

Wheathampstead
Parochial Church Council

Annual Report & Financial Statements

**for the year ended
31st December 2024**

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Helen's Wheathampstead
and St. Peter's Gustard Wood**

Registered Charity No: 1132924

St Helen's + St Peter's · Wheathampstead

living and working for the glory of God



Rector's Introduction

The Parish Vision: Bringing our strategic planning to life

The Parish's Vision and Mission Action Plan is a framework for how we wish to see the parish developing over the next five years. Our Mission statement and Vision are reviewed each five years and were reset in their current form at the beginning of 2022.

Our *Mission* is that we are Living God's Love in Our Community.

Our *Vision* for St Helen's and St Peter's is that we will:

1. Make St Helen's and St Peter's **a vibrant hub at the heart of the community** with buildings fit for God's mission in 21st century Wheathampstead
2. Be **a church for all generations**
3. Provide **opportunities for people to encounter God's love**



LIVING GOD'S LOVE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Across all of these is a wish also to lighten the parish's environmental footprint.

The PCC is responsible for driving the Vision forward and its meetings typically begin with a working session on the Vision, usually making progress towards the current goals for each of the Vision's three priorities and planning the next steps.

The third year of the new Vision has seen good progress in all three priority areas. Some items, such as the Buildings Working Group, Children and Families, Youth Work and Environmental Activities are covered more fully elsewhere in this Report. Many recently introduced activities ran again successfully in 2024, including the third Big Help-Out day.

The parish had an active presence at both Village Day and the St Helen's School Summer Fair, as well as joining in the School's Scarecrow Trail. An inspiring Developing Disciples course helped 13 people along their Christian journeys and in the Spring there was a meditation day led by visiting Brother Cassian.

A new church trail leaflet was developed with the use of QR codes to give further information, while the Friends of St Helen's Church offered tours of the church over the Heritage weekend. Temporary noticeboards were placed in the churchyard to promote forthcoming activities to passers-by and raise environmental awareness.

A vibrant musical evening in September celebrated the work of volunteers in the church and the community. An autumn tea party brought the church's teams of Welcomers together. We are continuing to encourage volunteering and to strengthen the welcome offered at all our services. The Community Larder in 2024 ran in St Helen's Church on one day each week during the summer school holidays.

The PCC expects to build upon this progress during 2025.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The combination of mission, vision and strategic priorities provides a framework within which the PCC evaluates our progress and promotes new initiatives for growth.

Role

In accordance with the PCC (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended, the Wheathampstead Parochial Church Council ("PCC") shares with the Rector and other Ministers the work of promotion in the Parish of "the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical". It is responsible for the churches of St Helen's and St Peter's, Gustard Wood. The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England and is registered as Wheathampstead PCC with the Charity Commission (charity number 1132924) and can be contacted at the Parish Office, St Helen's Church, High Street, Wheathampstead, AL4 8AA. In planning the activities for the year, the PCC has considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

PCC Activities in 2024

Our Annual Report and Financial Statements look back at a calendar year: this Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024 looks back at the calendar year 2024.

During its year of office, the PCC has met on ten occasions. PCC meetings regularly begin with a period dedicated to the Parish Vision; in group and plenary sessions PCC Members set short and long-term goals, consider initiatives and their implementation and evaluate progress. Our meetings continue to include devotions, discussions and decision-taking. Individuals are invited to join PCC meetings where their contribution is particularly valuable. A summary of PCC meetings continues to be shared with our mailing list. Annual reports are received from many areas of church life and our policies are regularly reviewed. In addition, the Ministerial Team, sub-committees and other groups continue to meet and report to the PCC during the year reflecting the many aspects of Church life.

Membership

Members of the PCC are ex officio, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). There are up to twelve elected lay members. The list of members who served in 2024 is below. The PCC wishes to record their gratitude to all who have tirelessly assisted in maintaining the momentum of the progress of our Vision for Wheathampstead, Gustard Wood and beyond. We thank all those individuals and groups who have contributed so readily to our worship, pastoral care and activities.

Our grateful thanks go to all who have contributed to the governance and decision-making of the church through their service on the PCC. Barbara Doye and Martin Thomas will retire by rotation and be eligible for re-election to the PCC. Linda Thomas retires but is eligible for nomination to the PCC ex officio as a Lay Reader. Stephen Rider was co-opted to the PCC in April 2024 and will be eligible for election to the PCC. Bob Carter and Brian Goleworthy are retiring from the PCC. Vacancies will exist for lay members to be elected either as Churchwardens at the Meeting of Parishioners or to the PCC at the APCM; there are also two vacancies for Deanery Synod Representatives.

List of PCC Members

The following members served on the PCC following the APCM in April 2024.

