

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

For the year ended 31st December 2024



The Parochial Church Council of Great Barr Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2024

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.

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 2024 to 215.

The average adult Sunday attendance for 2024 increased to **61** including the Remembrance Service **270+** (42 in 2023).

The average number of children attending increased to **20** through C@Ch (Children in Church) and the Uniformed Organisations.

The average attendance at the Thursday morning Communion service remained the same as last year at **20** regulars.

Easter was better with **115** attending (110 in 2023) and **118** at Christmas (141 in 2023).

There were **15** (15 in 2023) **baptisms**, **2** weddings, **0** blessings of marriage & **1** marriage thanksgivings during the year as well as **12** Funerals in church and **11** at the Crematorium & **12** Committals or Interment of Ashes.

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 2023 of our vicar Martin. Since Martin's retirement we were initially supported by 2 Pastoral Support Clergy appointed by the Archdeacon, namely Revd Colin Such appointed Minister in Charge, and Revd Ian Carmichael as Pastoral Support Clergy. Unfortunately, following 2 disastrous AGMs where nothing was really resolved, both Colin and Ian subsequently resigned leaving the 2 churchwardens to manage the day to day of the church. June has done a splendid job making sure we have a minister to conduct the services and spent 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. The task was made more difficult due to the health problems of Peter who was forced to take a more restricted role in the church affairs

The position of "Vacancy" has made making decisions on policy or any forward planning impossible, with the PCC effectively suspended and the churchwardens in limbo as anything has to be approved by the Minister In Charge and we currently do not have anyone we can turn to for help and guidance. It is hoped that these matters can be resolved in 2025.

Financial Review Year Ending 31 December 2024

2024 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 once again with grants to help in various maintenance projects for the church and churchyard, and hopefully they will continue to support the church.

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.

We were able to hold some fund-raising activities during the year, but the economic climate and the absence of so many people available to help raising nearly £3,500 in total. One of the most successful events was the Whisky Tasting evening run by Alan Humpage raising £184. Another successful event was the Afternoon Tea with music and tea prepared and served by Brenda Hatfield and her ladies at the Memorial Hall that raised £593. The Easter Bunny Hunt organised by Chris and Brenda Bird, with additional activities for the children provided by Georgina and Louise from Children @ Church raised £40. The Summer Fete raised £1,320.10 and the Summer Draw £562.10, the Christmas Fayre raised £802, and the Christmas

Hamper Draw £175. The return of the Brass Band Concert with a new band was very well received and raised £315.

Voluntary Donations and Plate receipts raised £11,635.

Fabric Report Year Ending 31 December 2024

Building and Churchyard Maintenance

General Maintenance and repair of the building is an ongoing problem but thankfully there were no major problems this year. For a Grade 11 Listed Building the fabric is in remarkable condition. The main expenditure was due to regular maintenance and inspection of services.

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 LED 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 from time to time, 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.)

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".

Throughout 2024, 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 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 events 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.

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 2024 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 to £43,860. The Diocese proposed that if the PCC paid a least £14,620 by the end of the year then the Board would write off a further £11,290 which would be set against the outstanding arrears from previous years We managed to pay £15,000, above the amount as requested.

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. We cannot see that we can cut down on the hours we employ our remaining staff following the retirement of the Parish administrator in May without severely reducing the service they provide.

Charitable Activities

In spite of the restrictions on income, The PCC were still able to give £270.96 to the Children's Society, £52.98 in support of Mercy Ships and £97.79 to the Tear Fund.

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.

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

In Vacancy

Minister in Charge

The Reverend Colin Such (Chairman – Appointed 27/9/23 resigned 31/7/24)

Reader

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

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

.....
Reverend Colin Such (Chairman)

.....
Vice Chairman/Secretary etc)

.....

Archdeacon Walsam

Liz Jackson

Churchwardens' Report Year Ending 31 December 2024

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 2023 of our vicar Martin. Since Martin's retirement we were initially supported by 2 Pastoral Support Clergy appointed by the Archdeacon, namely Revd Colin Such appointed Minister in Charge, and Revd Ian Carmichael as Pastoral Support Clergy. Unfortunately, following 2 disastrous AGMs where nothing was really resolved, both Colin and Ian subsequently resigned leaving the 2 churchwardens to manage the day to day of the church. June has done a splendid job making sure we have a minister to conduct the services and spent 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. The task was made more difficult due to the health problems of Peter who was forced to take a more restricted role in the church affairs

The position of "Vacancy" has made making decisions on policy or any forward planning impossible, with the PCC effectively suspended and the churchwardens in limbo as anything has to be approved by the Minister In Charge and we currently do not have anyone we can turn to for help and guidance. It is hoped that these matters can be resolved in 2025.

