

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN PARISH CHURCH
WESTERHAM, KENT**

ANNUAL REPORT

and

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

of the

Parochial Church Council

for the year ending 31st December 2023

Priest in Charge:

Reverend David Fox-Branch
The Vicarage
Vicarage Hill
Westerham, Kent

Bank

National Westminster Bank Plc
Sevenoaks branch
67 High Street
Sevenoaks, Kent

Independent examiner:

Brian Downs
61 Croydon Road
Keston
BR2 6EH

25th May 2024

Registered charity number 1133994

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN PARISH CHURCH
WESTERHAM, KENT**

Membership of the PCC 2023

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules, with members for 2023 listed below.

Ex Officio:		
Priest in Charge	Rev David Fox-Branch	Chair
Co-opted	Revd Wendy Harvey	Since 23 rd September 2021
Churchwarden	Mrs C Cusick	Elected May 2023
Deanery Synod Representatives	Mrs C Boston Mrs K Smart	
Elected Members	Mr D Booker	Chair of Fabric Committee Vice Chair from 24 th January 2024
(12 allowed including co-opted)	Mrs G Burmester	Co-opted May 2023
	Mrs J Duffield	Parish Safeguarding Officer
	Mrs K Johnson	
	Dr A Leather	Vice Chair until 24 th January 2024
	Mrs A Morris	
	Mr B Preston	
	Mrs R Preston	
	Mr K Willcox	
	Mr P Cambridge	Co-opted May 2023
	Mr R Pomfret	Co-opted May 2023

The PCC is supported by the following officers (not PCC members) but in attendance at meetings)

Secretary

Miss A Coughlan

In attendance at meetings

Treasurer

Mrs A Perrett

Appointed 8th November 2023

Due to illness, Mrs Perrett was unable to draw up these accounts and Ms Melanie Bailey was appointed for that purpose.

All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding how PCC funds are to be spent.

Given its wide responsibilities, the PCC has three sub-committees – Fabric, Finance and a Standing Committee which can make decisions required between full PCC meetings. Each committee has clear terms of reference and report back to the full PCC. In 2023 a Social Committee was established, which raises funds through social and community events. There is also an Environmental Group, which is open to non-church members and works especially with regard to the 5th Mark of Mission.

Financial Report by the PCC of St Mary the Virgin Parish Church, Westerham for 2023

1 Aim and purpose

St Mary the Virgin Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the Priest in Charge, the Reverend David Fox-Branch, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, including the attached 'John Fryth Room' hall and churchyard at The Green, Westerham.

2 Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to using the 5 Marks of Mission to shape the life of the church community in our vision of "Serving Christ, Westerham and the Wider World". The 5 Marks of Mission express the Anglican Communion's common commitment to, and understanding of, God's holistic/integral mission. i.e.

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

We seek to reach as many people as possible with the Good News of Jesus Christ, enabling them to worship at the church and to become part of the faith community at St Mary the Virgin. We aim to benefit the public locally and from further afield by offering a variety of church services and by enabling people to live out their faith within both the church and wider community. As a parish church, we support people from Westerham, and further afield, at particular points in their lives by preparing them for, and taking weddings, baptisms and funerals. The number of these 'occasional offices' held in church was 35 in 2023, compared to 30 in 2022 and 23 in 2021.

Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

To facilitate all this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of the church building and churchyard.

In 2023 our Ministry Team consisted of:

- Priest in Charge, Rev. David Fox-Branch
- Priest with Permission to Officiate, Rev. Wendy Harvey
- Ordinand, Dr Susan Leather.

This year we appointed a Director of Music, Mr Daniel Eaton, who supports the ministry team's service planning, plays the organ and piano for Sunday and other services, leads the choir and plans special events.

We also have a part-time paid office administrator, who additionally serves as Secretary to the Parochial Church Council.

3 Achievements and performance

This year was the first since the Covid pandemic in which we were able to plan the entire year without reference to public health considerations. Although, in common with many parishes, Sunday congregation numbers at individual services remain lower than in 2019, the last full year pre-Covid, they remained steady with some signs of growth compared with 2022.

Numbers at seasonal services were close to 2019 levels, and slightly higher on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Easter Day. At Christmas the Crib Service, which was introduced in 2022, the congregation

was over 50% greater than in the first year while our other Christmas and Advent services continued last year's growth.

In 2023 we continued to broaden our worship provision with the introduction of 2nd Sunday, an informal service with band-led music and activities for all ages.

