



St Lawrence Church
LECHLADE-ON-THAMES

**St Lawrence Church Parochial Church Council
Lechlade**

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the

Year ended 31 December 2023

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Parochial Church Council of St Lawrence Lechlade
Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

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INFORMATION

Parish Vicar	Revd Dr Andrew Cinnamond
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Churchwardens	Paul Cobb Susan Holmes
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Parochial Church Council	Richard Akroyd Richard Bell Nigel Jones Denver Keegan
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PCC Secretary	Vicky Jones
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PCC Treasurer	David Williams
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Deanery Synod Representatives	Samuel Ming Lynda Wright
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Bankers	Barclays Bank Plc Lloyds Bank Plc
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Independent Examiner	David Corris
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STRATEGIC REPORT

1. BACKGROUND

St Lawrence Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Parish Vicar, the Revd. Andrew Cinnamond, promoting in the parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelical and social. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the church building, Church Cottage, and the investment property.

2 PCC MEMBERSHIP

Members of the PCC who are also trustees of the charity for the purposes of the Charities Act 2011 are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, and in accordance with the Church Representation Rules are elected for a three-year period.

The following served as Members of the PCC during the year:

Parish Vicar	Revd Dr Andrew Cinnamond
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Curate	Revd Dr Gareth Griffith
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Churchwardens	Paul Cobb Susan Holmes
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Representatives of the Deanery Synod and therefore Ex-officio Members	Samuel Ming Lynda wright
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Coopted Members	Vicky Jones (PCC Secretary) David Williams (PCC Treasurer)
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Elected Members	Richard Bell Richard Akroyd Paul Cobb Nigel Jones Denver Keegan
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3. COMMITTEES

The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings. It comprises the Vicar, Church Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary.

4 CHURCH ATTENDANCE

There were 143 parishioners on the Church Electoral roll.

The average Sunday attendance was 107 adults and 15 children. Services have also been streamed live throughout the year from the church, and this will continue; an average of 20 people have viewed the whole service.

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During the year, the church held services for 9 baptisms, 2 weddings and 15 funerals, with 5 funerals just at the crematorium.

5 VICAR'S REPORT

One of the things I love to emphasise is that we are a local church family. A family made up of brothers and sisters in Christ; a family whose Head is Christ. Every family will have its ups and downs, its 'characters', its difficult moments, but essentially, we are there for one another. We are all one in Christ. This family focus reminds us that the local church isn't a club for like-minded people. It isn't a man-made institution, complete with a constitution, rules and regulations. The local church is God's primary means of mission in the world, despite all our frailty, disunity and weakness. In the local church family we welcome people as they join us. We say goodbye to others as they move to pastures new. We also mourn when members die, 'promoted to glory', as the Salvation Army put it so well. We encourage and build one another up, not just in our gatherings all together on a Sunday, but also through prayer triplets, small groups and meeting one to one. We learn together from God's Word in the Bible. We pray together and confess our sins together. We affirm our faith corporately in the creeds and are spiritually nourished through the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. We also believe the Gospel is Good News and our local church family is worth being part of. That is why we have parish missions and outreach events. In 2023 we have been blessed to have had new people joining us. It is important we don't accept the widely held narrative that the Christian Church is dying out everywhere in the UK. It is simply not true. Some churches are growing and there are signs of life. Usually, it those churches that hold to the truth of God's Word and prioritise evangelism and discipleship that are growing. Another hugely important aspect of our church life in 2023 has been developing our plans for 'Project Inspire'. It has been a year of activity behind the scenes, setting budgets and timelines, thinking about fundraising and publicity, but all underpinned by prayer and seeing the re-ordering of our fine church building as all part of our mission to encourage a new generation of people to consider the claims of Christ for themselves. The relaying of Shelley's Walk was an important first step to seeing our vision for the building taking shape. It is a good example of how it is possible to keep the very best of the past, but combine it with new, safer access for all. We are encouraged to have had permissions from Cotswold District Council and from the Diocesan Advisory Committee of the Diocese of Gloucester, but we still wait the approval of the Chancellor of the diocese. All our efforts are to have a warm, bright, flexible and welcoming space to invite people to. Yes, as a church family we can meet in other places, but the church building is a physical location hallowed by generations of dedicated Christian believers, and has constantly evolved over the years as a vitally important symbol of Christ being right at the centre of our community.

Reading the Annual Report of activities during is very encouraging- the diversity and vibrancy of small groups, the choir and music group, the Mothers' Union, the World Church Group, Eco Church, the growing ministry among children and young people. In the past year God has really answered our prayers in connections being made between activities in our church school, such as the 'Explorers' after-school club, and the holiday club, and our Sunday groups. As seeds were faithfully sown in the past, we are now seeing fruitfulness and growth. Sometimes it is difficult to faithfully keep going, without seeing obvious or immediate results, but in other times we see God's blessing in new families joining us and God powerfully working in individual's lives. There is much to be thankful for.

A growing local church, branching out in different directions and exploring new ministries, brings about its own challenges. Our expenditure is now greater than our income and we do need to take seriously the financial health of our church and increase our committed, regular giving. This is now becoming a key priority. We also need to be aware of over-burdening a committed core of volunteers, who often tend to be heavily used on rotas and sacrificially give of their time and energy. An important objective is to encourage others to volunteer in some ways and to play their part in using God-given gifts for the Kingdom of God. We also need to make sure that our administration is keeping pace and we are immensely grateful to Lesley Uzzell in the Parish Office for pulling things together and keeping an unruly vicar in check! We are also blessed in having two remarkably able and dedicated churchwardens in Paul Cobb and Susan Holmes, who have had to

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take on extra duties while we search for a new PCC treasurer. Together with Vicky Jones our indefatigable PCC secretary, we have a formidable Standing Committee who give so much of themselves in a very busy time in the life of the church. We are also blessed to have Gareth Griffith continue with us curate and I am so thankful for his willingness to serve God in this parish context and he brings a great deal of energy, insight and intelligence to our church family.