The Wardens have been supported by many members of the church community without whose help it would have been impossible. Vic Wiles (Deputy Warden), William Horrell as Deputy Chair of the PCC occasionally assists the minister administer communion and on occasions has led the service when no official member of the clergy was available. Heather Allen, retired as our Parish Administrator and Lisa Comley-Burke has come in regularly as a volunteer to help 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. Sheila Carrington and the members of the Guild provide floral decoration and clean the brasses and Carol Adams runs the greetings card sales. Thanks go to all these valued members of our team and to everyone who has supported us in so many ways. Special thanks go to Ann Reeves who has accepted responsibility for preparing the service sheets, and keeping the Parish Magazine updated.

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".

It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve as Churchwardens again in this our final year, and we thank the PCC, and all the other people who have helped us support the church. Time to take a well earned rest.

June Aubrook

Peter Clark

Churchwardens

Financial Report Year Ending 31 December 2024

2024 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.

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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 £209 for the Children's Society via the collection boxes and £62 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 £53 to the Mercy Ships Appeal and £98 for the Tear Fund Harvest appeal.

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.

June Aubrook

Churchwardens

Peter Clark

Fabric Report Year Ending 31 December 2024

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June Aubrook

Churchwardens

Peter Clark

Charity Number 1132892

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

**Accounts for the Year ended
31st December 2024**

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 2024 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 : 29th July 2025

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 2024

Statement of Financial Activities

	note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Incoming Resources					
Donations and Legacies	2a	50,139	481	50,620	76,769
Charitable Activities	2b	24,695		24,695	27,903
Other Trading Activities	2c	616		616	674
Investments	2d	5,036		5,036	5,419
Other	2e	71		71	642
Total		80,557	481	81,038	111,407
Resources Expended					
Raising Funds	3a	270			463
Charitable Activities	3b	52,787	422		93,001
Other	3c	249	140		1,307
Total		53,306	562	53,868	94,771
Net gain/(losses) on investment		1,283		1,283	16,783
Net Income/(Expenditure)		27,251	-81	27,170	16,636
Transfer between Funds		0	0		0
Net Movements in Funds		28,534	-81	28,453	33,419
Total Funds brought forward 1st January 2024		150,090	4,807	154,897	121,478
Total Funds carried forward 31st December 2024		178,624	4,726	183,350	154,897

The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

Balance Sheet

	notes	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	5(a)	0	0
Investment Assets	5(b)	177,694	186,411
		<u>177,694</u>	<u>186,411</u>
Current Assets			
Bank current account		14,326	9,034
Cash		132	73
Lichfield Diocese Board of Finance		0	0
		<u>14,458</u>	<u>9,107</u>
Liabilities due in one year	6		
Creditors		-13,646	-55,154
Debtors		4,844	14,533
		<u>-8,802</u>	<u>-40,621</u>
Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)		<u>5,656</u>	<u>-31,514</u>
Liabilities due after one year			
Creditors		0	0
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Net Assets		<u>183,350</u>	<u>154,897</u>
Parish Funds			
Unrestricted Funds		178,624	150,090
Restricted Funds		4,726	4,807
Total		<u>183,350</u>	<u>154,897</u>

The attached notes form part of these financial statements

Approved by the PCC on 22nd Sept 2025 and signed by

.....Colin Such, Minister in charge



Archdeacon



The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Notes to Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