A significant moment in the life of the parish was the Coronation of King Charles III, although it was noticeable that this did not draw people to the parish church in the same way that the Jubilee and then death of the late Queen did in 2022.

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

Being the only Anglican church in Westerham we offered a variety of worship services, including traditional language 'said' Communion, choral morning services, Evensong and 'Messy Church'.

Ministers lead Morning Prayer most Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, as well as a midweek Eucharist. We have a regular schools ministry shared with the local Congregational Church, plus four school services in church this year. These are opportunities to bring the Christian message to adults and children alike who otherwise might not normally visit a church. We were also pleased to welcome Valence School members to St Mary's this year, to talk about the church and our faith.

We have sought opportunities to collaborate with other local churches at key moments in the year.

To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

As well as systematic Bible-based preaching in Sunday services, church members and the Priest in Charge support the local Church of England School as governors. The school has a distinctively Christian ethos, and the church endeavours to support that wherever possible. In 2023, school worship was tied more closely to the SIAMS curriculum. We encouraged the school to empower the children to take a lead in preparing and leading whole-school worship and class-based worship, and the children have responded with enthusiasm. Bibles, donated by an anonymous donor, were distributed in school at a special collective worship to welcome reception children.

In addition, we organised an ecumenical Lent course and hosted a Deanery Confirmation service for the first time in some years, with two adults from St Mary's being confirmed and one other being received into the Church of England as well as candidates from elsewhere being confirmed.

To respond to human need by loving service

Throughout the year there are particular services that draw many from the community into the church. In 2023, at request of the British Legion, the Remembrance service was held inside, after an outdoor act of Remembrance, for the first time since 2019. Although this probably reduced the number of people who stayed for the worship part of the event, it enabled the Legion to increase the value of the collection they received and many who attended seemed to feel moved by the service.

The church is open every day for private prayer as well as for tourists (free of charge); prayer requests can be left on the prayer board and are included in Sunday prayers.

The ministers meet and pray with individuals as requested and, on occasion, make referrals such as to the Foodbank, adult social services and emergency housing.

The governors of Churchill School and the Priest in Charge offer pastoral support to staff and pupils. The Hosey Trust continued to make individual grants to meet the needs of current and past pupils up to the age of 25.

The clergy visit the bereaved and take funerals – both in the church and at local crematoria. This year has seen slightly fewer funerals and memorial services in church, compared to 2022, but more burials of ashes. We also conduct funerals at crematoria and cemeteries, but these are not recorded in the service registers.

The Pastoral Care Team has been very active, providing spiritual support, prayer and distributing communion to those from our congregations who are unable to attend church services due to ill health.

The Priest in Charge is also a trustee for the Westerham Almshouse Charity, providing accommodation for persons in need.

The PCC supports the local Westerham Foodbank, with a full-time collection point in the church and various members, including one of the ministers, actively involved. The Harvest services, for the school and parish, collected lots of donations for the foodbank.

The church also gives away part or all of the offering at certain services, such as Remembrance Day, Christingle and during Lent, and makes other appeals in response to events in the wider world.

To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation

Through preaching, being a Fairtrade Church and supporting charities to make the world a fairer place, we work towards this mark. A successful fundraising concert for Ukraine was held in the church, organised by members of the wider community, and Porchlight was supported via collections in Lent.

We also hold some ethical investments.

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The PCC cares for the churchyard and has undertaken re-wilding of some areas. The liturgical season of Creationtide is celebrated annually.

The Environmental Group continued to guide and encourage our moves to live more in harmony with God's Creation. We already have the Bronze Eco Church award and are actively working towards silver. Swift boxes have been installed in the tower. Work has been done on developing a plan to be carbon neutral by 2030. Our electricity is certified 'green'.

As part of the redecoration of the John Frith Room, LED lighting was installed.

An environmental handbook is in preparation.

4 Financial Review

Church activities are funded by regular giving (mainly attracting gift aid), collections, donations, fees and investment income. Total income for 2023 was £130,581 of which £50,517 was restricted funds. This compares to total income for 2022 of £116,333 of which £52,984 was restricted funds. General fund income in 2023 amounted to £80,016 compared with £63,349 in 2022.

Overall expenditure in 2023 was £189,767 of which £80,646 was restricted funds, compared with £14,093 in 2022. General fund expenditure was £106,962, compared with £95,293 in 2022. This was driven in part by increasing prices arising from the cost-of-living crisis, and in part related to the maintenance of ageing heating systems and other equipment.