It is my privilege and honour to continue to serve as your vicar and I look forward to the future safe in the knowledge that Jesus is the 'Bread of Life' (John 6: 35) and we can feed on him and never be hungry again.

Yours in Christ's service,

Revd Andrew Cinnamond

6 CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

2023 has been a busy year with Project Inspire reaching critical milestones. The visit of the Chancellor of the Diocese in December was a very worthwhile morning and we hope that the petition for a faculty will reach conclusion in February 2024. The huge amount of work by Nigel Jones, supported by project team members, is greatly valued.

Mission aspects are covered elsewhere in this Annual Report. It is becoming clear that the composition of the congregation is changing as additional younger families participate in services and other events. This is the highly desirable consequence of events such as the Holiday Bible Club, the Pumpkin Trail and events at school, and services such as Little Lights; people from outlying areas also make up a good part of the congregation.

Routine maintenance has continued plus repairs to the floor and major work on light fittings and the installation of many LED lamps. This will reduce consumption but too much energy is wasted with lights being used when not needed. The same applies in the Church Cottage.

Our churchyard team had a challenging summer when access was greatly limited by the lengthy closure of Shelley's Walk. Once reopened, the wet, warm season meant we had to hire a much larger mower to cut the grass and return it to its usual state; disposal of cuttings also took several weeks as every available wheelie bin was filled fortnightly. One mower suffered a gearbox failure and so a new mower was bought; likewise, a new strimmer had to be bought to replace another that was worn out.

The Archdeacon's Visitation took place for the first time since 2017. This is a check on the terrier and records held. Much work was put into ensuring that everything was up-to-date but it is clear that moving out of the church will be an opportunity to clear a lot of clutter; the 'new' interior will also demand better stewardship of the storage provided.

Looking ahead to 2024, it is clear that in order to sustain the activities of a thriving church, we must widen our volunteer base. The financial position – particularly with the increase we are expected to pay the Diocese – is also reaching an unsustainable point. The PCC has much to address in 2024.

Paul Cobb and Susan Holmes
Church Wardens

7 SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The role of the Safeguarding Officer is to be the named person to whom volunteers and church members would report any disclosures relating to vulnerable adults or children. Any

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disclosures made will be dealt with and referred to where required. There were no disclosures in 2023.

Safeguarding is on the PCC agenda every month to ensure that as a church family we continue to understand and endorse its importance.

Why is Safeguarding so important? Psalm 82 verse 3 says 'Defend the weak and the fatherless, uphold the case of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy and deliver them from the hand of the wicked.' As a church we want to ensure that the children and vulnerable adults in our church family are protected, and we recognise our duty to love and care for the vulnerable and marginalised and to protect all from abuse.

At St Lawrence we want to ensure we have clear procedures in place and a culture where ensuring children and vulnerable adults are safe is a key priority and taken seriously. Where people can speak out about any concerns they have and that these are dealt with in a professional manner, with no cover up or matters being brushed under the carpet.

The St Lawrence Safeguarding Policy is reviewed by the PCC annually.

All volunteers working with the youth and children have a DBS check prior to undertaking their role. These are renewed every three years. Safeguarding training is also a requirement for many volunteering roles, not just for those working with children, the courses are easily accessed online but can also be attended in person. These too need to be refreshed after three years to ensure knowledge and understanding remains current.

It is important to remember that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Raising your concerns or seeking advice is rarely a bad idea. We can't assume that someone else has seen what we may have seen or will pass on concerns. Please contact the Safeguarding Officer via email on safeguarding@stlawrencelechlade.org.uk or speak to me (I'm usually at the 10 am Sunday service) or to the Vicar.

Lesley Uzzell (Safeguarding Officer)

8 CIRENCESTER DEANERY SYNOD

Back in 2021 Synod agreed these Deanery Strategic Priorities

- Stay connected to our local communities
- Develop Lay ministry and leadership
- Outward focus on mission, meeting people where they are
- Define the role of clergy in this new landscape

These priorities have evolved into The Deanery Strategic Plan (DSP) which is now moving into implementation phase. Synod would appreciate any help that parishioners can offer.

Owing to retirements and 'movings on' there are now vacancies in: Thameshead, Cirencester and Ermine West the Archdeacon is keen to get the process of appointments going by April 2024.

Mr Michael Spittle retired as Secretary and Apportionment Officer after ten years of service.

The role of Area Dean is now split between three joint Area Deans:

Rev. Andrew Cinnamond, Rev Canon Graham Morris, and Rev Canon John Swanton.

The following were elected in **June**:

Lay Chair: George Collins

Secretary: Claire Pearson supported by Maggie Dennis

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Safeguarding: Jackie Colburn

Re-appointment of General Synod member: Lay Canon Karen Czapiewski

The office of Apportionment Officer remains vacant. Peter Moore and Rosemary Bailey joined the Standing Committee as additional members.

Rev Jim Caldwell chaplain to The Gloucesters is now in Cirencester Deanery

Rev Catie Watson has joined the South Cotswold team in Kempsford with Whelford, The Meyseys and Castle Eaton.

In October Bishop Rachel sent word that she plans to spend some time in Cirencester Deanery in 2024 hoping to meet a cross section of people from the farming community

Note: This has been scheduled for Thursday 1 August 2024.

13 March 2024 Synod plans a discussion on Stewardship and Christian Giving to be led by Lisa Gardner Diocesan Director of Finance, Property and Giving.

Attendance at Deanery Synod averages about 30 of the potential 70+ representatives and clergy.

