horrell

Choir and music.

Following some disruption in the aftermath of the vicar's retirement the choir were "back in business" for Christmas. Ably led by Sheila the choir seeks to augment our worship on Sunday mornings and at other special events. In order to provide some certainty, given the lack of a vicar and the opportunities for confusion when visiting clergy kindly help out, Rev'd Such took over the selection of hymns and the schedule of services. We thank Sheila for her continued playing and hope to grow our choir and music ministry in the year ahead.

Brownies and Rainbows

6th Great Barr Brownies and 1st Great Barr Rainbows units are full and well attended. Some of the older girls in both units are looking forward to moving up to the next section in September. We have also welcomed a new Rainbow Leader and helper and said a fond au revoir to Brenda as a Brownie Leader

We have been working on the Brownies and Rainbows programmes which cover the themes
Know Myself.

Express Myself

Be Well

Have Adventures

Skills for my Future and

Take Action

Enjoying things such as First Aid, Dance, Den Building science experiments and Art and Craft activities.

We have also attended 2 local Pantomimes and are planning an end of term visit for the Summer Term.

Both units attend church parades over the year and assist at the Summer Fete. Rainbows have recently completed a fund-raising activity to purchase a new unit flag and are looking forward to it's appearance at church parades very soon.

2024 Ringing Report

2023 has been quite a busy year for ringing and we have tried hard to do our bit, though we haven't been able to ring the quarters that we have done in the past. We have two new adult learners and they are a very welcome addition to our band. Our three other learners are making good progress and one can handle a bell quite competently and is now learning to Plain Hunt on the treble.

We are very fortunate that we have been able to ring for most Sunday morning services and Friday night practices are usually well attended but we have an increasing reliance on our regular visitors from Walsall and Willenhall to ring more advanced methods.

There was only one Quarter Peal in the tower this year, Grandsire Doubles, rung by members of the St Martin's Guild, enabling one of their young ringers to complete the "Learning the Ropes: Level 5" programme. In early May we joined hundreds of towers across the country to ring in celebration of King Charles' and Queen Camilla's Coronation and the following day we rang before and after a special church service at which all our learners took part. Afterwards we enjoyed a slice of cake with the congregation. We also rang for the local Parkinson's Disease Society's Annual Carol Service in November.

In May and June we welcomed two visiting bands: one from Brewood and the other from members of The Kimpton Guild of Change Ringers.

On the social side, in March we once again enjoyed a ringers' lunch at Great Barr Golf Club, when the Vicar and his wife joined us for the last time before his retirement. Some members of the band also joined the rest of the LAWSCR at their annual Skittles Night at The Walsall Arms, when it was good to catch up with old friends, some of whom we have known for more than sixty years.

The ringers continue to give support to the church, local organisations and other towers when they can. We often supply ringers for weddings at Wood Green, Walsall, West Bromwich and Willenhall and, in return, they help us out when we are short. In February we attended the annual Wedding Fayre in Church. In July we ran the Golf Challenge at the Summer Fete and spent an evening with the local Brownie Pack, giving them a chance to try their hand at ringing, both in the tower and on handbells.

Denise Large

Financial Review

2023 was another difficult year for the PCC financially. We were almost entirely reliant on regular donations via the monthly and weekly envelopes or Direct Debit/ Standing Order commitments by member of the congregation for which we are very grateful. This has helped considerably to maintain some form of income stream, but more is needed so we encourage anyone who can to increase their regular donations. We would also ask that anyone who pays income tax and is able to do so gives permission for Gift Aid to be claimed by the church on their donations as this effectively adds 25p to every £1 donated.

Our investments continue to provide healthy returns, but any sales of shares reduce the value of our investment and consequently reduces the dividends payable.

We do receive help in the form of grants from St Margaret's School towards the cost of employing the Children's Worker, and the Great Barr Church Lands Trust have been very generous with grants to help in various maintenance projects for the church and churchyard, and hopefully they will continue to support the church.

We were able to hold some fund-raising activities during in the year, raising nearly £3,600 in total. A particular successful event was the Afternoon Tea with music provided by Trevor Davies and Paul Chester and tea prepared and served by Brenda Hatfield and her ladies at the Memorial Hall that raised £455. The Easter Treasure Hunt organised by Chris and Brenda Bird, with additional activities for the children provided by Georgina and Louise from Children @ Church raised £116. The Summer Fete raised £1,291 and the Summer Draw £305, the Christmas Fayre raised £802 and the Christmas Hamper Draw £158. The return of the Brass Band Concert with a new band was very well received and raised £423.

Despite our best efforts to cut back on unnecessary expenditure costs still increased and will continue to increase. The main problem areas are:

1. Parish Share Payments

The Parish Share (now known as Common Fund) for 2023 was originally set at £59,315 but following a meeting with the Diocesan Board of Finance a Special Agreement was agreed to reduce the amount by £16,315 to £43,000. The PCC however were in arrears for previous years of £78,101. The Diocese proposed that if the PCC paid the revised amount of £43,000 for 2023 plus a further £3,500 towards the

arrears then the Board would write off £10,500 of the outstanding debt. We managed to pay the full amount as requested. It has further been agreed that if the PCC pay the full amount of the 2024 Common Share of £43,860 plus a further £3,330 towards the outstanding arrears then the remainder of the debt will be written off and we will be free of debt. It is imperative that we meet this target to be debt free.