Overall, there was a net deficit on general funds of £26,946 compared with a deficit in 2022 of £31,944.

St Mary's investment holdings (details in note 3 of the financial statements) increased in value by £58,616 during the year. Of this £34,640 related to restricted funds, £21,218 to designated funds and £2,758 to the general investment value reserve.

5 Reserves policy

The PCC has set aside reserves in designated funds for the following purposes

- Over the years the trend has been for the church's investments to have risen in value. This year we have sold some investments to fund running costs, which is not a sustainable strategy in the medium to long term with reserves ideally used only for strategic investments. The PCC believes it is prudent to maintain a reserve against future falls in investment values which are likely to occur from time to time. Accordingly, an investment value reserve exists.
- The main church buildings are of an age and type that periodically major repairs will be required. St Mary's is fortunate that the Westerham Heritage Trust, an independent charity, raises funds which may be available when major repairs are required. However, the PCC recognises the need to retain a reserve for contributing to such repairs.
- The PCC believes that work with children and youth is an important part of its mission. A reserve has been established to support major initiatives in this field. The PCC resolved that this should contribute to the Director of Music's salary, as part of his remit is to engage younger people.
- Similarly, the PCC believes outreach both within the immediate community and in the wider world is part of St Mary's mission. A reserve has been established to support future initiatives in this field and again, some of the incomes from this contributes to the Director of Music's salary.

6 Administrative information

St Mary's is situated at the northeast corner of The Green in Westerham, the correspondence address being The Green, Westerham, Kent TN16 1AS. The registered charity number is 1133994.

Details of those who have served as members of the PCC between the 2023 APCM and the date of this report are shown on page 2.

7 Payments to and giving by members of the PCC

The total identified giving by members of the PCC, while members, totalled £7,335 excluding Gift Aid recoverable.

Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for the Priest in Charge totalled £673.83 for 2023.

8 Other Funds

These funds are separate trust funds administered by the PCC and do not appear in the accounts. Applications for grants can be made for specific use related to the purpose of the funds.

Westerham Church of England Religious Education Fund exists to support activities contributing to religious education connected to St Mary's Church. Its assets at the year-end totalled £29,981.88. The Priest in Charge and church wardens are the Trustees.

Westerham Hosey Fund supports pupils and former pupils of Churchill Church of England Primary School up to the age of 25. Its assets at the year-end amounted to £47,371.04 but £1439.68 was paid by St Mary's in grants and this sum is yet to be reclaimed. The Trustees are the Priest in Charge, church wardens and two nominated Trustees.

The Ralph Fund exists to provide help to those in need in the parish. It is managed by the Priest in Charge and church wardens. Its assets at the year-end totalled £11,211.18.

St Mary's manages the North Downs Guild of Music fund. Its assets at the year-end amounted to £147,957.54.

**Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of
St Mary the Virgin Parish Church Westerham**

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2023, which are set out on subsequent pages.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the Independent Examiner

As members of the PCC, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. You consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act') and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- Follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters.

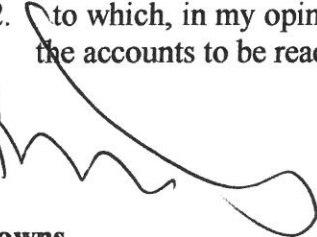
The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention:

1. which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material aspect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
 - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Dated:

20.12.24

Brian Downs
61 Croydon Road
Keston
BR2 6EH

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WESTERHAM

Balance sheet at 31st December 2023

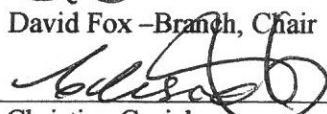
	General	Designat ed	Restricted	Total	Total
	Funds	Funds	Funds	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Investment assets	30,323	274,238	390,779	695,340	681,724
CURRENT ASSETS					
Short term deposits	2,580	-	45,236	47,816	51,235
Cash at bank and in hand	(3,994)	(2,112)	20,925	14,819	31,497
Amounts receivable	16,280	-	-	16,280	7,840
	14,866	(2,112)	66,161	78,915	90,572
CREDITORS (due within 1 year)					
Creditors	(636)		(212)	(848)	(50,719)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	14,230	(2,112)	65,949	78,067	39,853
NET ASSETS	44,553	272,126	456,728	773,407	773,977