Dates and topics for Cirencester Deanery Synod 2024

13 March	Stewardship and Christian Giving
19 September	Ministry
21 November	Spiritual and Pastoral

Claire Pearson

Secretary

c.d.pearson@icloud.com

9 CHURCH MISSION AND MINISTRY

9.1 Prayer

Prayer is the fuel by which the Church Mission and ministry is achieved.

There are Prayer meetings weekly on a Wednesday Morning at 9am in the Church Cottage. Monthly meetings in the Vicarage usually the first Monday of every month. We have a number of Prayer Triplets in our Church family, if you are interested please contact Denver Keegan or the Parish Office

9.1.1 Prayer Ministry

A team of trained people offer prayer ministry after most 10 am Sunday services; prayer is offered for concerns that people share and this is in complete confidence. Each Sunday we meet with the clergy before the service to pray for them as they lead and for all those who are attending, particularly for people carrying heavy burdens that they may be ministered to in their need.

9.2 Bible Study groups

9.2.1 Men's Bible Study

The men's bible study group met every other week studying Genesis, 1 Timothy and Ester. This year we have moved our meetings to Wednesday evenings and will start with a series of studies looking at each of the disciples in turn.

Several of us also attended the national men's Christian festival 'The Gathering' run by Christian Vision for Men in a field on the road to Highworth. We are so blessed to have such a great event on our doorstep (and to be able to attend without having to camp!). The

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highlights included incredible testimonies from men with very different backgrounds and the power of two thousand men worshipping God.

9.2.2 Evening Study and Fellowship Group

Our group started the year following The Prayer Course, a series of eight sessions produced by 24-7 Prayer which included videos for each session and a wide ranging set of resources to introduce us to different types of prayer used by Christians over the years. After a break for the Lent Groups, we turned our attention to The Romans Course, recently released by The Bible Society. This consisted of ten sessions, again supported by excellent videos and other resources. We found both series to be interesting, challenging, and well produced - and recommend them to anyone who might be interested. Further details can be found online at:

The Prayer Course: <https://prayercourse.org/home>

The Romans Course: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-romans-course/>

Around ten of us generally meet twice a month at the host's house on a Wednesday or Thursday evening. We start with refreshments, giving us a chance to talk and catch up with each other before the main session at 8 p.m. The study tends to last about an hour, but some discussions can extend this by a few minutes after which we close with a short time of prayer.

There is no pressure to pray, or even talk, but we encourage everyone to share their views so that we can learn from each other as we seek to gain a better understanding of the bible and our faith.

9.2.3 Thursday Evening House group

Last year we started the year by looking at a book called 'Those who wait' by Tanya Marlow, continuing our study from last year. We studied Bible characters e.g., Sarah, Isaiah and Mary who all waited as part of God's plan for the world. It gave us an insight into his perfect timing for us.

During Lent a slightly different group studied the Anne Woodcock book 'Real Prayer' which was used by a number of Lent groups throughout the Church.

In the summer, our group dipped into a book called 'Busyness - Finding God in the whirlwind' by Juanita Ryan. These studies gave us fresh insight into finding the Lord in our very busy lives.

And finally, we finished the year with 6 studies based on the letter to the Galatians - with questions inspired by the works of Thomas Shriners, John Stott and Tom Wright.

The study group has grown together in prayer and a willingness to open ourselves to each other and to the Lord. We are all encouraged by the experiences and stories which we share.'

9.2.4 Women's Bible Fellowship

We continued to meet weekly for fellowship, Bible study and prayer, to help us grow in our faith. Our Bible studies have included what the Bible teaches about fellowship in our life as disciples of Jesus, and the Gospel of Luke. All ladies are welcome to join us on a Monday afternoon.

9.2.5 'Men Aloud Out'

The Men Aloud Out group has continued to meet at the Trout most months with a varied programme of invited speakers, social meetings, or discussion on a topical matter of concern led by one of our members. Average attendance 10 people, with more for the social events.

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9.3 St. Lawrence Youth and Children's Ministry

Ministry Amongst Children and Young People

Regular discipleship:

This year we have been very thankful for new children and new leaders in our children's ministry (as well as giving thanks for the contributions of those who have now stepped back), and have slightly adapted our Sunday groups to allow us to better cater for younger children, now organised as 'Sparks' (2.5-5s), 'Flares' (6-11s) and 'The Grid' (11-16s), taking place on three Sunday mornings each month. Recently we have begun using some exciting new teaching material, 'Energize' from Urban Saints, which has easily adaptable sessions for all ages. The children have enjoyed series on 1 Thessalonians, 'Who am I? (Identity)' and 'Encounters with Jesus', as well as seasonal celebrations. Young people from The Grid have been actively sharing in church life by serving in the Holiday Bible Club team and helping with prayers, readings and refreshments in services.

- Please give thanks for the young people in our church family and pray for faithful discipling of them and that they may grow in their love for Jesus.

Community outreach and holiday club:

'Explorers' afterschool club at St Lawrence School saw an increase in numbers of children (from 35 up to 50) after the holiday club. Attendees are drawn from all year groups and meet weekly for Bible stories, songs, crafts and activities, building upon the excellent work done through 'Open the Book' and school worship. We are thankful for those from the church family who have joined the team to accommodate the new children.

In the community, we organised another community Pumpkin Trail, 'Light on a Dark Night', and estimate approaching 200 children and their families visited the Church for hot chocolate, popcorn and Christian gift bags. This gave great opportunities to build relationships, explain our hope and share invitations to Christmas events. In December we again invited families to a pre-service christingle-making workshop with refreshments. We were really encouraged to see that this attracted more families to the christingle service. God blessed us richly through the 'Wild West' Holiday Bible Club, with 73 children and a team of over 30 adults and 6 young leaders all enthusiastically having fun whilst learning about Jesus' invitation to follow him (exploring stories of people who met him in the Gospels).

We are so thankful for the way the church family has enabled and supported these outreach efforts.

- Please pray for God to move in our community as we seek to faithfully share the Gospel with children and families in our midst.

