

ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, WEALD

**Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council
of the
Ecclesiastical Parish of St George's Sevenoaks Weald
for the year ended
31st December 2023**

Registered in England and Wales Charity Number 1133777

Address

St. George's Church
Church Road,
Weald, Sevenoaks,
Kent TN14 6LT

Please address correspondence to
The Secretary, St George's PCC, The Vicarage
Church Road, Weald, Sevenoaks Kent, TN14 6LT

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Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of St George's Weald

This report on the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2023, which are set out on pages 11 to 20, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and s.145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

Respective Responsibilities of the PCC and the Independent Examiner

As members of the PCC, you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and s.145(1)(a) of the Act does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of this Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under s.145(5)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church Guidance, 2006 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

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 s.130 of the Act; and
- to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations

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.

Perrys Accountants Limited,
Churchdown Chambers, Bordyke, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1NR

30 March 2024

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Annual Report

Administrative Information

The PCC is chaired by the Vicar, The Reverend Canon Mandy Carr and during the year the following served as elected members of the PCC:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Church Wardens | Sarah Griffiths Lisa Martin * |
| Deputy Church Wardens | Paul Goozee Sarah Jones |
| Representatives on the Deanery Synod | Nick Broadbent (from April 2023) Shirley Hayes * |
| Elected Members | Peter Curtis (from April 2023) Ros Durdant-Hollamby * Trevor Griffiths Rebecca Johnson Elizabeth Miller Julia Richardson * Linda Young |

* Member of Ministry Leadership Team

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Ministry Leadership Team | Reverend Canon Mandy Carr Graeme Copestake (Ordinand) Reverend Hannah Glover (Curate) (from September 2023) Shirley Hayes (Pastoral Assistant) Judith Howard (Pastoral Assistant) (to October 2022) Ros Durdant-Hollamby (Reader) Philip Johnson (Reader) (to October 2023) Lisa Martin (Reader) Julia Richardson (Music Director) Michael Richardson (Reader) |
|--------------------------|---|

| | |
|---------|--|
| Address | St. George's Church Church Road, Weald, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 6L |
|---------|--|

Please address correspondence to
The Secretary, St George's PCC, The Vicarage
Church Road, Weald, Sevenoaks Kent, TN14 6LT

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Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended. The PCC completed its registration with the Charity Commission on the 26th January 2010 and became a registered charity - The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. George's Sevenoaks Weald, charity number 1133777.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), in accordance with Church Representation Rules, elects the members of the PCC. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. Newly elected and existing members of the PCC are encouraged to make appropriate use of resources available from the Diocese, including courses, guidance notes and dialogue with the Diocesan Office to help them discharge their obligations.

Objectives and Activities for Public Benefit

St. George's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church building, the Church Hall, the Church grounds and burial grounds of St. George's, Weald.

For the public benefit St. George's PCC aims to advance the Christian religion. In planning its activities, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance for the advancement of religion and aim to enable people to develop and live out their faith through worship and prayer, teaching, provision of pastoral care, service, discipleship and evangelism across all ages – aiming to make the life of Christ real in the community. To facilitate this work, it is important to maintain the fabric of the Church, the Church Hall, the Church grounds and burial grounds of St. George's, Weald

Achievements and Performance

St. George's is a parish church serving all the people of Weald. All ages of people from many different Christian backgrounds (and none) find a welcome. At the APCM in 2023 the Church Electoral Roll was 136 (2022:135). All normal 10.30am Sunday services continue to be streamed online & can be accessed via the St George's website or St George's Facebook page. We have a regular, appreciative online congregation made up of those preferring not to attend in person since the Pandemic, those away with work, ill or on holiday. Although it is not possible to ascertain the exact numbers of individual online viewers, numbers continue to be high which is gratifying, and the feedback received is encouraging. It has also been wonderful to live stream a wedding, some baptisms & funerals during the year, again allowing some who would not have been able to participate otherwise, to be able to do so. Many thanks go to our loyal tech crew: Julia, Michael, Stephen, India, Lisa, Patrick, Graeme and Jonathan for facilitating this for us. A training session was organised in September which enabled us to share our experience & understanding & to encourage some new members to join the team. The session was preceded by a wonderful breakfast including bacon baps, for which we were very grateful to Graeme. We are delighted to note that average in person attendance over the year, excluding the festival services has been maintained at approximately 50 and a number of new families are now attending Family Services.

Easter Day was attended by 72 and received 622 views online [91 and 119 in 2022]

Remembrance Day Service was attended by 107 with 74 views online [80 and 116 in 2022]

Carol Service was attended by 186 with 106 views online [143 and 116 in 2022]

Christmas Day was attended by 80 with 40 views online. [84 and 130 in 2022]

The online numbers are all as given by YouTube.