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 2024

2 Income and Endowments from:

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£
Donations and Legacies	2a				
Voluntary Income/Receipts					
Tax efficient planned giving		17,966			21,151
Other planned giving		0			0
Collections at services		2,641	30		3,049
All other giving and voluntary receipts including special appeals		6,778	451		15,930
Gift Aid Recovered		-3,009			13,988
Legacies received		5,784			0
Grants		19,979			22,651
		<u>50,139</u>	<u>481</u>	<u>50,620</u>	<u>76,769</u>
Charitable Activities	2b				
Church Activities					
Statutory Fees (retained by PCC)		21,683			23,531
Fundraising Activities		3,012			4,372
		<u>24,695</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>24,695</u>	<u>27,903</u>
Other Trading Activities	2c				
Activities for Generating Fund					
Church Hall Hire		0			0
Parish Magazine		616			674
		<u>616</u>		<u>616</u>	<u>674</u>
Investments	2d				
Dividends		5,036			5,419
Rent received					0
		<u>5,036</u>		<u>5,036</u>	<u>5,419</u>
Other	2e				
		71			642
		<u>71</u>		<u>71</u>	<u>642</u>
Total		<u>80,557</u>	<u>481</u>	<u>81,038</u>	<u>11,407</u>

The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£
3	EXPENDITURE ON:				
	Raising Funds				
	3a				
	<i>Costs of Generating Income</i>				
	Garden Fete	270			130
	Other fundraising expenses	0			333
		270		270	463
	Charitable Activities				
	3b				
	<i>Church Activities</i>				
	Mission giving and donations		422		987
	Diocesan Parish Share	-15,243			7,107
	Salaries/Wages	25,208			33,798
	Clergy and Staff Expenses	3,430			2,256
	<i>Church Expenses</i>				
	Church running expenses	26,562			25,339
	Church Expenses (Mission and Evangelism)	751			494
	Church utility bills	6,783			14,978
	Cost of trading	3,560			6,200
	<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>	1,736			1,842
		52,787	422	53,209	93,001
	Other				
	3c				
		249	140		1,307
		249	140	389	1,307
	Total	53,306	562	53,868	94,771

The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

		2024 £	2023 £
4(a) Staff Costs			
	Salaries	25,208	33,798

During the year the PCC employed 3 staff; a vergger, a parish worker and a church office administrator.
(Church Office Administrator left during the year)

4(b) PCC Costs

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

P Clark	Stationery & Postage	£382
M Room	Churchyard Upkeep	£13,098
M Room	Grave Digging	£250

5(a) Fixed Assets	Freehold Buildings	Church Equipment	Total
Investment property	£	£	£
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

	01/01/2024	Additions	Disposals	Transfers	Change in Market Value	31/12/2024
Unrestricted funds						
Investments	186,411	0	-10,000		1,283	177,694
Restricted funds						
Investments	0	0			0	0
Total	186,411	0	-10,000	0	1,283	177,694

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

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

6 Liabilities	2024	2023
	£	£
Amounts falling due in one year		
Accruals of Utilities	1,353	2,760
Accrual of pension and HMRC	1,008	633
Debtor	-1,266	0
HMRC Gift Aid refund due	-3,578	-14,533
Other Creditors and accruals	2,820	13,053
Parish Share	8,465	38,708
	<u>8,802</u>	<u>40,621</u>
Amounts falling due after one year		
Parish Share	0	0
	<u>8,802</u>	<u>40,621</u>

7 Analysis of Net Assets

	General		
	Unrestricted	Restricted	
	Funds	Funds	Total
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	0	0	0
Investment Assets	177,694	0	177,694
Current Assets	9,732	4,726	14,458
Current Liabilities	-8,802	0	-8,802
	<u>178,624</u>	<u>4,726</u>	<u>183,350</u>

8 Funds Reconciliation

	Reserves	Incoming	Resources	Investment	Transfer	Reserves
	at 1/1/24	Resources	Expended	Gains/Losses	between funds	at 31/12/24
	£	£	£	£		£
Unrestricted Funds	150,090	80,557	-53,306	1,283		178,624
Restricted Funds	4,807	481	-562			4,726
Total Funds	<u>154,897</u>	<u>81,038</u>	<u>-53,868</u>	<u>1,283</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>183,350</u>