9.3.1 Little Lights. Pram service/ baby and toddler play group

The team especially thank The Revd Gareth Griffith for his support on the piano, talking to the adults and playing with the children.

Kathy Newton

9.4 South Cotswold Team Youth Ministry

Schools work

Within the school year I am able to visit all 9 primary schools in the South Cotswold Team with the majority of smaller schools establishing a regular pattern of collective worship visits every term. I delivered 6 weekly lunchtime clubs in 5 different schools last year with a special focus on y6s about to move to secondary school. At St Lawrence Primary School the lunchtime club is very well supported in both engagement and number (an average of 18 last year and about 14 this year and full class numbers when it rains!). The y6

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commitment was intensified during the summer term as the school emphasis shifted towards transition amongst y6 pupils.

I was able to distribute over 130 copies of the excellent SU publication, It's Your Move, to help pupils consider the big step to secondary school during the summer term and it has been a great privilege to see many of the same pupils at Farmors school and help to give them a measure of continuity. In addition, we were able to offer two water-sport activity days where y6 pupils from different schools mixed and regular attendees of school/evening youth clubs joined together. In total we were able to subsidize 66 young people over 2 sunny June weekends (via external funding).

The lunchtime clubs at Farmors have been well attended (an average of over 20 at Cookie Jar and about 12 at the older club last year and 16 this year) and has provided a safe haven to come and make friends as well as a first point of entry for those interested in our out-of-school activities. Indeed over 80% of these two groups attended either an activity day or residential activity external to school.

Having received some generous local support, we were able to give out Christmas food hampers and gifts (toys and presents courtesy of Fairford Air Base) to 8 needy families (Farmors school-identified). Hopefully, this again took a little pressure off those with financial hardships and allowed 'the church' to be seen as a positive, visible presence in a very practical and relevant way.

Sunday services

I endeavour to regularly visit churches from across the team, supporting clergy and updating congregations on our youth work through sharing encouragements, prayer needs and vision for the future. In addition, I take the opportunity to preach, lead prayers and chat to interested parties wherever possible. Once a month, I'm also committed to co-lead the Grid group in Lechlade where the youth of our team gather for bible study and discussion.

Other youth work

Two faith-based discussion groups operate concurrently on a Tuesday evening. The older group (Quench) has journeyed with the leaders for a number of years and are largely at the point of moving on to new ventures in the coming year as we seek to spiritually equip them for life beyond. We have bible-based, weekly discussion and the group still enjoys residential outings to nearby Macaroni Woods. Our younger group, Thirst (school years 6 to 8) enjoyed a first residential trip in June 2023 where some mature discussion happened alongside a host of games and organised mayhem! Both groups plan to return to Macaroni Woods in early 2024. The Lechlade Holiday Club was again an excellent launchpad for weekly links with a new generation of youth about to enter secondary school, and these connections have been invaluable in drawing in around half a dozen new faces (to Thirst) this school year.

Elsewhere our youth & children's club in Kempsford has continued to flourish. After good attendance (over 30 last summer term) and diverging needs, we took the decision to split into 2 groups. I co-lead the youth version (with around 20 attending) and Rev Kim Brown has led the younger group with a dozen faithful.

With still no announcement of a new director at SU Romania, our plans remain in limbo.

I would like to close with a huge thank you to the volunteers who give their time so sacrificially to stand alongside me in body and prayer to support and nurture these young lives in so many contexts. Together we lift them to the Lord who we trust will continue the good and lasting work in their hearts and minds.

Future Dates:

15-17 March – Quench Macaroni Woods residential

26-28 April – Thirst Macaroni Woods residential

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SCT Activity Day -date tbc

Autumn 2024 - Thirst Macaroni Woods residential

Chris Saunders

9th February 2024

9.5 St. Lawrence School

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School has continued to enjoy its strong links with the church this year. Gordon Soutar, the Headteacher and Rev'd Andrew have attended joint training together to develop the vision for the school and ensure it remains distinctively Christian and set in strong foundations. We have also worked with Rev'd Gareth to develop child friendly Bible links to each of our core Christian Values. This term, for instance, we are focusing on the value of 'Forgiveness' and have used the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant to illustrate the importance of the value to the children.

We continue to enjoy the support our Open The Book team give us and appreciate the time commitment each team member gives to the school both in preparation and delivery.

Our Explorers after school club is popular and well attended by the children. This is such an important bridge between church and school and we are pleased to hear that along with the summer holiday club some new families and children have explored their faith.

As a member of the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust, we work closely with the other 23 schools. We have a strong central team providing support and challenges on a regular basis. We are supported in our continual improvement journey by our Foundation Governors who all have links to St Lawrence Church alongside further Parent and Co-opted members.

As always, it is a privilege to serve this community and work with the many wonderful families and friends of the school.

Mr Gordon Soutar

Headteacher

9.5.1 Open the Book

Over the past year we have been able to go into St Lawrence School on a regular basis to lead Open the Book acts of worship. Each time we work with about 10 children from Key Stage 2; we read the Bible Story to them and choose who will act each part. Then we dress them up and rehearse before the rest of the school join us. An adult reads the introduction and the children act the story which the adults narrate. This is then followed by a summary of the meaning of the story, a prayer and then a song. Over the past year we have been very encouraged by the members of staff who sit in and then talk to the children more about the story.

The Bible Society now oversees the mission of Open the Book and has recently completely revised the Storybook and Handbook so we are gradually getting used to the new materials.

At the Together @ Ten service in church in October we talked about the work of Open the Book. Then a number of children joined us and dressed up and acted out the first part of the story of Joseph and his brothers.