The Christmas Eve afternoon service was not live streamed, but was attended by 180 and the Midnight communion had 45 attendees.

Over the year there was one wedding, three baptisms, four funeral services, and seven interments of ashes; in 2022 there were three weddings, three funerals, one baptism and nine interments of ashes.

The 8am Holy Communion BCP service has continued to be held on the first Sunday of each month. This service is not live streamed and has maintained an average attendance of 11 people.

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Music is an important part of the services at St George's, and we continue to be blessed in this way having both an augmented choir who sing at Festivals and for some weddings and funerals and our group, Revelation who play and sing twice each month, led by our Musical Director, Julia Richardson. We remain grateful for the commitment & enthusiasm of Julia, Paul, Michael, Ros, Elizabeth & Val for leading our worship in this way.

Live online Morning and Evening Prayer, following the liturgy of "Rythm of Life, Celtic Prayer" has continued Mondays to Thursdays (8.30 and 5.30) and Fridays and Saturdays (8.30am). Thank you to the dedication of those who have continued to contribute. The support, comfort and chance to pray together in their own space is much appreciated by many locally, nationally and worldwide. The church remains open for prayer and reflection on Thursdays and Sunday afternoons.

Services were held in church for Weald Community Primary School at Harvest Festival, Christmas and a special Leavers service. Mandy continues her much valued connection taking regular school assemblies, now with Hannah too.

The PCC met five times during 2023/2024, (2022/2023 five times); three meetings were held online via Zoom and two in person and on each occasion we have had high attendance.

The PCC is extremely grateful, as always, to all Church members who have given their time and energy in church cleaning, flower arranging, coffee making, grass cutting, publication of notices, advertising, and producing of service rotas; to those who lead the intercessions and read lessons in services, to the sides people, the prayer shawl ministry team, to those who contribute to worship through their gifts of music and manning the PA desk, cameras and live streaming, to the leaders of Teddy's & Cameo, to Julia Richardson for looking after the website, to Becca Johnson as church administrator, including looking after Church Hall and Rooms lettings, to Trevor Griffiths, our knowledgeable and efficient Treasurer, and the many others who have undertaken a myriad of tasks that have contributed towards the enthusiastic and smooth running of St. George's. We remain especially grateful to our team of sidespeople & welcomers as the initial point of welcome to St. George's. With increased attendance & frequent newcomers, this role is vital.

The PCC would like to take this opportunity to thank the Church Wardens, the Director of Music, our Pastoral Assistant and Readers for all their commitment and hard work during the past year. The Ministry Leadership Team, led by Mandy, meets regularly throughout the year. Phil Johnson stepped down from his role as Reader in October and we were pleased to honour his years of service with a gift at the October Family Service. At the same service, we were delighted to officially welcome our curate, Reverend Hannah Glover, and it was lovely to meet her mum Sue & daughter Mae too. Hannah has settled easily into the church and the community, working and learning alongside Mandy, and we are so pleased to have her at St. George's. It has been interesting already to watch the chairs go back, the microphones go up, Mandy having to stand on a stool and the pulpit stand need to be raised!

Following Living in Love & Faith in 2022, during Lent, Mandy led the Pastoral Principles course; once again sessions were both via Zoom and in person and were well attended.

In May, we joined with the village in celebrating King Charles' Coronation, including the opening of The King's garden (with tea) thanks go to Karen Elsom for doing the official bit, on the Bank Holiday Monday. May also saw a very successful Christian Aid week with tea, cake, activities, open gardens and a concert, as well as a special service. Thanks as always, go to Phil Johnson and the committee for organising the excellent events.

Due to the coronation, the popular Safari Supper was moved to June & meant that some people were by then on holiday. Despite this 58 people took part & enjoyed a lovely evening. Thank you to Lisa Martin for organising.

In September, there was another whole community effort with the popular 10k run on the first Sunday, under the very enthusiastic new management of three ladies! Our thanks go to everyone involved for this massive undertaking and in particular to Steph Major, Julia Baber & Charlotte Rogers. St George's once again held a service on the green prior to the start of the run.

September also saw the inauguration of a term of new sessions entitled 'Mornings @ The Well.' Topics ranged from 'Finding God on the Beach' to 'Art from the Heart' & 'Creating a Spooky Soundtrack.' Each

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session was very well attended, not just by villagers, and also well received, and we hope to organise another programme after Lent.