Restricted funds received and expended

	2024	2024	2023
	received	expended	
Christian Aid			£ 35.00
Childrens society collections	£ 209.00	-£209.00	£ -
Royal British Legion			-£ 30.00
Fabric Fund			£ 50.00
Turkey Earthquake Appeal			£ -
Tearfund Harvest Appeal	£ 98.00	-£98.00	£ -
New Display Stands			£ -
Christingle	£ 62.00	-£62.00	£ -
RNLI (Beavers Appeal)			£ -
Children @ Church Appeals	£ 47.00	-£53.00	£ 5.00
McMillan Coffee Morning			
St Margaret's Guild	£ 65.00	-£140.00	£ 65.00
	<u>£ 481.00</u>	<u>-£562.00</u>	<u>£ 125.00</u>
Other balances			
Childrens Corner	£ 255.00		£ 255.00
Royal British Legion			£ -
St Margaret's Guild	£ 1,060.00		£ 1,136.00
Fabric Fund	£ 2,876.00		£ 2,876.00
New Display Stands	£ 500.00		£ 500.00
Christian Aid	£ 35.00		£ 35.00
Children @ Church Appeals			£ 5.00
	<u>£ 4,726.00</u>		<u>£ 4,807.00</u>

The Parish of St Margarets Church Great Barr

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

9 SOFA Comparatives

(previous year)	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Incoming Resources			
Donations & Legacies	75,657	1,112	76,769
Charitable Activities	27,903		27,903
Other Trading Activities	674		674
Investments	5,419		5,419
Other	642		642
	110,295	1,112	111,407
Resources Expended			
Raising Funds	463		463
Charitable Activities	92,014	987	93,001
Other	1,307		1,307
	93,784	987	94,771
Net gain/(losses) on investment	16,783		16,783
Net Income/(Expenditure)	33,294	125	33,419
Transfer between Funds	0	0	0
Net Movements in Funds	33,294	125	33,419
Total Funds brought forward 1/1/23	116,796	4,682	121,478
Total Funds carried forward 31/12/23	150,090	4,807	154,897

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

For the year ended 31st December 2024



The Parochial Church Council of Great Barr Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2024

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.

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 2024 to 215.

The average adult Sunday attendance for 2024 increased to **61** including the Remembrance Service **270+** (42 in 2023).

The average number of children attending increased to **20** through C@Ch (Children in Church) and the Uniformed Organisations.

The average attendance at the Thursday morning Communion service remained the same as last year at **20** regulars.

Easter was better with **115** attending (110 in 2023) and **118** at Christmas (141 in 2023).

There were **15** (15 in 2023) **baptisms**, **2** weddings, **0** blessings of marriage & **1** marriage thanksgivings during the year as well as **12** Funerals in church and **11** at the Crematorium & **12** Committals or Interment of Ashes.

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 2023 of our vicar Martin. Since Martin's retirement we were initially supported by 2 Pastoral Support Clergy appointed by the Archdeacon, namely Revd Colin Such appointed Minister in Charge, and Revd Ian Carmichael as Pastoral Support Clergy. Unfortunately, following 2 disastrous AGMs where nothing was really resolved, both Colin and Ian subsequently resigned leaving the 2 churchwardens to manage the day to day of the church. June has done a splendid job making sure we have a minister to conduct the services and spent 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. The task was made more difficult due to the health problems of Peter who was forced to take a more restricted role in the church affairs

The position of "Vacancy" has made making decisions on policy or any forward planning impossible, with the PCC effectively suspended and the churchwardens in limbo as anything has to be approved by the Minister In Charge and we currently do not have anyone we can turn to for help and guidance. It is hoped that these matters can be resolved in 2025.

Financial Review Year Ending 31 December 2024

2024 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 once again with grants to help in various maintenance projects for the church and churchyard, and hopefully they will continue to support the church.

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.

We were able to hold some fund-raising activities during the year, but the economic climate and the absence of so many people available to help raising nearly £3,500 in total. One of the most successful events was the Whisky Tasting evening run by Alan Humpage raising £184. Another successful event was the Afternoon Tea with music and tea prepared and served by Brenda Hatfield and her ladies at the Memorial Hall that raised £593. The Easter Bunny Hunt organised by Chris and Brenda Bird, with additional activities for the children provided by Georgina and Louise from Children @ Church raised £40. The Summer Fete raised £1,320.10 and the Summer Draw £562.10, the Christmas Fayre raised £802, and the Christmas

Hamper Draw £175. The return of the Brass Band Concert with a new band was very well received and raised £315.

Voluntary Donations and Plate receipts raised £11,635.

Fabric Report Year Ending 31 December 2024

Building and Churchyard Maintenance

General Maintenance and repair of the building is an ongoing problem but thankfully there were no major problems this year. For a Grade 11 Listed Building the fabric is in remarkable condition. The main expenditure was due to regular maintenance and inspection of services.

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 LED 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 from time to time, 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.)