Name	Capacity	Serving from	Serving to
Rev Richard Banham	Rector & PCC Chair	April 2010	While in office *
David Hartley	Elected Churchwarden	Elected APCM 2024	APCM 2025 *
Hilary Hollick	Elected Churchwarden	Elected APCM 2024	APCM 2025 *
Keith Andrews	Elected Lay Member Deputy Warden from Oct 21	Elected APCM 2024	APCM 2027 *
Simon Best	Elected Lay Member Lay Vice Chair	Elected APCM 2024	APCM 2027 *
Madeleine Bigmore	Elected Lay Member	Elected APCM 2023	APCM 2026 *
Helen Caldwell	Elected Lay Member	Elected APCM 2023	APCM 2026 *
Bob Carter	Elected Lay Member	Elected APCM 2024	APCM 2027 *
Barbara Doye	Elected Lay Member	Elected APCM 2022	APCM 2025 *
Brian Golesworthy	Deanery Synod Member	Elected APCM 2023	APCM 2026 *
David Pangbourne	Elected Lay Member	Elected APCM 2023	APCM 2026 *
Stephen Rider	Co-opted Member Hon. Treasurer	Co-opted April 2024	APCM 2025 *
Linda Thomas	Deanery Synod Member	Elected APCM 2023	APCM 2026 *
Martin Thomas	Elected Lay Member	Elected APCM 2022	APCM 2025 *
Ales Vrbas	Elected Lay Member	Elected APCM 2023	APCM 2026 *
Stephen Wilson	Deanery Synod Member Hon. Secretary	Elected APCM 2023	APCM 2026 *

***Member serving on 31st December 2024 (end of Report and Accounts year).**

Jim Donnet and Ross Rayner attended some PCC meetings as Observers.

Team of Ministers

As with so many areas of church life, we are fortunate to have such a capable and committed team of Ministers who lead our worship and do so much good work away from the spotlight of Sunday Services.

Minister	Role	Minister	Role
Rev Richard Banham	Rector	Claire Banham	Reader
Rt Rev John Gladwin	Retired Bishop	Carol Hopper	Reader
Rev Brian Gwinn	Retired Minister	Pippa Legg	Reader
Rev Tom Purchas	Retired Minister	John Grace	Reader
Rev Geoff Barter	Retired Minister	Barbara Doye	Reader in Training
Linda Thomas	Children & Families Minister and Reader		

Working Groups, Committees and Sub-committees

The PCC appointed the following officers: Stephen Wilson as **Honorary Secretary**, Stephen Rider as **Honorary Treasurer**, Britt Dahle and Sabrina Shafer as **Parish Safeguarding Officers**, Jez Hirst as **Parish Safeguarding Adviser**, Helen Caldwell as **Lead Recruiter, DBS Administrator** and **PCC Safeguarding Officer**, Judith Lambert as **Electoral Roll Officer** and Michael Hollick as **Health & Safety Officer**. David Pangbourne is serving as Interim **Data Protection Officer**.

The PCC elects a “**Standing Committee**” with power, subject to the directions of the PCC, to transact business between PCC meetings. Its members are Richard Banham, David Hartley, Hilary Hollick, Keith Andrews, Simon Best, Stephen Rider and Stephen Wilson.

The overall co-ordination of our **Vision** is led by Simon Best as Chairman.

The PCC is advised by a “**Fabric Committee**” which is chaired by Stephen Scowcroft.

The Rector and Ruth Jeavons have served as our appointees to **Wheathampstead Churches Together** in whose activities we regularly participate together with St. Thomas More RC Church and Wheathampstead United Church. These include the Good Friday Walk of Witness, special services like the Advent Carol Service, occasions for joint prayer and our ecumenical Lent courses.

Financial Review

The Financial Statements of the PCC are attached, see pages 13 to 19. The Statement of Financial Activities shows our income and expenditure for the year on our General (Unrestricted) Fund; on the Designated Funds we have set aside for major Fabric costs, Reserves and the Development Fund; and the Restricted Funds which we have been given for particular purposes, and our Endowment Fund. The Balance Sheet shows the state of our finances at the year end and both these statements are supported by notes.

In 2024 our planned giving decreased slightly on the previous year. We were pleased that many were able to increase their donation in line with inflation and that there were a net 3 (2023, 5) new regular donors to the Parish Giving Scheme. This continuous support is much appreciated and represents 54% (2023, 52%) of our unrestricted income. The Unrestricted Funds initially show a surplus for the year of £7,044 (2023, £14,269). This figure takes into account our income for general purposes, from which is deducted our normal annual outgoings on the church and its activities, together with our contribution to the Diocese (the Parish Share), and the Parish’s own giving.

It is the PCC’s aim to ensure that normal expenditure is, at least, covered by our annual income, and this has been achieved this year, although it should be noted that a transfer from unrestricted funds to the designated funds of £10,000 for the Roof Fund did result in a small fall in unrestricted funds of £2,956.

In addition to these normal running costs there were expenses from our designated funds on fabric and church development. Our total funds, being unrestricted, designated and restricted, at the end of the year stand at £313,110 (2023, £302,135). This is an increase of £10,975 (2023, £18,758) from the previous year.