2. Gas and Electricity

Gas and electricity costs continue to rise and are likely to get much worse in the future. The Treasurer has agreed new contracts for both Gas and Electricity. The Electricity contract is for 2 years from 1st January 2024 at a fixed rate based on advice from our adviser. The price is higher than last year as expected but is still the lowest available from a main supplier. The gas contract is for 3 years from April 2024 and is in fact cheaper than we are currently paying.

3. Staff Costs

After the Parish Share contribution, of which much has been said before, Staff costs are probably our biggest expenditure. The salaries of our 3 Part time employees are affected by the minimum wage arrangements determined by the government plus the corresponding tax and National Insurance contributions and pension plans. I cannot see that we can cut down on the hours we employ our staff without severely reducing the service they provide.

Charitable Activities

We have not been able to provide the level of financial help to charities that we normally support but we still managed to raise £203 for the Children's Society via the collection boxes and £227 and from the Christingle service. Gifts donated for Harvest Festival were given to St. Basil's charity for the homeless and the Food Bank. We took part in Operation Christmas Child organised by Samaritan's Purse in the shoebox appeal providing gift boxes for struggling families and acted as a collection point for others involved in the scheme. We donated £200 to the Samaritans Purse Turkey Earthquake Appeal to help those families affected by the earthquake. £73 was raised for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, £115 for the MacMillan Cancer Care Fund through a coffee morning, and the Children at Church raised £103 for the Mercy Ships appeal. The Beavers raised £110 for the RNLI.

Not all activities provided are just for fund-raising and community activities are just as important. The church hosted the Parkinson Society annual service again this year and the carol service for the Q3 Community Choir, both events much appreciated by the communities involved. The return of the tea and coffee sessions after the services has been welcomed as it provides an opportunity for church members and others to meet and socialise, something that is becoming more difficult for some these days.

2024 looks like being another challenging year financially but with the continued help and support of the church family we will manage to meet all our commitments and hopefully extend our support for the local community.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on free reserves (net current assets) which equates to at least three months unrestricted payments. This is equivalent to £10,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies.

Investment Policy

The charity is granted power to invest in suitable investments under the PCC Powers Measure 1956 and the Trustees Act 2000. As a charity, the Trustees have a duty of care to take such advice as is appropriate before investments are undertaken. This advice is sought from the Central Board of Finance (CCLA) in London.

The charity's investment policies are based on two key principles: -

- Ethical Investment – this includes ensuring that investments are held in companies which have high standards of corporate governance and act in a responsible way towards stakeholders.
- Long-term responsibilities – the trustees are aware of their long-term responsibilities in respect of the Restricted and Unrestricted reserves and as a result follow a prudent approach to investment decisions.

Investment policy for long-term funds is aimed primarily at generating a sustainable income, with due regard to the need for the preservation of capital value, and the possible need to realise investments to meet operational needs. The charity does not have a policy of generating income at excessive or high risk – known as “purchasing income”, where high returns are guaranteed at the expense of capital.

In summary, the charity has an overall policy to maximise income while preserving the real value of its funds. Due to the nature of the charity, an ethical investment policy is taken into consideration when investments are made:

The charity follows the Ethical Investment Advisory policy as recommended by the Lichfield Diocese which includes the following:

“We aim to invest in companies that:

- * will develop their business in the interests of shareholders;
- * demonstrate responsible employment practices;
- * are conscientious concerning issues of corporate governance, the environment and human rights;
- * are sensitive to the community in which they operate.”

Planned giving, collections and donations are the main sources of fund raising along with tax recoverable.

Safeguarding

The PCC believe they have fulfilled their duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Reporting Serious Incidents

A Serious Incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant harm to the charity's beneficiaries, employees, office holders, volunteers or to others who come into contact with the charity through its work, loss of the charity's money or assets, damage to the charity's property or harm to the charity's work or reputation.

The trustees are not aware of any Serious Incidents in the last year.

Fundraising

The PCC takes its fundraising responsibilities seriously and is very grateful to all donors – whether regular or occasional – for their support of the church and church events. PCC supporters are never taken for granted. The PCC take full responsibility for fundraising and do not use commercial organisations or professional fundraisers. All money raised is either by donations, fundraising events, special appeals or legacies for which the PCC are most grateful.

Churchwardens' Review of the Year

This year has been a particularly difficult year for wardens and the whole church community due in part to the retirement at the end of August of our vicar Martin. Since Martin's retirement we have been helped and supported by 2 Pastoral Support Clergy appointed by the Archdeacon, namely Revd Colin Such appointed

Minister in Charge, and Preb Ian Cardinal as Pastoral Support Clergy. Both Colin and Ian have been extremely supportive during the church's preparation for the official Interregnum when we can look for a new vicar. Even with the support from Colin and Ian the load on the Churchwardens has increased considerably. June is spending a lot of time trying to find local ministers to officiate at church services, a job not being made easier because of the number of other churches going through similar problems reducing the pool of potential ministers available to help. Thanks go to all current and retired ministers who have stepped in to take services and keep the church going in this difficult time. Things are picking up and attendances in church are slowly getting back to normal.