9.6 Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union is a charity for Christian people who share God's love. Through the Holy Spirit we are united in prayer and worship, love and service. Lechlade Branch 2024 is made up of 50 enrolled members, 39 from Lechlade, 6 from Fairford and 5 from Faringdon. We have a full programme planned, with inspirational speakers for the monthly Wednesday afternoon meetings, at the Memorial Hall and the quarterly evening meetings held at 8,

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Katherine's Walk. We have a brilliant committee of 7. Not all members can attend meetings but we include them, support them and keep them informed. 2023 brought happy times together with trips out, prayer meetings, services, singing, hand bell ringing and lots of tea/cake together! Dear Andree Boddington passed away and Carole Topple moved to London. New members were enrolled.

We have worked hard with our fundraising which is so important for the future of our charity, which transforms lives locally and worldwide. We support our Churches and our communities. You will find MU members at the heart of Sunday School, Open the Book, knitting for the hospitals, Tuesday Club for the elderly, sewing crosses in pockets and Baptism Bears. We deliver helpful items to the prison, the Women's Refuge in Gloucester and the Family Haven. We linked with The Lions and Home Start charities last year, after spotting families in need.

9.7 Music

We are thankful for singers and instrumentalists in the informal music group, who faithfully serve our church family through the year by supporting the musical worship in our informal services 3 times per month, as well as taking part in events engaging with our wider community, such as leading community carol singing during 'Lighting Up Lechlade', and taking part in the town carol service in the Memorial Hall.

St Lawrence Church Choir Annual Report

This has been a busy and greatly fulfilling year for the choir and it is always much appreciated when members of the congregation thank us for our musical contribution. We really appreciate your support.

The choir has sung in fifty services in Lechlade and one in Southrop, many of which are morning Communion services or Choral Evensong. However, some of the most memorable are the special services at Candlemas, on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, and the wonderful services that prepare for and then celebrate Christmas Day. The Easter Sunday evening service this year was a special service which told the Easter Story through music and readings. This new format was very positively received with requests for it to be repeated in 2024, which we will do.

There have been twenty-four regular singers: fourteen sopranos (including seven adult sopranos), led by the Head Chorister Sophie, her Deputy Lily, and Librarian Hannah. Having completed their probationary year, Lavinia and Kaitlyn received their surplices and were admitted as full choristers at special services in October and November - this means they have attended practices and services regularly, know how follow and sing psalms, canticles and anthems, have an understanding of the different services at which they sing and have completed basic training in music theory. In September, the front row was augmented by two probationers, Alistair and Jonathan, who have made a very positive start to their time as choristers. We were also very fortunate to have Tia (former Head Chorister), continue to support the choir this year during her Gap Year. Emily (the mother of our new probationers) is an experienced singer who joined the choir as an alto, and we are delighted Richard (tenor) has moved back to the area. We now have very talented back row of four altos, four tenors and two basses, making for a more balanced sound. It has been particularly enjoyable to welcome back former members of the choir when they are in the area. This was particularly the case over Christmas when the choir was delighted to be strengthened by five former Head Choristers.

Many congratulations to Sophie Bath for achieving her Red Ribbon in April with a magnificent 92%. Lily McBain achieved her Dark Blue Ribbon in April and Hannah Chamberlain was presented with her Dark Blue Ribbon in November. They both achieved a fantastic 84% in their exams. Thanks are also due to these three senior singers for their continued dedication to the choir and for encouraging our new young choristers. During the summer holidays, Tia once again attended the Bath RSCM Residential Course. This time

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she was selected following interview to be a House Captain, supporting the recreational and pastoral activities of the young people attending the course, as well as being a vocal leader and role model on the course. What a wonderful ambassador of St Lawrence Church Choir. She is now studying at Royal Holloway University of London, where she continues to sing and is also doing a conducting course.

The choir, myself and all who attend services in the church are extremely grateful to our two organists: Geoff and Miranda. We thank them for their dedication and all the practice they put in behind the scenes to support the music at St Lawrence and enable us to continue challenging the Choir in learning new music and broadening our repertoire.

Rachel Bath

Choir Director

26th January 2024

9.8 World Church Committee

We continue to support, pray for and learn from Christians around the world. In December 2023 we allocated a total of £9,500 from the PCC to our World Church Links:-

- National Mission Commission of Nepal – training and equipping missionaries for Nepal.
- Scripture Union Pakistan – ministry to children and young people; supplying Bible reading notes.
- Dornakal Diocese, South India - supporting the Shriver Memorial School for the Deaf.
- iServe Africa, in Nairobi, under Harrison Mungai – training young graduates for Christian ministry.
- Gabriel Parra and his wife Rebecca, CMS local partners in Valparaiso, Chile.
- Ram Prasad and Keshari (from Nepal) - sharing their faith among ethnic minorities in Rochdale, UK. We were glad to welcome Ram and Keshari for the weekend 18-19 March.
- SAT-7 – satellite broadcasting of Christian teaching and worship programmes to isolated Christians in the Middle East and North Africa.

10 CHURCH SUPPORT TO MINISTRY

10.1 Project Inspire

We submitted our detailed reordering proposals to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) in March 2023, following a presentation to the church community in February. We responded to comments from Heritage England and the amenity societies in May. The DAC gave their approval to the proposals in June and issued a Notification of Advice in July.

In August, we submitted a formal application to the Chancellor for a faculty to carry out the works. There was a formal notice period in September and October when the proposals were available in the church and on-line. This gave the opportunity for the public to comment to the Chancellor on the design.

A detailed brochure was prepared to promote the reordering proposals. This was followed by a pledging weekend in April. We are very grateful for the church community who have pledged significant funds to the project.

The Chancellor visited St Lawrence church in December to view and discuss the proposals with the project team and our architect. We responded to a few detailed questions put to us. We await his judgement expected in February 2024.

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We submitted a planning application to Cotswold District Council (CDC) for the external works element of the proposals. Following detailed discussion, we secured planning permission in October.