Reserves Policy

The PCC follows the general recommendations for Church of England parishes and sets aside funds via its Designated Fund to provide cover against a sudden loss of income and unforeseen capital expenditure. Designated reserves of £209,326 (2023, £205,397) are shown in note 9 to the annual accounts. Within our designated reserves there is £55,049 (2023, £52,590) set aside for loss of income, £82,587 (2023, £78,897) for capital expenditure, and £64,908 (2023, £52,231) for the Roof Fund. As at 31st December 2024 the amount in the General Fund which was not Restricted or Designated amounted to £69,885 (2023, £72,841). Total free reserves, being Unrestricted and Designated cash and short-term deposit funds, came to £285,933 (2023, £274,787).

Charity Partnerships

We are delighted that we were able to maintain our committed financial support throughout this last year – the 7th year when our focus has been on Vulnerable Children.

Overview of Charity Partnerships

Local

Azalea Luton reaches out to those suffering the injustice of sex trafficking, supporting them to build new lives because of the love of God, through Outreach, Drop-In and Befriending and also works as a key partner in Faiths Against Child Sexual Exploitation (FACES) – which is a local coalition of faith leaders working to prevent Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). There is active involvement and support by individual members of the congregation and one of our house groups.

National

The Children's Society is committed to fighting child poverty and neglect and helping all children to have a better chance in life. From their early history in the vision and actions of a young Sunday School teacher at the end of the nineteenth century, their work has been grounded in the churches at local and national levels. Churches constitute their core partners and they work very closely with the Church of England. Unfortunately with the loss of a Regional Representative post, we report that our link has become less active.

International

CCT Kimbilio is overseen by a group of experienced Trustees who share a passion for the Congo and work with street children. In simple terms, Kimbilio is a project supported by the Congo Children Trust. Kimbilio supports street children in Lubumbashi, Katanga in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They have been working alongside the Anglican Church of Congo since 2007. There are active links with British schools.

There is ongoing discussion about identifying a further International Charity and reviewing our current partnerships: the advice and experience of the congregation will be sought.

Giving 2024 (paid quarterly)

Charity	Annual Total
Azalea	£3,000
The Children's Society	£3,000
CCT & Kimbilio	£3,500

Additional Support for Charities:

During 2024 we provided support and additional fund-raising activities for our Charity Partners and several other charities. Over £500 was raised for St Albans Open Door Homeless Service by a Sleepout in which members of our Youth Group and a similar group at another church participated. The Wheathampstead Churches Together Christian Aid Week appeal raised £3,143-65. The Children's Society received a total of £415-20 from the donation box collection. Our congregation donated £1,646-90 to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal for Sri Lanka in conjunction with The Leprosy Mission with donations of food going to local food banks. The summer-holiday project "The Community Larder" attracted financial donations of £1,762 and the Christmas Lunch on Jesus project received donations in excess of £2,172. Significant donations have continued to be received into our Community Fund with which it is possible to assist local people in difficulties. The figures in this report remind us of the remarkable continuing generosity of our congregation in funding charitable work.

Safeguarding

The PCC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults who attend church or church activities. We have in place – and regularly review – a policy for Safeguarding which is the Church of England Statement “Promoting a Safer Church”. Our Safeguarding Procedures are contained in the Church of England’s “Parish Safeguarding Handbook”. The PCC receives regular reports on Safeguarding which is on the agenda for every meeting. All relevant volunteers are DBS-checked and issued with appropriate guidance for their role; safer recruitment standards are followed. We are committed to having role descriptions and training for all our volunteers. All activities and events have risk assessments. The PCC has complied with the 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).

Risk & Statutory Policies

As required by law, the PCC has considered the major risks within its responsibility and the systems designed to minimise those risks; this has included annual Health and Safety Inspections with recommendations reported to the PCC. We have undertaken risk assessments for all areas of activity. We have an appropriate fire risk assessment. We hold a register to log any accidents. We take out adequate insurance cover against fire, theft, employers’ and public liability and other insurable risks. Clear procedures are in place for the authorisation of expenditure and secure receipt and recording of income.

The PCC has in place statutory policies in the following areas:

- Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Data Protection;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;
- Health and Safety;
- GDPR/Privacy.

Where appropriate, these are in line with Diocesan guidance and all are reviewed regularly by the PCC for any changes in activities and developments in statutory requirements or recommended practice.

Goods Fabric and Ornaments

The annual inventory of Church goods, fabric and ornaments was completed during the year and all essential items found to be present and correctly accounted for (and the absence of a few minor items duly noted). The Fabric Committee has taken further the programme of redecoration and repairs at St. Helen’s and St. Peter’s which has included work on the buildings, churchyard and car parks. A sponsored independent Energy Audit was conducted at St. Helen’s which offered direction towards our ambition to achieve “Carbon Zero” by 2030.

The PCC records thanks to the Fabric Committee for many other alterations and improvements. At St. Helen’s these include repairs to gulleys and lead flashing on the vestry roof, repairs to the churchyard wall on the High Street, servicing of the bells, ropes and associated equipment, repairs to churchyard standard lantern, refreshing the Parish noticeboard facing the High Street, installation of two 100W LED spotlights to illuminate the spire, constructing shelving in the vestry and installation of a new fibre broadband service from Kinex following a network upgrade by Openreach. At St. Peter’s, clearing gutters, fixing an external car park light and trimming boundary hedges was achieved.