At Harvest Festival, St George's collected for the Hygiene Bank. Also in October, the moving All Souls Service was held. It is a service to remember those we love but see no longer and candles are lit. It was followed by tea and cake in the church rooms.

In November, it was wonderful to be able to dedicate the newly sewn white/gold altar frontals & hangings for the pulpit, in memory of Ivy. This was a labour of love taken on by Lesley Knight, Sue Gidman and Jean Conacher and the result is quite magnificent. Thank you so much ladies.

In the same month, the churchyard received a thorough tidy up, followed by a well-deserved cooked breakfast; huge thanks to everyone involved, especially to Chris Andrews who both organised and cooked. On Remembrance Sunday, we held our traditional service with the laying of wreaths at the war memorial, accompanied by a bugler.

A very successful and slightly larger Christmas Sale with mulled wine and mince pies and the return of the popular Hot Dog and Soup lunch, was held in the church in November and the money raised went to support our Mission Partners.

Mandy has been keeping in touch with Adam, the new vicar of St Francis, Strood. They did not need our help with the Christmas Hamper project this year, so fund raising instead was carried out for the three Christmas Soup Kitchens & other Christmas community gifts organised by The Gathering in South Africa. We have however, maintained our connection with St. Francis by taking some clothing for recycling, which was much appreciated & we were invited to a quiz with afternoon tea.

St George's was pleased to again take part in the village Living Advent Window project; and once again we are grateful to Justine Frost for her talents in designing and creating a beautiful display for our door.

A new venture for us last Christmas was the inaugural immersive live Nativity at the Farm, together with animals! We are truly grateful to Hannah and Mandy for their creative talents in writing and narrating the play, to all those who acted, prepared and served refreshments and of course to the Hamlyn family for the enormous task of clearing and preparing the barn in the first place and for their welcome on the day. This event proved incredibly popular, as well as tiring to organise and put on, so although it will definitely be repeated, it will not become an annual event.

The Café on the Green, as a Place of Welcome, continues every Tuesday morning, 10.00 until midday. It has proved a valuable and successful addition to Weald village in offering a warm hospitable and safe place for everyone to meet, enjoy a coffee, companionship and receive support. There are a regular group of 20 attendees and speakers have included CAB on 'Scam Awareness', a speaker from the charity Hi Kent [supporting the deaf and hard of hearing] and a very successful coffee morning in aid of MacMillan. The choir from Weald Primary School also came to sing which was much appreciated and enjoyed on a couple of occasions. We are grateful to the Memorial Hall committee for their continued support of the Café and to Nikky Goozee, Sarah Jones and all the volunteers involved in ensuring the success of this venture.

The St George's group (for babies, toddlers and carers) Teddy's, meets in the Church Rooms every Friday morning during term time and continues to be a popular, welcoming and fun group. A short toddler friendly Christmas service was held in the church led by Mandy. Thanks to Lois, Helen, Shirley, Ros and Judith for running this much appreciated group.

Cameo, led by Judith Howard, has had a good year with interesting speakers and amazing afternoon teas and soup lunches in the colder months. Easter and Christmas were both celebrated with tea and hymns/carols with short addresses by Mandy. A few days of Holiday at Home were run and enjoyed over summer and an equally enjoyable Christmas meal at the Windmill. Thanks to Judith and her committee of helpers for running this much needed and appreciated group.

The showing of Golden Oldies continues to be appreciated. Films are shown in the church on the big screen every 1-2 months. The screening is for everyone, but also dementia friendly and shown with subtitles, and includes an interval with choc ices! The films are shown by Sarah Griffiths who along with Shirley Hayes is

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an Anna Friend, championing the elderly and especially those (and their carers) living with dementia. Thanks to Sarah for running these popular events.

The Telephone Prayer Link continues to be a very important part of St George's ministry. Thanks to Shirley Hayes who is the main lead and to all the dedicated pray-ers.

We remain grateful to Terra Firma, under the leadership of Stephen Martin, for continuing to keep an eye on anything that needs attention regarding our fabric and grounds. This small group of enthusiastic men is very much valued by Lisa, Sarah and Mandy for being able to carry out small jobs themselves or finding someone else to do the work that is more major. Thank you to Stephen, Ashley, Paul, Guy and Phil for your expertise and time. Following the Quinquennial Inspection, a number of small jobs such as fixing the floorboards on the balcony, have been completed. It was lovely to be able to watch the second annual pantomime performed by WAPS in a well-maintained and decorated Church Hall. We have just received the specification for overpinning in the Hall and are waiting on a quote for this work.