The public footpath known as Shelley's Walk was reconstructed with recovered flagstones by Gloucestershire County Council in May. This provides a huge improvement with a level stone surface for access through the churchyard and improves access to the north porch. An archaeological study carried out during the works found no significant artefacts. We are grateful for grants from the Lechlade Historic and Development Trust and Lechlade Town Council which made this possible.

The Working Group met ten times in the year. We informed the church community through newsletters and plan further issues through 2024.

Nigel Jones

Chairman Project Inspire

20th February 2024

Project Inspire Fund Raising

In 2023 there were three strands to our fund raising efforts. Firstly, the request to the congregation to pledge funds towards the project as a lump sum or as regular donations. In total the pledges amounted to £122,000 which after Gift Aid will add £150,000 to our funds. Secondly, applications to Trust Funds which produced pledges for £23,000; and thirdly fund raising events.

In 2023 a programme of 7 events through the year raised just over £7000. The programme was designed to provide events which would be attractive to the Lechlade community and the surrounding villages/towns at the same time as raising funds for the Project. The coronation Ceilidh in May was attended by over 100 people; in June, a concert by the choir of Merton College Oxford filled the church; cream teas at Barton Swyre Farm was a delightful afternoon in July for around 100 people; a top quality Jazz concert in September was enjoyed by a widespread audience; a concert performance of Karl Jenkin's Adiemus by the combined choirs of Lechlade and Kent again filled the church; a wine tasting evening in the Memorial Hall was attended by 70 enthusiasts; and a Christmas Carol Concert, which included several opportunities to join in, attracted over 100.

In 2024 a programme of 10 events is planned, with a target of raising £11,000. The largest events will be Lechlade Open Gardens on Bank Holiday May 27th and an Auction of Promises on Saturday September 21st; other events include a Burns Supper, a lunchtime concert, a summer Ceilidh, a Summer Sale, an evening's entertainment in a beautiful local garden, a concert performance of a Roger Jones musical, a Jazz concert and a repeat of the Christmas Carol Concert. It is hoped that this varied programme will add significantly to community life in Lechlade as well as benefitting the project.

Once the faculty is granted it will be possible to apply to other Trust Funds, and also it is hoped that more parishioners will make personal pledges. It is hoped that the combination of personal donations, Trust Fund grants and the revenue from events will substantially close the gap between the projected cost of Project Inspire and the funds already available from accumulated reserves and the sale of Church Cottage.

David Turtle

10.2 Eco Church Group

Eco Church is A Rocha UK's award scheme for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth. It is designed to equip each church to express care for God's world in our worship and teaching; in how we look after

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our buildings and land; in how we engage with our local community and in global campaigns, and in the personal lifestyles of our congregation.

We got our Silver Award in May 2022, requiring 50% score in all the categories on the questionnaire. We have now set our sights on achieving the Gold award requiring a 75% score. We are hoping that the completion of the Inspire Project will help us reach Gold.

11.1 Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to: -

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles of the SORP applicable to charities.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material disclosures and explain such departure in the financial statements, and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in the future.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, The Charity (Accounts & Reports) Regulations 2008 and Church Accounting Regulations. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud.

When planning our activities for the year, the PCC, considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in particular, the specific guidance to charities concerned with the advancement of religion.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity financial information included on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements

11.2 Risk Management

The PCC actively reviews the major risks and challenges generated within the church by means of its regular meetings. Approval is required for all key operational and financial decisions.

11.3 Investment Policy

It is the policy of the PCC to invest fund balances with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund.

11.3 Voluntary Help

The PCC wishes to express their gratitude to the many volunteers who help in so many ways in the various activities of the church and who provide support to the PCC.

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11.4 Transactions and Financial Position

The Statement of Financial Activities displays a summary of the Analysis of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2023. The key performance indicators are as follows: -

- A deficit of £2,867 on the General Fund,
- A surplus of £20 on the Designated Funds.
- A surplus of £21,430 on the Restricted Funds and
- A net surplus of £651 on the Endowment Funds.

The principal funding sources of the church activities continues to be regular gifts and donations from members of the congregation, supplemented by grants from outside bodies and legacies.

Inflationary pressure have continued to have an impact this year which has resulted in costs being higher than income. The PCC is aware of the need to increase our income in the coming year and to ensure sufficient liquidity on the unrestricted funds.

Income was also generated from the letting of fixed asset properties.

The reserves of the charity stand at £837,344 (2022 £818,113). General purpose funds, which include buildings and the designated funds amounts to £591,027 (2022 £594,137), restricted funds, which includes funds for capital projects, restoration, maintenance, and fabric amounts to £239,906 (2022 £217,881) and endowment fund amounts to £6,411 (2022 £6,095).

Approved by the PCC on 21/03/2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Revd. Andrew Cinnamond

Date: 24 April 2024



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12 INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF LECHLADE

Report to I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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 accounts to be reached.

Signed:- 

Dated:- 24 April 2024

David Corris
23 The Wern
Lechlade
Gloucestershire
GL7 3FF

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Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Incoming resources						
Voluntary income	124,936	100	24,076	—	149,112	157,865
Activities for generating funds	8,051	—	6,535	—	14,586	12,655
Investment income	51	—	5,048	143	5,242	2,456
Incoming resources from charitable activities	4,251	—	—	—	4,251	2,156
Other incoming resources	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total income	137,289	100	35,659	143	173,191	175,132
Resources used						
Costs of generating funds	—	—	2,511	—	2,511	483
Fundraising: cost of goods sold and other costs	—	—	11,719	—	138,517	166,467
Charitable activities	126,718	80	—	—	13,440	12,962
Governance costs	13,440	—	—	—	—	—
Total expenditure	140,158	80	14,230	—	154,468	179,912
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(2,869)	20	21,429	143	18,723	(4,780)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	13,269	11,450	645	293	25,603	22,529
Gross transfers between funds - out	(11,467)	(13,513)	(49)	(628)	(25,603)	(22,529)
Other recognised gains / losses						
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	—	508	508	(859)
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—	25,000
Net movement in funds	(336)	(2,043)	21,294	316	19,231	19,361
Total funds brought forward	592,094	2,043	217,881	6,095	818,113	798,752
Total funds carried forward	591,027	—	239,906	6,411	837,344	818,113