Faculty consent was received for conservation work on the Garrard Memorial and Garden of Remembrance (GofR) extension. Work on the former was subsequently completed by Carthy Conservation Ltd. Work to establish the new GofR required the installation of concrete spurs and hardwood rails for attaching plaques and the planting of a new Japanese Holly hedge to mark the boundary of the extension.

Two low-mow areas were marked out and overhanging trees removed. In addition, a well-attended “Big Help Out” was organised, and special work parties undertook various tasks at both churches both inside and outside.

Environmental Activities

At St. Helen's and St. Peter's we believe that human beings are called to be faithful stewards and to enjoy a relationship with and a responsibility for God's creation. We seek to serve the earth, not enslave it.

Caring for our environment plays an increasingly important part in the life of the Parish, as we acknowledge the stress that human activities have caused for the world around us and pray for those affected by the increasing incidence of extreme weather events. The Parish received the A Rocha Eco Church Silver Award in 2024 and is now working towards the Gold Award.

The Parish's Environmental Group arranged a consultation with the Diocesan Living Churchyard Adviser, who identified some interesting wildflowers in some of the mown areas, such as lady's bedstraw, burnet saxifrage and common knapweed. The Group is developing a churchyard management plan to promote these plants and to provide a favourable environment for other flora and fauna, subject to the inevitable constraints of it being a public space and burial ground. A series of environmental notices were displayed in the churchyard during 2024 encouraging passers-by to reflect on aspects of the environment.

A creation-centred service at St Peter's during the Churches Count on Nature week in June engaged the congregation after the service in identifying 35 species of flowers and shrubs, nine tree species, eight species of birds and three of insects in the small St Peter's churchyard.

The Group repeated in July 2024 a visit by 30 children from St Helen's School to enjoy a range of nature-based activities around the St Helen's churchyard.

The parish again collected used printer ink cartridges for recycling, making a modest contribution to parish funds. A facility for recycling pharmaceutical blister packs was also introduced in 2024. Used and redundant candles were donated to produce new candles for people in Ukraine to use during power cuts.

The Fabric Committee seeks to keep in mind how it can lighten the Parish's environmental footprint, subject to the constraints of a heritage-listed building and a limited budget.

The Parish marked the Season of Creation in the autumn of 2024 with a series of sermons on our relationship with the environment and a display showing some of its environmental activities.

Buildings Working Group

Good progress has been made in the last year as we strive to address our needs to render our St. Helen's church building a truly vibrant hub at the heart of our community with buildings fit for God's mission in 21st century Wheathampstead.

At the last APCM we outlined the progress that had been made with the painstaking task of consulting with the statutory 3rd parties and the DAC on our ideas. As presented last time, this culminated in a design that would deliver, amongst other things, new toilets, a new kitchen, level access at the west door, an enclosed space in the south transept, welcome areas and flexible seating in the nave/north and south aisles.

We achieved a consensus of the church community and many of the statutory consultees around the feasibility design in Spring/Summer 2024. We then appointed a design team to undertake the next stage of design (Scheme Design) and this has been developed with the BWG over the last 6 months with the objective of delivering the formal statutory approvals needed to implement building works, including local authority planning consent and a Faculty from the DAC. The design team have now largely completed the Scheme Design and have submitted a 'pre-application' submission to the local authority planners and the DAC in March, in preparation for a full formal submission to follow after initial consultation and feedback.

In parallel with the 'pre-app', we have prepared presentation boards of the designs in the church to show how the feasibility design ideas have been developed and it is planned to show these from 7th April.

Also in parallel, we are seeking an update on the overall cost of the scheme from our quantity surveyors. The broad outline costs of the options in the Feasibility Study were reported as between £550,000 and £650,000+VAT at 2023 prices.

All this activity will then be followed by the preparation of the local authority planning submission and Faculty submission to the DAC. As part of this process there will be a public consultation exercise.

As ever, we must continue to focus on a scheme that is deliverable, and seek a balance between this objective; our needs and affordability. We anticipate that the statutory 3rd party consultees will still have often conflicting views, which we will need to work through.

Once the above approvals are received, we will need further funding to deliver the 1st phase building works on site (still likely to be the new toilets in the north door extension and the level west door entrance and landscaping). As a church community we need to press on with this fund raising activity, starting with the formation of a fund raising group, action plan and raising funds. To date the sum raised is £5,117.

Keith Andrews

Coffee in the Chancel

In September 2011 we launched a new idea in church of a coffee shop in the chancel. Over the last 14 years it has changed in many ways but has always been serving good coffee and delicious homemade cakes. We now open on Monday, Tuesday and Saturday and each day attracts different customers.