The church continues to provide a strong and comforting spiritual and pastoral service to our regular congregation and to the local community, including those who may only attend church occasionally, that is much appreciated as evidenced by the many letters and comments received. Examples of such letters include the following: "Thank you for being a big part in making our wedding day special and for welcoming us into your beautiful church"; "Thank you for all the care and support you all gave to us throughout the sad time we went through earlier this year. The church service left us feeling very peaceful. We really appreciate your attention to detail, kindness and above all a sense of humour which helped us keep a sense of normality – Thank You".

The Wardens have been supported by many members of the church community without whose help it would be much harder. William Horrell has taken on the responsibility as Deputy Chair of the PCC and regularly assists the minister administer communion and on occasions has led the service when no official member of the clergy was available. Heather Allen, our Parish Administrator, worked tirelessly in the background making sure everything ran smoothly in the office. Her workload has increased significantly since Martin Rutters retirement as a lot of the administrative work previously done by Martin is now her responsibility. Lisa Comley-Burke has come in regularly as a volunteer to help Heather in the office and help Peter with some aspects of Finance and book-keeping. Sheila Ward continues to stand in as volunteer organist and choir leader in the absence of a permanent appointment to this post and we thank her for this. Gillian Savage has also stood in as organist when Sheila was unable to attend. Diane Cooke has assumed responsibility for cleaning the church and meeting room for which we are extremely grateful. Bill Knight continued to perform his duties as vergers with enthusiasm and diligence. Thanks also to Mr and Mrs Bird who keep the top of the churchyard in order, to Sheila Carrington and the members of the guild for their flower arranging and Carol Adams for the greetings cards. Thanks go to all these valued members of our team and to everyone who has supported us in so many ways.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve as Churchwardens again this year, and we thank the PCC, Dennis Clive and Vic Wiles (Deputy Wardens), and all the other people who have helped us support the church and the Vicar.

June Aubrook and Peter Clark

Future Plans

Our immediate plans are to find a new vicar. We hope to put together the parish profile and job and person specifications as soon as we can and advertise the post in the hope that a new incumbent will be in post by next year. In the meantime we seek to continue and grow our links with the schools and youth organisations.

Risk Management

The Church Wardens carry out regular Health and Safety Reviews and regularly inspect premises for potential hazards. We have safeguarding policies in place for child protection and for work with vulnerable adults, including rigorous DBS checking of staff and volunteers. Our insurances are reviewed annually to ensure adequate cover. An informal review of any new risks which may impact the work of the Church in the Parish is ongoing.

Structure, Governance and Management

The PCC is a Body Corporate established by the Church of England and is a Charity registered with the Charity Commission. The PCC is governed by the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended that came into effect on 2nd January 1957, and the Church Representation Rules (contained in Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended).

The method of appointment of the PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The Council comprises the Incumbent, the Churchwardens, those elected to the Deanery Synod, and other members who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, by those on the Electoral Roll. The PCC members receive training from courses run by the Diocese. Members of the congregation are always urged to join the Electoral Roll, and to stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance in the parish, and for all financial matters. The PCC meet six times a year. Given its responsibilities, the PCC has a number of sub committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life. Each reports back to the PCC with the minutes of their meetings.

Reference and Administrative details

St. Margaret's Church is situated in Chapel Lane, Great Barr. It is part of the Diocese of Lichfield, within the Church of England. The Correspondence address is:

The Parish Office, St. Margaret's Church, Chapel Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 7BA

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission. Charity No. 1132892. Our website address is: <https://www.stmargaretsgreatbarr.org.uk>

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2023 until the date this report was approved were:

Ex Officio Members

Vicar	Revd Preb MC Rutter (Chairman – Retired 31/8/23)
Minister in Charge	The Reverend Colin Such (Chairman – Appointed 27/9/23)
Reader	Mrs VA Rutter (Retired 31/8/23)
Churchwardens	Mrs JA Aubrook Mr PJ Clark (also Treasurer)
Deanery Synod reps	Mr A Humpage Mrs M Humpage
Elected Members	Mr S Borgazzi (PCC secretary from 11/12/23) Mr M Room (also paid as part time churchyard maintenance contractor) Mr V Wiles (also Deputy Warden) Mrs C Aston Mrs B Hatfield (PSO) Miss P Millward Mrs R Smith Mr D Clive (Co-opted as from 12/7/23) Mr T W Horrell Mrs K Underwood Mrs C Adams Mrs J Thynne

[Ms Heather Allen Minute Secretary resigned 12/7/23]

Approved by the PCC on 7th March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

.....
Reverend Colin Such (Chairman)

.....
(Vice Chairman/Secretary etc)