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REPRESENTED BY:-	Fund Balance 01 /01/2023	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfers	Fund Balance 31/12/2023	Last Year
Unrestricted						
General fund	592,094	137,289	140,158	1,802	591,027	592,094
Designated						
Perrinsfield House	1,799	—	80	(1,719)	—	1,799
Restricted						
Audio/visual	5,737	—	—	—	5,737	5,737
Bells Appeal Fund	2,556	82	—	17	2,655	2,556
Brownrigg Fund	18,618	513	—	—	19,131	18,618
Choir Fund	1,396	1,045	—	—	2,441	1,396
H Arnold Memorial Fund	1,917	190	—	—	2,107	1,917
Hardship Fund	1,912	200	—	—	2,112	1,912
Fabric Appeal	110,284	3,536	814	—	113,006	110,284
Mission	—	100	—	(100)	—	—
Project Inspire	57,569	30,071	10,365	—	77,275	57,569
Reordering (West end) Fund	255	—	—	—	255	255
Restoration and Maintenance Fund	18,073	165	3,051	—	15,187	18,073
Endowment						
H Arnold Investment Fund	5,903	508	—	—	6,411	5,903
Total funds carried forward	818,113	173,699	154,468	—	837,344	818,113

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Balance sheet

Class and code	Description	This year	Last year
Fixed assets			
	H Arnold CBF Inv Fund	5,115	4,675
	H Arnold CBF Fixed Int. Sec.	1,296	1,228
	Fixed asset - property	575,000	575,000
	Total Fixed assets	581,411	580,903
Current assets			
	General Lloyds Bank Account	131	423
	General Barclays Bank Account	91,103	76,787
	General CBF Deposit Account	44,548	43,164
	Fabric Appeal CBF Deposit Account	112,820	110,284
	Bells CBF Deposit Account	2,655	2,573
	H Arnold CBF Deposit Account	2,106	1,917
	Accounts Receivable	6,100	3,813
	Total Current assets	259,463	238,961
Liabilities			
	Creditors due in 1 year	3,530	1,751
	Total Liabilities	3,530	1,751
	Net Asset surplus(deficit)	834,344	818,113
Reserves			
	Excess / (deficit) to date	18,723	(4,781)
	Starting balances	818,113	798,753
	Gains/(losses) on investment assets	508	(859)
	Gains and losses own use	-	25,000
	Total Reserves	837,344	818,113
	Represented by funds		
	Unrestricted	591,027	592,094
	Designated	-	2,043
	Restricted	239,906	217,881

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Endowment	6,411	6,095
Total	<u>837,344</u>	<u>818,113</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 24/04/2024 and signed on its behalf by:

V Jones, Trustee.....

P. Cobb, Trustee.....

Notes to the Accounts

1 Accounting Policy

Accounting Convention

The Financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with transactions recognized at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the notes to the accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom FRS102 and the Charities Act 2011.

Funds

Endowment funds are funds, the capital of which must be maintained: only income arising from Investment of the endowment may be used for the purpose for which the endowment was established.

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Restricted funds may be expended only on those restricted objects provided in the terms of the trust or bequest, or in the case of 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 are given. Any balance remaining unspent at the end of the year must be carried forward for each fund.

Unrestricted funds are general funds which can be used for PCC ordinary purposes.

Incoming Resources

Planned Giving, collections and donations are recognized when they are received. Tax refunds are recognised when the resource to which they relate is received. Grants and legacies are accounted for when the PCC is legally entitled to the amounts due.

All other income is recognised when it is receivable.

Resources Expended

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid. The diocesan parish share is accounted for when due.

All other expenditure is recognised when it is incurred and accounted for gross.

Fixed Assets

Consecrated land and benefice property is not included in the accounts in accordance with S.96(2)(a) 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 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. Subsequently no individual item has cost more than £1,000 accordingly all such expenditure has been written off when incurred.

Equipment used within the church premises is depreciated on a straight line over 4 years. Individual items of equipment with a purchase price of £1,000 or less are written off when the asset is acquired.

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Investments

Investments are valued at market value at 31 December 2023. The Statement of Financial Activity includes net gains and losses arising on revaluations at the year end.

Current Assets

Amounts owing to the Charity at 31 December 2023 for tax recovery are included in amounts recoverable.

Bank deposits include cash held on deposit either with CBF Church of England Funds or at a Bank.

2 Staff Costs

	2023 £	2022 £
The Charity employs a part time administrator.	<u>10,338</u>	<u>9,888</u>
	£	£
The Charity also paid honoraria to the Director of Music and certain choristers.	<u>1,376</u>	<u>1,632</u>

3 Fixed Assets for use by the Charity

	£	£
Gross Freehold Land and Buildings at valuation	<u>575,000</u>	<u>575,000</u>

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The freehold land and buildings are held in trust by the Diocese, and for accounting purposes the historical cost is deemed to be the valuation at the date the property was acquired. The PCC considers that depreciation is not considered necessary, since the properties are deemed residential properties and are fully maintained by the PCC.

The properties held are as follows:

- a) Church Cottage Lechlade: valuation £350,000.
- b) Perrinsfield, Lechlade: valuation £225,000.