On Monday we support a U3A iPad group fortnightly, a social group who meet monthly and an informal WI coffee group – and then later host a bible discussion group. It's our quieter day as on Tuesday and Saturday we are a regular venue for several groups of friends for a weekly get together and we welcome our Celtic Prayer group on Saturday mornings – so we are often serving coffee non-stop!

We are staffed entirely by volunteers – some from within the church membership but many from within the community. Our prices are set to be more affordable than other cafes as our ethos is to support our community and provide a place for rest and refreshment. Despite that we do make a profit of over £3,000 most years and this is added to church funds.

Sally Jones & Hilary Hollick

Children and Families

The number of families who are part of our worshipping community has continued to grow during the year, and we now have regular contact with over 50 children aged 0-10 years. This does not include contact with children at both primary schools and our weekly toddler group. Provision for family-friendly worship has included our fortnightly Kids Worship and monthly All Age Communion services as well as a "play and pray" area and stories during the Parish Communion and regular Messy church and Mossy (outdoor) church services.

During the Easter period in 2024 we held a successful intergenerational Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday, worked with families to create an Easter garden outside the West door of St Helen's and walked with a donkey across Rectory Gardens to the church on Palm Sunday.

During the school year, St Helen's School have had regular services in the church and a team from St Helen's have led a weekly "Open the Bible" worship session in school. The Rector has taken occasional assemblies at Beech Hyde School. The Children and Families Minister has assisted with a pilot of The Haven mental health course for a small group of Year 6 children and has started to lead a pilot of the Alban Way leadership course, also for Year 6, alongside a member of the Diocesan Growing Younger and more Diverse team. She has continued to support new Reception children with a regular Bible story and has again run a weekly after school club. The church joined in with the village scarecrow trail in September.

The Christmas period included another successful Nativity with live animals at the village Lights Up event, Christingles both in church and school and Crib services.

Linda Thomas

Youth Group

The St. Helen's Youth Group continues to meet on Sunday afternoons, with the usual mix of games, food, activities and chat. The team is so encouraged that for the third year running we've had a positive take-up from Year 6's, who are invited to join in the Spring Term. This year, 4 new members have swiftly become "regulars" and have integrated well with the existing group – we now have over 20 young people "on the books" with an average of 10 young people attending on a Sunday.

Weekly gatherings focus on giving our young people space to explore the big questions of life, which they seem to relish. We asked the group to come up with themes for exploration and subsequently we have covered such weighty topics as "Faith vs Science", "Good & Evil" and "What happens after death?" Other sessions are shaped around clips from the TV series "The Chosen" (a dramatization of Jesus' life), which gives us more time to introduce the members to the great news that Jesus can be in their lives.

Sometimes it's easier to meet with God when we are away from "home turf", and so we're excited to be taking three members of our group to Satellites Christian Festival this summer. We also take as many members as possible along to regional events, such as Illuminate Cathedral and the new Fuel Adventure youth gatherings.

One mum recently messaged us to tell us that her daughter "found the conversations (at Youth Group) really interesting ... and felt it was a safe space to open up about things". More of that, please Lord!

Youth Work Team: Richard & Claire Banham, Anne Hollis and Sarah Holloway

St. Helen's Fellowship

We are delighted to report that St. Helen's Fellowship is thriving.

We meet each Thursday in school term time, in The Mead Hall, 2.45 -4.15pm, with a £2 weekly sub. We have been able to extend our programme to include more speakers. This has resulted in a wider attendance and, whilst being enjoyable and even educational, it has encouraged the social side to flourish as well. Topics have included the origins, moves and music of the Argentine Tango; Eat, drink and be Merry in Roman Verulamium [with food samples made for us to taste] ; The Drain Brain – the great grandson of Sir Joseph Bazalgette speaking of his relative's designing and overseeing of the Victorian sewer system in London.

We watched the film 'The Cruel Sea' then had a talk on that naval experience. 'Lock 'em up, Bang 'em up' told of a charity's work in the rehabilitation of prisoners. The Ol' Packers ukelele group had members up on

their feet and dancing! Chair exercises with Sarah brought much laughter. Social afternoons include quizzes, raffles, board games and Bingo and there is always a 'Save a space for Puds' session. 'Adventures in the Far East' and then 'Egypt' were two excellent talks given by Richard, our Rector.

We are very grateful to Richard, Bishop John and Brian Gwinn for leading us in our monthly Holy Communion services and to the Clover Singing Club for supporting us at our Advent Celebration in Church.

We continue our link with the MacIntyre Home in the village. Outreach is part and parcel of fellowship and we hope that St. Helen's Fellowship offers spiritual support but also good old fashioned fun and friendship to all who come to us – and there is always tea and biscuits!