Approved by the PCC on the 25th May 2024 and signed

on its behalf by


David Fox – Branch, Chair

and


Christina Cusick,
Churchwarden

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WESTERHAM

Notes to the Financial Statements

year ending 31st December 2023

	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Incoming resources - page 9					
Voluntary income	52,260	48	43,286	95,776	85,872
Activities for generating funds	7,736	-	-	8,736	2,271
Income from investments	15,365	-	7,049	22,414	21,709
Church activities	3,473	-	182	3,655	6,481
	80,016	48	50,517	130,581	116,333
Resources expended - page 10					
Church activities	(61,703)	(2,159)	(745)	(64,607)	(68,381)
Church running expenses	(43,056)	-	(79,901)	(122,957)	(41,004)
Fundraising expenditure	(2,203)	-	-	(2,203)	-
Total resources expended	(106,962)	(2,159)	(80,646)	(189,767)	(109,385)
Net incoming resources	(26,946)	(2,111)	(30,129)	(59,186)	6,948
Net gain on investments	2758	21,218	34,640	58,616	(88,057)
Net movement on funds	(24,188)	19,107	4,511	(570)	(81,109)
Balances brought forward	68,742	253,019	452,216	773,977	855,087
Balances carried forward	44,554	272,126	456,727	773,407	773,978

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WESTERHAM

Notes to the Financial Statements year ending 31st December 2023

INCOMING RESOURCES

	General	esignated	estricted	idowmen	Total	Total
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Voluntary Income						
✓ Planned giving/gift aid	28,118	-	-	-	28,118	33,312
✓ Income tax recoverable	7,000	-	-	-	7,000	6,832
✓ Collections/EPO	4,590	-	-	-	4,590	6,262
✓ Visitors and other giving	5,661	48	-	-	5,709	3,760
✓ Grants	1,236	-	41,136	-	42,372	30,965
✓ Donations	5,837	-	-	-	5,837	2,021
✓ Legacies	-	-	-	-	-	1,000
✓ Choir and bell ringers		-	2,150	-	2,150	1,720
	52,442	48	43,286	-	95,776	85,872
Activities for Generation Funds						
✓ Fundraising events	9,710	-	-	-	8,710	2,259
✓ Bookstall	26	-	-	-	26	12
	9,095	-	-	-	9,095	2,271
✓ Income from Investments	15,365	-	7,049	-	22,414	21,709
Dividends and interest	15,365	-	7,049	-	22,414	21,709
Church Activities						
✓ Fees for weddings and funerals	2,596	-	182	-	2,778	6,222
✓ Sundry income	877	-	-	-	877	259
	3,473	-	182	-	3,655	6,481
Total Incoming Resources	80,016	48	50,517	-	130,581	116,333

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WESTERHAM**Notes to the Financial Statements year ending 31st****December 2023**

	General Funds £	Designa ted Funds £	Restrict ed Funds £	Endown ment Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
RESOURCES EXPENDED						
Church Activities						
Missionary and Charitable giving					-	(201)
Outreach Expenses		(159)			(159)	(489)
Contribution to diocese	(45,851)				(45,851)	(55,289)
Vicar's and Vicarage expenses	(4,014)				(4,014)	(5,284)
Organ and Choir (incl bell funds)	(8,792)	(2,000)	(745)		(11,537)	(7,119)
Other costs	(3,046)				(3,046)	-
	(61,703)	(2,159)	(745)	-	(64,607)	(68,382)
Church Running Expenses						
Parish office	(4,351)				(4,351)	(5,524)
Church cleaning	(7)				(7)	(484)
Staff remuneration	(10,315)				(10,315)	(11,850)
Insurance	(4,798)				(4,798)	(4,645)
Heat and light	(15,157)				(15,157)	(5,740)
Repairs and maintenance	(8,428)				(8,428)	(5,205)
Churchyard expenses			(8,154)		(8,154)	(7,557)
Repair Projects			(71,747)		(71,747)	-
	(43,056)	-	(79,901)	-	(122,957)	(41,005)
Other resources expended						
Fundraising and bookstall	(2,203)	-	-	-	(2,203)	-
Total resources expended	(106,962)	(2,159)	(80,646)	-	(189,767)	(109,387)

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WESTERHAM

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31st December 2023

1 Accounting policies

a) The financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 together with FRS 102 and Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities'. The statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the value of investment assets which are shown at fair value. They are prepared on the going concern basis. Incoming resources are included when receivable. Liabilities are recognised when the obligation arises

b) The funds held comprise

- unrestricted funds representing the remaining income funds of the church together with funds designated by the PCC for particular purposes; and
- restricted funds comprising endowment funds that must be retained as church capital and income funds which can only be spent on restricted purposes.

c) Consecrated and beneficed property of any kind is not included in the financial statements in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. This includes all fixtures and fittings in the church buildings.

d) Investments are valued at market value as at 31st December 2023.