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".

Throughout 2024, 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 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 events 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.

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 2024 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 to £43,860. The Diocese proposed that if the PCC paid a least £14,620 by the end of the year then the Board would write off a further £11,290 which would be set against the outstanding arrears from previous years We managed to pay £15,000, above the amount as requested.

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. We cannot see that we can cut down on the hours we employ our remaining staff following the retirement of the Parish administrator in May without severely reducing the service they provide.

Charitable Activities

In spite of the restrictions on income, The PCC were still able to give £270.96 to the Children's Society, £52.98 in support of Mercy Ships and £97.79 to the Tear Fund.

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.

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

In Vacancy

Minister in Charge

The Reverend Colin Such (Chairman – Appointed 27/9/23 resigned 31/7/24)

Reader

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

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

.....
Reverend Colin Such (Chairman)

.....
Vice Chairman/Secretary etc)

.....

Archdeacon Walsam

Liz Jackson

Churchwardens' Report Year Ending 31 December 2024

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 2023 of our vicar Martin. Since Martin's retirement we were initially supported by 2 Pastoral Support Clergy appointed by the Archdeacon, namely Revd Colin Such appointed Minister in Charge, and Revd Ian Carmichael as Pastoral Support Clergy. Unfortunately, following 2 disastrous AGMs where nothing was really resolved, both Colin and Ian subsequently resigned leaving the 2 churchwardens to manage the day to day of the church. June has done a splendid job making sure we have a minister to conduct the services and spent 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. The task was made more difficult due to the health problems of Peter who was forced to take a more restricted role in the church affairs

The position of "Vacancy" has made making decisions on policy or any forward planning impossible, with the PCC effectively suspended and the churchwardens in limbo as anything has to be approved by the Minister In Charge and we currently do not have anyone we can turn to for help and guidance. It is hoped that these matters can be resolved in 2025.

The Wardens have been supported by many members of the church community without whose help it would have been impossible. Vic Wiles (Deputy Warden), William Horrell as Deputy Chair of the PCC occasionally assists the minister administer communion and on occasions has led the service when no official member of the clergy was available. Heather Allen, retired as our Parish Administrator and Lisa Comley-Burke has come in regularly as a volunteer to help 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. Sheila Carrington and the members of the Guild provide floral decoration and clean the brasses and Carol Adams runs the greetings card sales. Thanks go to all these valued members of our team and to everyone who has supported us in so many ways. Special thanks go to Ann Reeves who has accepted responsibility for preparing the service sheets, and keeping the Parish Magazine updated.

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".

It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve as Churchwardens again in this our final year, and we thank the PCC, and all the other people who have helped us support the church. Time to take a well earned rest.

June Aubrook

Peter Clark

Churchwardens

Financial Report Year Ending 31 December 2024

2024 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 once again 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, but the economic climate and the absence of so many people available to help raising nearly £3,500 in total. One of the most successful events was the Whisky Tasting evening run by Alan Humpage raising £184. Another successful event was the Afternoon Tea with music and tea prepared and served by Brenda Hatfield and her ladies at the Memorial Hall that raised £593. The Easter Bunny Hunt organised by Chris and Brenda Bird, with additional activities for the children provided by Georgina and Louise from Children @ Church raised £40. The Summer Fete raised £1,320.10 and the Summer Draw £562.10, the Christmas Fayre raised £802, and the Christmas Hamper Draw £175. The return of the Brass Band Concert with a new band was very well received and raised £315.

Voluntary Donations and Plate receipts raised £11,635.

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 2024 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 to £43,860. The Diocese proposed that if the PCC paid a least £14,620 by the end of the year then the Board would write off a further £11,290 which would be set against the outstanding arrears from previous years. We managed to pay £15,000, above the amount as requested.

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 2 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 £209 for the Children's Society via the collection boxes and £62 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 £53 to the Mercy Ships Appeal and £98 for the Tear Fund Harvest appeal.

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.

June Aubrook

Churchwardens

Peter Clark

Fabric Report Year Ending 31 December 2024

Building and Churchyard Maintenance

General Maintenance and repair of the building is an ongoing problem but thankfully there were no major problems this year. For a Grade 11 Listed Building the fabric is in remarkable condition. The main expenditure was due to regular maintenance and inspection of services.

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.

June Aubrook

Churchwardens

Peter Clark