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4 Investments

	Cost	Value
	£	£
CBF Investment Fund 226.27 shares	<u>3,654</u>	<u>5,115</u>
Unrealised Gain/(Loss) £1,461		
	Cost	Value
	£	£
CBF Fixed Interest Securities 895.53 shares	<u>1,435</u>	<u>1,296</u>
Unrealised Gain/(Loss) (£139)		

5 Debtors and Prepayments

	2023	2022
	£	£
Gift Aid tax recoverable	3,500	3,321
Prepaid Heat and Light	1,100	-
Donation	750	-
Grant Receivable	<u>750</u>	<u>492</u>
TOTAL	<u>6,100</u>	<u>3,813</u>

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6 Creditors

	£	£
Incumbents Expenses	1,827	1,751
Cleaner	78	-
Village Hall	90	-
Electricity	635	-
Donation to Dornakal School	900	-
-		
TOTAL	<u>3,530</u>	<u>1,751</u>

7 Donations to Missionary Societies

	2023	2022
	£	£
CMS Chile	1,900	1,900
CMS Nepal	2,375	2,375
Scripture Union Pakistan	950	950
Scripture Union U.K.	-	950

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Ram Prasad	950	-
Sat 7	1,000	-
iServe Africa	1,425	1,425
Dornakal School for the Deaf	<u>900</u>	<u>1,900</u>

8 Amounts Collected on Behalf of Others

The PCC collect funds on behalf of other charitable institutions as follows:

The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal £912.
The Church of England Children's Society £204

The PCC also held a special appeal called the Hardship Fund to raise money to support local charities who are helping those in financial difficulties. The fund currently stands at £2,112

9 Financial Commitments

At 31 December 2023 the Charity had no financial commitments.

10 Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions in the reporting period

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ANALYSIS OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

					Total	
	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This Year	Last year

INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

Incoming resources from generated funds

Incoming resources from generated funds - Voluntary income

Standing Orders	10,043	—	—	—	10,043	10,605
Gift Aid Envelopes	806	—	290	—	1,096	876
Parish Giving Scheme	66,335	—	—	—	66,335	65,083
Gift Aid tax recovery	16,395	—	—	—	16,395	15,342
Collections	6,287	—	615	—	6,902	7,505
Goodbox Card Donations	4,289	—	1,821	—	6,110	4,769
Charities Aid Foundation	3,600	—	—	—	3,600	3,750
Sundry gifts	6,060	100	3,601	—	9,761	33,617
Southrop and Eastleach	2,880	—	—	—	2,880	2,880
Tax recovery Sundry gifts	4,761	—	—	—	4,761	10,195
Grants	750	—	—	—	750	3,242
Project Inspire Pledges	—	—	17,750	—	17,750	—
Legacies	2,000	—	—	—	2,000	—
Total	124,216	100	24,077	—	148,383	157,864

Incoming resources from generated funds - Activities for generating funds

Fund raising events	22	—	6,535	—	6,557	4,715
Perrinsfield Rent	8,760	—	—	—	8,760	7,940
Total	8,782	—	6,535	—	15,317	12,655

Incoming resources from generated funds - Investment income

Dividends and interest	51	—	5,048	143	5,242	2,456
Total	51	—	5,048	143	5,242	2,456

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Other Incoming resources

Revaluation of Fixed Assets	—	—	—	508	508	25,000
Total	—	—	—	508	508	25,000

Incoming resources from charitable activities

Fees (weddings funerals) due to PCC	4,251	—	—	—	4,251	2,156
Total	4,251	—	—	—	4,251	2,156
INCOME TOTAL	137,290	100	35,660	651	173,701	200,131

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EXPENDITURE

Costs of generating funds - Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold and other costs

Fund raising events	—	—	2,511	—	2,511	483
Total	—	—	2,511	—	2,511	483

Charitable activities

World Church donations	9,500	—	—	—	9,500	9,500
Mission 2022	—	—	—	—	—	5,982
Hardship Donations	120	—	—	—	120	4,500
Donations	—	—	—	—	—	184
Parish share: Diocese	77,232	—	—	—	77,232	77,232
Parish share: Deanery	7,555	—	—	—	7,555	7,555
Incumbent's expenses	5,819	—	—	—	5,819	5,233
Clergy expenses	1,990	—	—	—	1,990	2,091
Church heating	4,277	—	—	—	4,277	1,648
Church lighting	1,477	—	—	—	1,477	1,001
Church water charges	57	—	—	—	57	16
Church insurance	4,631	—	—	—	4,631	4,247
Church fabric repairs	226	—	585	—	811	—
Gas/electric/water repairs	240	—	1,241	—	1,481	927
Organ/ Piano maintenance	230	—	—	—	230	30
Maintenance Fixtures and fittings	925	—	1,170	—	2,095	1,580
Cost of running services	4,555	—	—	—	4,555	4,072
Churchyard maintenance	570	—	—	—	570	90
Cottage heating	1,376	—	—	—	1,376	527
Cottage lighting	494	—	—	—	494	530
Cottage water charges	429	—	—	—	429	12
Cottage cleaning	501	—	—	—	501	9
Cottage insurance	78	—	—	—	78	166
Cottage repairs	144	—	411	—	555	527
Honoraria, salaries/wages	1,586	—	—	—	1,586	1,632
Holiday Club	1,253	—	—	—	1,253	1,127
Sunday School	66	—	—	—	66	—
Education and Training	913	—	—	—	913	372
Architects/other fees for repairs or new	—	—	8,312	—	8,312	34,538
Perrinsfield repairs/insurance	473	80	—	—	553	1,139
Total	126,717	80	11,719	—	138,516	166,467

Parochial Church Council of St Lawrence Lechlade
Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Governance costs

Bank charges	358	—	—	—	358	380
Administrator's wages	10,338	—	—	—	10,338	9,888
Parish Office	2,744	—	—	—	2,744	2,693
Total	13,440	—	—	—	13,440	12,961
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	140,157	80	14,230	—	154,467	179,911
MOVEMENT IN YEAR	(2,867)	20	21,430	651	19,234	(4,780)