2 Priest in Charge stipend and parish offer

The Priest in Charge's stipend and pension cost are paid by the Diocese of Rochester. The diocese also incurs other costs which are borne by parishes through a charge traditionally known as 'parish share'. This includes a share of the overall cost of running the diocese and providing services such as legal advice, of supporting ministry in parishes that cannot pay the full cost of their ministers, and of mission activity across the diocese.

From 2015 the Diocese of Rochester introduced a new system whereby parishes made an annual 'offer' to cover all these costs. St Mary's offer for 2023 was £45,775. This covered the cost of having a full-time minister in the benefice but did not contribute towards the wider mission of the diocese. The PCC resolved to increase the offer if funds became available but they did not.

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WESTERHAM

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31st December 2023

3 Investments

The main Church, Churchyard and NDG investments are held in CBF Investment Fund shares. The gain/loss on revaluation of the Church holding has been allocated to the various funds (endowment, designated and general) according to the relative proportions of those funds. The investments in M&G Charifund are all allocated to general funds.

	CBF Shares Church £	CBF shares Churchyard £	North Downs Guild of Music £	M&G Charifund £	Total £
Value on 31st December 2022	456,187	81,432	110,975	33,131	681,724
Sold during year	(45,000)				(45,000)
	411,187	81,432	110,975	33,131	636,724
Gain on valuation during 2023	41,133	7,728	10,532	(778)	58,615
Value at 31st December 2023	452,319	89,160	121,507	32,353	695,339

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WESTERHAM

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 31st December 2023

4 Funds

The movements in individual funds in the year are shown below

	Forward 2022	Income	Expenditure	Gain/Loss	Transfer	At end 2023
Restricted funds						
Church endowment	163,732	-	-	16,379	-	180,111
Churchyard endowment	81,432	-	-	7,729	-	89,161
NDG endowment	110,975	-	-	10,532	-	121,507
Legacies	25,000	-	-	-	-	25,000
Bellringers	2,524	1,220	(690)	-	-	3,054
Choir	1,239	930	(55)	-	-	2,114
Churchyard Deposits	15,825	9,112	(8,154)	-	-	16,783
North Downs Guild cash	22,373	4,076	-	-	-	26,449
Repair projects	29,117	35,178	(71,747)	-	-	7,452)
	452,216	50,516	(80,646)	34,640	-	456,726
Designated funds						
Investment value reserve	135,519	-	-	13,557	-	149,076
Major repairs	40,000	-	-	(91)	-	39,909
Children and youth	37,500	36	(1,000)	3,751	-	40,287
Outreach	40,000	12	(1,159)	4,001	-	42,854
	253,019	48	(2,159)	21,218	-	272,126
General fund	68,742	80,016	(106,962)	2,758	-	44,554
Total	773,977	130,580	(189,767)	58,616	-	773,406

ST MARK THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WESTERHAM

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31st December 2023

The endowment funds represent sums held as capital for the respective purposes. The other funds comprise income less expenditure incurred for the specified purposes. Of these, EPO funds are those collected specifically to donate to various charities.

5 Going Concern

The PCC agreed that the financial statements should be prepared on the going concern basis. It was noted, however, that income levels remain lower than pre-Covid while costs have risen. Planned giving has continued to drop as has collections, although the latter might be explained in part by increased use of the card reader.

For most of the year, the position of Treasurer was vacant which limited the PCC's ability to respond and plan to a challenging financial situation. High energy prices and inflation meant that it was necessary to draw on investments to meet running costs, with a net deficit in the general fund broadly in line with that budgeted-for. Although there are substantial investments, drawing on these to cover shortfalls reduces the financial sustainability of the parish across time.

A concerted effort has been made by the PCC to increase fundraising income and this resulted in fundraising activities earning more in 2023 than 2022. This will continue to be focused on in the future with a commitment by the PCC to prepare a clear income generation strategy, as will opportunities to attract grant funding that incorporates indirect costs. Increased fundraising activities, the effects of the new lighting scheme, hire of the John Frith Room and a reduction in energy supply costs from October have helped to mitigate some costs.