Jill Bareham and Louise Edwards ... and with THANKS to everyone in our valued team

Deanery Synod Report

The Rector and three elected representatives serve on the Deanery Synod. Rev'd Jo Burke (St. Leonard's, Flamstead) succeeded Canon Dennis Stamps as Rural Dean and she was commissioned by Archdeacon Charles at the July Deanery Synod Meeting. The Deanery arranged an Ascension Day Service and an Evening Service in Creationtide. There was also a Deanery Prayer Walk in May and an Advent Quiet Morning. In addition the Deanery Synod arranged three meetings: in February representatives were able to share recent experiences and initiatives and reflect together on current challenges and opportunities. At the other two meetings guest speakers helped us to focus on a particular topic. Synod meetings take place in different parishes of the Deanery and offer the chance to learn more about other churches and congregations.

The July meeting involved a presentation by Polly Eaton - Eco Diocese Officer - for A Rocha who gave a detailed explanation of the Award Scheme and the survey which lay behind it. There was a great deal of scope for active work in the use of buildings and churchyards and commitment through our lifestyle as well as community and global engagement. A number of "environmentalists" from St. Helen's and St. Peter's attended and shortly afterwards we successfully qualified for the A Rocha Eco Church Silver Award.

In October the speakers were Jacob Kurien and Corinne McCrum of the Dispute Advisory Service. They explained that disputes happen, conflict and disagreement is natural but learning how to deal with this well strengthens trust and relationships. Some experience disputes as more painful in a Christian setting. In any case unresolved conflict can fester. One person's solution may not suit others, and a useful emphasis can be on offering early support before situations escalate. People may need space to explain their situation and opportunities to look for ways to resolve it in a non-threatening environment.

The above report was approved by the Wheathampstead Parochial Church Council on the 25th March 2025.



Canon Richard Banham
Chairman

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

2024 Accounts

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - For the year ended 31 December 2024

		Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted & Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2024 £	FUNDS 2023 £
Note						
INCOME & ENDOWMENTS						
Incoming resources from donors						
	Planned Giving via Parish Giving Scheme	108,791	-	-	108,791	106,912
	Other Planned giving	9,782	-	-	9,782	12,905
	Tax recoverable on planned giving	27,711	-	-	27,711	27,894
	Collections: St Helen's	7,449	-	-	7,449	7,283
	Collections: St Peter's	757	-	-	757	1,021
	Tax recoverable on Small Donations Scheme	2,161	-	-	2,161	2,098
	Collections for Specific Purposes	-	-	4,105	4,105	1,366
	Collections for the Community Fund	-	-	3,564	3,564	4,754
	Legacies, donations etc	8,616	660	27,465	36,741	37,287
		165,267	660	35,134	201,061	201,520
Income from investment						
	Interest and Dividends	3,490	9,476	1,281	14,247	11,111
Income from charitable trading/fees						
	Coffee in the Chancel	3,983	-	-	3,983	4,713
	Fees for weddings and funerals	23,603	-	-	23,603	21,000
		27,586			27,586	25,713
Other incoming resources						
	Coffee after services	447	-	-	447	536
	Rental income	999	-	-	999	1,412
	VAT recovered on building works	1,166	-	3,720	4,886	1,970
	Grants	740	-	4,000	4,740	500
	Flowers	-	-	4,340	4,340	1,220
	Bells	-	-	360	360	240
	Other income	482	-	-	482	230
		3,834		12,420	16,254	6,108
	TOTAL INCOME	200,177	10,136	48,835	259,148	244,452
EXPENDITURE						
	Giving	12,100	-	7,695	19,795	16,100
	Church Management & Administration	30,179	-	3,445	33,624	34,098
	For the work of the Church	150,854	16,207	27,693	194,754	175,496
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	193,133	16,207	38,833	248,173	225,694
	NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE	7,044	(6,071)	10,002	10,975	18,758
	Transfers between funds	(10,000)	10,000	-	-	-
	NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(2,956)	3,929	10,002	10,975	18,758
	TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	72,841	205,397	23,897	302,135	283,377
	TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	69,885	209,326	33,899	313,110	302,135

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

2024 Accounts

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2024

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The PCC is a public benefit entity within the meaning of FRS102. The financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 governing the individual accounts of PCCs, and with the Regulations' "true and fair view" provisions, together with FRS102 (2016) as the applicable accounting standards and the 2016 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP(FRS102)).

The historical cost convention is adopted except for investments, which are shown at market value at the balance sheet date.

The statements are prepared on the accruals basis.

Funds

Unrestricted funds are those available for the general purposes of the PCC. The purpose of restricted funds is noted in the statements. Interest, other income and tax recoverable related to amounts allocated to particular funds is credited to those funds.

The statements include transactions for which the PCC is responsible but not those of informal groups of members or of separately constituted bodies from which the PCC may benefit.

Income and use of resources

Collections, donations and similar income are recognised on receipt.

Income tax recoverable on donations is recognised when the income is recognised.

Income from fund raising events, coffee in the chancel etc, is shown in full and the related expenses are included within resources used.

Grants and legacies are recognised in the period when they become due.

Expenditure is accounted for when incurred.

Assets

In so far as consecrated and benefice property of any kind is excluded from the statutory definition of "charity" by Section 10(2) (a) and (c) of the Charities Act 2011, such assets are not capitalised in the financial statements.