In October, St George's was delighted to gain the bronze Eco Church award and is now starting to work towards the silver award. We are particularly looking forward to seeing the emergence of the bulbs planted in the King's Garden this Spring and extend our grateful thanks to Sarah Jones and Mike Conacher for leading on Eco Church and to Franny Kerr and Anne Cryer for all their hard work in the garden. Thanks also to all the community volunteers who helped with the bulb planting and other tasks prior to the opening of the garden. With the average age of the team standing at 75 plus, we are eagerly seeking more volunteers for the garden!

St George's is pleased to be able to continue to support our mission partners overseas and in the UK, Julia Richardson CEO with International Children's Palliative Care Network, Patrick Kangi with London City Mission, Sam and Abby Baguma with Mission Aviation Fellowship and Paula and Dean Finnie and The Gathering Church in South Africa. We love receiving regular updates by film and emails from all of them. We also continue to support the local food bank, Sevenoaks Loaves and Fishes by collecting non-perishable food.

Safeguarding remains a priority. It is an item on every PCC agenda and we are grateful for the regular updates provided by our Safeguarding Officer, Elizabeth Miller. This year, this has included updates on our standing on the Diocesan Dashboard, information on Mike Pilavachi and Soul Survivor and White Ribbon Day, designed to draw attention to the need to end violence towards women and girls. After six years as Safeguarding Officer, Elizabeth has decided to step down. We are exceedingly grateful for her commitment and efforts in this area and look forward to somebody new willing to take on the role, with Elizabeth's support.

Sadly, Sarah Griffiths has also decided that the time has come for her to step down from the role of Church Warden. Sarah, thank you so much for your dedication to the role over the past five years; we shall miss you and we wish you well.

It is good once again to have this opportunity to officially express our appreciation to Mandy. St George's and the parish of Weald continue to be blessed, supported, encouraged and nourished under her excellent spiritual leadership and wonderful preaching. Thank you so much Mandy; your hard work and dedication is truly appreciated by us all. As we move further into 2024, it looks certain that we will be working towards creating a joint benefice with St. Mary's Leigh, with Mandy taking on the role of the first vicar of that benefice. This will inevitably involve some changes on our part, not least for Mandy, and we look forward to what the future holds 'keeping our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.' (Hebrews 12:2)

Financial Statement

A Statement of Financial Activities for 2022 are included in this report along with that for the previous financial year. In 2022, St George's total income excluding a one-off legacy increased by 11.8% (24.9% including the legacy). Total expenditure reduced by 6.6% and as a result income exceeded expenditure by £747 (2020: expenditure exceeded income by 24,891). Last year, total income was £94,939 (2020: £75,999) and total expenditure was £94,192 (2020: £100,890).

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Of this, Donations and Legacies provided £74,752 (2020: £62,415) or 78.7% of the total. Although Planned Giving has again reduced to £31,066 (2020: £36,947), it continues at a level which underpins St Georges financial planning. As might be expected, a significant reduction in collections at services observed in 2020 has continued but an increase in the level of one-off donations and appeals more than offset this.

The level of planned giving via gift aid decreased slightly along with reductions in the level of income tax recovered but other planned giving increased along with the level of donations and appeals. Concerning other sources of income – Church Activities and Other Trading Activities increased in 2022 and are closer to those observed in 2019. For further information, please see Note 2 to the Financial Statements.

Expenditure from the General Fund, excluding the Parish Share and charitable giving, was essentially unchanged from 2020; this mainly resulted from lower depreciation costs.

The PCC distributed £10,400 to charities in 2022, this equated to 11.0% of total income (2020: 13.1%) and 15.4% of general income (15.5% in 2020). Payments of £2,000 from the General Fund and £8,400 from the Restricted Mission Fund were distributed to our Mission Partners and other charities. There was a small surplus in the Mission Restricted fund of £674 (2020 £732) this will be used to support the 2023 committed donations of £4000. See Notes 9 and 10 to the Financial Statement for more detail.

Transfers from the General fund to the Church and Church Hall repair funds were decreased in 2022 to £5,500 and £2,000 respectively.

We are very grateful to all those who are able to support St George's financially in one way or another.

In 2022, the cost of raising funds was around £430 (2020: £0) with a further £744 being spent on the Café on the Green. Donations of around £6,000 allowed the installation of the streaming equipment at a cost of £14,511; at the request of the family the legacy of £10,000 was used to top up the Streaming Fund to fully cover the purchase although the cost will be depreciated over five years. The balance of the legacy was used to fund additional donations to our Mission Partners. In 2022, £4754 was spent on the Church building preventing the ingress of water, this cost will be depreciated over five years.