Depreciation is provided on equipment used by the PCC over the useful life of the asset. Items of equipment costing less than £1,000 are written off when the expenditure is incurred.

Short term deposits include cash held in a Church of England Central Board of Finance account and at the bank.

2 LEGACIES, DONATIONS, NAVE BOXES, ETC.

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted & Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2024 £	FUNDS 2023 £
Nave boxes, Donations	6,947	-	10,000	16,947	5,680
Legacies	-	-	-	-	14,000
Friends of St Helen's	-	-	14,600	14,600	7,169
Flower Fund	-	-	720	720	400
Fellowship Fund	-	-	950	950	464
Fabric Fund	-	300	-	300	650
Development Fund	-	288	-	288	2,800
Energy Fund	-	-	-	-	1,690
Concert	-	-	-	-	860
The Ark	508	-	-	508	434
Miscellaneous income	-	-	-	-	151
Income tax recoverable on donations	1,161	72	1,195	2,428	2,989
	8,616	660	27,465	36,741	37,287

Related Party Disclosures

Donations, including planned giving, from Trustees and their related parties amounted to £25,950 during the year 2024 (2023: £24,985)

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

2024 Accounts

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2024

3 GIVING

	From Parish income		Special collections, Community Fund	
	2024 £	2023 £	2024 £	2023 £
Charity Partners				
Congo Children Trust	3,500	3,500	-	-
The Children's Society	3,000	3,000	69	109
Azalea	3,000	3,000	937	-
	<u>9,500</u>	<u>9,500</u>	<u>1,006</u>	<u>109</u>
Other charities				
St Helen's School	2,550	2,550	-	-
Harvest Appeal	-	-	1,647	-
The Trusell Trust	-	-	-	1,090
Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust	50	40	-	-
Christian Aid	-	-	313	100
Payments from Community Fund	-	-	3,290	2,439
Payments from Funeral Collections	-	-	1,439	272
	<u>2,600</u>	<u>2,590</u>	<u>6,689</u>	<u>3,901</u>
TOTAL	<u>12,100</u>	<u>12,090</u>	<u>7,695</u>	<u>4,010</u>

Note: Giving to St Helen's School is by standing order which is continuing into 2025

4 CHURCH MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted & Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2024 £	FUNDS 2023 £
Stationery, post, telephone, print	3,320	-	-	3,320	3,093
Staff salaries	23,580	-	3,445	27,025	27,759
Pension contribution	790	-	-	790	790
Payroll administration costs	517	-	-	517	494
Office Equipment depreciation	998	-	-	998	998
Bank charges and card fees	434	-	-	434	424
Database Fees	540	-	-	540	540
	<u>30,179</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,445</u>	<u>33,624</u>	<u>34,098</u>

Note

During the year the PCC employed an average monthly number of 2 staff (2023: 2 staff) : a parish administrator, and a Children's and Families' Minister, both on a part time basis. The services of an occasional organist are also provided on a regular basis, The total costs of salaries and pensions are as shown above and no national insurance costs were incurred. No employees received more than £60,000.

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL					
2024 Accounts					
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2024					
5 RESOURCES USED FOR THE WORK OF THE CHURCH					
	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted & Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2024 £	FUNDS 2023 £
Parish share to Diocese	101,172	-	-	101,172	100,359
Fees paid to Diocese	5,558	-	-	5,558	4,664
Wedding Disbursements	1,779	-	-	1,779	1,500
Funeral Disbursements	2,760	-	-	2,760	2,600
Plaques and other memorials	652	-	-	652	443
Ministry expenses	163	-	-	163	1,127
Electricity & Water (St Helens)	4,482	-	-	4,482	4,403
Electricity & Water (St Peters)	738	-	-	738	609
Gas (St Helen's)	5,444	-	-	5,444	9,439
Maintenance (St Helens)	9,209	-	-	9,209	13,729
Maintenance (St Peters)	1,114	-	-	1,114	163
Insurance (St Helens)	4,017	-	-	4,017	3,865
Insurance (St Peters)	806	-	-	806	669
Mission	4,693	-	704	5,397	3,344
Children, Youth & Schools	2,990	-	-	2,990	3,300
Services	2,102	-	-	2,102	2,118
Choir and music	1,003	-	150	1,153	830
Casual organists for regular Church services	650	-	-	650	1,175
Training	925	-	-	925	264
Coffee in the Chancel expenses	335	-	-	335	575
Stewardship costs	262	-	-	262	85
Flowers	-	-	4,373	4,373	2,048
Bells	-	-	146	146	211
Audio Visual System depreciation	-	1,531	-	1,531	12,876
Major fabric and Projects Expenditure					
Preservation and Restoration	-	-	22,320	22,320	-
Church Development	-	14,676	-	14,676	5,100
	150,854	16,207	27,693	194,754	175,496
Notes					
During the year, two members of the ministerial team who are also members of the PCC were paid £11,793 in remuneration and for working expenses (2023: £12,152)					
No other payments or expenses were paid to any other PCC member, persons closely connected to them or related parties.					

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL							
2024 Accounts							
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2024							
6 FIXED ASSETS							
Tangible assets							
					Office printer	AV equipment	Total
					£	£	£
	Cost	At 1st January 2024			4,991	64,380	69,371
		Additions at cost			-	-	-
		At 31st December 2024			4,991	64,380	69,371
	Depreciation	At 1st January 2024			3,743	62,849	66,592
		Charge for the year			998	1,531	2,529
		At 31st December 2024			4,741	64,380	69,121
	Net book value	At 1st January 2023			1,248	1,531	2,779
		At 31st December 2024			250	0	250
Investments at market value					2024	2023	
					£	£	
	Central Board of Finance Investment Fund				1,804	1,762	
7 AMOUNTS RECEIVABLE							
					2024	2023	
					£	£	
	Income tax recoverable				2,584	2,822	
	VAT recoverable on building works				-	582	
	Other amounts receivable				1,945	-	
	TOTAL				4,529	3,404	
8 AMOUNTS PAYABLE							
					2024	2023	
					£	£	
	Accrued expenses				13,305	4,494	

WHEATHAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL					
2024 Accounts					
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year ended 31 December 2024					
9 FUNDS					
	1 Jan 2024 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Used £	Transfers of Funds £	31 Dec 2024 £
Endowment Funds	1,762	42		-	1,804
Restricted Funds					
Community Fund	4,925	4,440	(3,289)	-	6,076
Flower fund		5,143	(4,373)	-	770
Bell Fund	1,527	436	(146)	-	1,817
Music Fund	9,578	364	(3,595)	-	6,347
Choral Scholar Fund	1,941	91	-	-	2,032
Charity Partnership Fund	3,905	183	-	-	4,088
St Helen's Fellowship Fund	259	972	(500)	-	731
Preservation and Restoration Fund	-	22,320	(22,320)	-	-
Church Reordering (Build)	-	5,117	-	-	5,117
Children, Youth & Schools Work	-	5,117	-	-	5,117
Specific collections	-	4,610	(4,610)	-	-
	22,135	48,793	(38,833)	-	32,095
Total Restricted Funds	23,897	48,835	(38,833)	-	33,899
Designated Funds					
Fabric Fund	2,187	373	(1,531)	-	1,029
Income Reserve	52,590	2,459	-	-	55,049
Capital Reserve	78,897	3,690	-	-	82,587
Development Fund	19,492	937	(14,676)	-	5,753
Roof Fund	52,231	2,677	-	10,000	64,908
	205,397	10,136	(16,207)	10,000	209,326
Unrestricted Funds					
General Fund	72,841	200,177	(193,133)	(10,000)	69,885
TOTAL FUNDS	302,135	259,148	(248,173)	-	313,110
Notes					
Endowment Funds					
These are the Fenwick and Bracey bequests, the investment of which is mainly in the CBF Investment Fund shown in the Balance Sheet. Income from the Fenwick bequest is for the church and churchyard upkeep. These funds, and their annual movement in value, are included with the restricted funds.					
Community Fund					
This fund is from collections at weddings and baptisms, and some donations, which are set aside to provide assistance to those in need mainly in the parish of Wheathampstead.					
Bell Fund					
For the renovation, repairs and maintenance of the bells, including handbells, and related structures, fixtures and fittings, plus the support and development of the bell ringers.					
Music Fund					
Money set aside by PCC and other donations for music and choir purposes within the church.					
Charity Partnership Fund					
Donations set aside by the PCC for work on the Kimbilio Project and and future projects with our Charity					
Fabric Fund					
This fund is for major work to the Fabric of St Helen's church.					
Income Reserve and Designated Capital Reserve					
As the Diocese recommends, the PCC maintains designated funds as a reserve against sudden total loss of income and unforeseen capital expenditure. Reserves were set at an initial level of £60,000 each in 2005 with interest to be accrued to the funds as a protection against inflation. In 2020 the PCC reviewed the Reserves Policy and decided to reduce the Income Reserve by a transfer of £25,000 to the General Fund					
Development Fund					
Donations set aside by the PCC for improvements to the interior of St Helen's. Two unrestricted legacies were added to the fund in 2023.					
Roof Fund					
Transfer of funds for future repairs on the roof of St Helen's					
Church Reordering (Build)					
Donations restricted to the cost of the church reordering project at St Helens.					
Children, Youth and Schools work					
Donation received restricted to supporting children, youth and schools work.					
The cash related to the restricted funds is held in the PCC bank accounts.					

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Helen's Wheathampstead and St.
Peter's Gustard Wood (the Charity)

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and related notes.

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the Charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charity and the Charity's Trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As Trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit goes beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

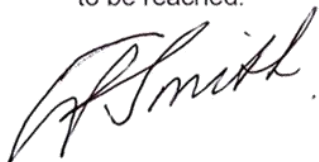
Independent examiner's statement

Since your Charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a registered member of Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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



G P Smith
Chartered Accountant
14 Stanhope Road
St. Albans
Herts AL1 5BL

25th March 2025