Church Activities expenditure can be broadly grouped into three areas. First, Missionary and Charitable Giving which increased slightly in 2022 to £10,400 (2020: £9,970) and although this is a lower percentage of total income it is a similar percentage of the general fund income. – see Note 10 to the Financial Statement for more detail. Second, Ministry Costs which decreased slightly mainly because the Diocesan parish contribution decreased. Third, the cost of running, repairing and improving the Church buildings and its grounds which were broadly similar to 2020. For more information, please see Note 3 to the Financial Statements.

Bringing the income and expenditure together, the result for 2022 was a small increase in assets held by St Georges to £193,156 (2020: £192,409). Of this, the sum of Debtors, Short Term Deposits, Cash at the Bank and in Hand, less Creditors amounted to £175,800 (2020: £180,721). Another way of analyzing the composition of the £193,156 is to divide it between the amounts held in Unrestricted and Restricted Funds. At 31 December 2022, the split was £174,931 and £18,226 respectively.

The PCC is truly grateful for the significant commitment from Trevor Griffiths and John Miller in managing the day-to-day finances of St George's, preparing reports for the PCC to both monitor the ongoing financial position and to forecast budgets for subsequent years, and lastly for the preparation of these Financial Statements.

The PCC is also grateful for the work of the accountancy firm Perrys Accountants Ltd. for their work in carrying out the Independent Examination, which provides an important level of assurance to the PCC that their stewardship of the financial affairs of St George's is appropriate and proportionate to the objectives of St George's.

All Cameo funds (Restricted) are currently held in the PCC bank account.

Funds held as Custodian on Behalf of Others

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At the end of 2022, £582 was held as Agency collections, these monies are held for the verger and streaming equipment fees for two weddings in 2023 along with the fees payable to the Diocese Finance Board.

The PCC established a fund in 2007 called the Weald Opportunities Fund aimed at supporting worthwhile social and community projects in which parishioners participate, both within and outside the parish. No Gifts were made from this Fund in 2022 (2020: £0).

Plans for Future Periods

Although overall a small surplus was realized in 2022, expenditure of the general fund exceeded income by £12,891 and a substantial legacy was received. The financial position at the end of 2022 is essentially unchanged from 2020; Net Current Assets (nearly all in the form of cash deposits) are still relatively high at £193,156. Between 2017 and 2020 there was a continuous reduction in the reserves because of reductions in planned giving. This reduction continued in 2022 but there are signs that it has plateaued.

Repairs were recently made to the Church roof to prevent water ingress; following this, a large area of the internal wall was re-plastered. Essential work on the Church was identified in the Quinquennial inspection including repointing of external walls and buttresses which will be financed from the Church Repair fund. There are considerable structural issues with the Church Hall which are currently being investigated.

Looking ahead, the 2023 Budget for the PCC aims to avoid a reduction in the cash reserves, a lower and more affordable parish share was offered for 2023, however, depreciation costs are likely to increase further when the extent of work necessary on the Church Hall is agreed.

One of the tasks of the PCC during 2023 is to consider how best to balance the use of income and reserves in furtherance of St George's Objectives and Activities for Public Benefit.

Policy Statements

Reserves

It is the policy of the PCC to generally maintain unrestricted funds, which are the free reserves of the charity, at a level which equates to approximately six months of unrestricted expenditure. This provides sufficient funds to cover management, administration and support costs, and to respond to emergency expenditure and applications for grants that arise from time to time. At the end of 2022, this was estimated to be £45,000 and was covered by Unrestricted Funds amounting to £174,931.

Missionary and charity giving

It is the policy of the PCC to ensure that missionary and charitable giving should be at a level which is at least 10% of total income. These include missionary societies, relief and development agencies, home mission and secular charities – see Note 10 of the Financial Statements for more information. Decisions as to the distribution of the money are made at PCC meetings and the Mission Action Group.

Risk management

The following points should be noted:

- Insurance cover for third party and buildings is provided by Ecclesiastical Insurance Group
- Cheques require two signatories
- Normal precautions are taken to protect against fire risk with the provision of regularly maintained and appropriate extinguishers

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- Child protection policies are strictly observed, as required by the law
- A full security assessment was carried out in January 2009 and all valuable items have now been professionally marked and/or chained to the floor. Following these and other security measures, the Church was re-opened more often during the day than previously
- Cash receipts are paid into the current account. As a result, virtually all bills are paid by cheque or direct debit and the amount of petty cash is kept to a minimal level.

Approved by the PCC on 23rd March 2023
and signed on its behalf by



Rev Mandy Carr
PCC Chair