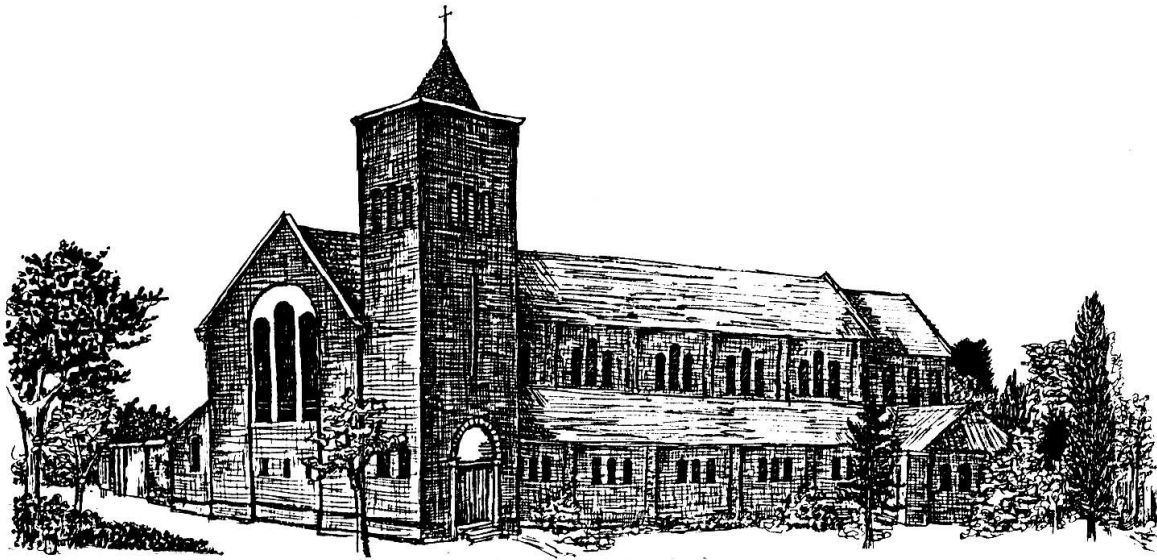




# **St Faith and St Laurence Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/2024**



**THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST FAITH AND ST LAURENCE HARBORNE**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024  
of the  
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**For the year ended April 2024  
and  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

**Priest in Charge:**

The Reverend David Parker  
Harborne  
Birmingham

**Bank:**

TSB plc  
537 Bearwood Road  
Warley  
West Midlands  
B66 4BQ

**Independent Examiner:**

Gee Ark FCA  
Ark Aurora Ltd  
Chartered Accountants and Chartered Tax Advisors  
The Maltings  
2 Anderson Road  
Bearwood  
Birmingham  
B66 4AR

**Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of  
Churchwardens and Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.30 pm and 7.45 pm held in the Church**

**A G E N D A**

1. Opening Prayers

**Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens**

2. Election of Churchwardens

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

3. Apologies for absence

4. Minutes of the 2022/2023 meeting

5. Business as required by the Synodical Government Measure 1969:

The Annual Meeting shall receive from the Parochial Church Council and shall be free to discuss: -

- A report on changes in the roll since the last annual parochial church meeting
- An annual report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the activities of the parish generally
- The financial statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31st December 2023
- A report upon the fabric, goods, and ornaments of the church, under section 5 of the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991
- A report on the proceedings of the Edgbaston Deanery Synod

6. Elections

- Parochial representatives of the laity to the Parochial Church Council (6 for 2024-2027 plus 2 places on Deanery Synod)
- Appointment of Independent Examiner

7. Any questions about parochial church matters, or discussion of any matters of parochial or general church interest, or any particular recommendation to the Council in relation to its duties.

8. Final words from the Chair

9. The Grace

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC: -

Priest in Charge: The Rev'd David Parker

Licensed Reader: Sally Griffiths  
Rachel Luckman (resigned May 2023)

Churchwardens: Malcolm Adey  
Corinne Treacy

Treasurer: Loleta Atkinson

Secretary: Helen Setchell

Deanery Synod Caroline Mosley  
Representatives: Simon Palmer (resigned January 2024)

Elected Members: Angela Collingwood  
Dee Coyne  
Alan Jones  
Helen Setchell  
Anita Tippin  
Chris Stewart  
John Wadman

## **TASK GROUPS AND OTHER ROUPS 2023/2024**

The PCC operates through a number of Task Groups, which meet between full meetings of the PCC. The Incumbent is an ex-officio member of all committees.

**Standing Committee** chaired by the Vicar. This is the only committee required by law. The committee consists of the Vicar, Wardens, Secretary, Treasurer, with two other members of the PCC.

**Children and Young People Task Group** chaired by Helen Setchell

**Church and Estates Task Group** chaired by David Arkel

**Communications Task Group** chaired by Caroline Mosley

**Eco Church** chaired by Corinne Treacy

**Mission Task Group** chaired by Pauline Sitford

**Socials Task Group** chaired by David Glanvill

**Safeguarding** Sally Griffiths, Safeguarding Co-ordinator  
Corinne Treacy, Parish Identity Verifier

# **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens and Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 at 7.30 pm and 7.45 pm**

In attendance (28): Malcolm Adey, Loleta Atkinson, Geoff Bennett, Judith Bennett, Angela Collingwood, Neil Collingwood, Laurie Deimel, David Glanvill, Sally Griffiths, Helen Hayward, Tim Hayward, Alan Jones, Pat Jones, Thelma Kettle, Diana Leadbeater, Caroline Mosley, Beryl Myers, Len Myers, Simon Palmer, Susannah Palmer, Rev'd David Parker, Jane Shaw, Peter Stokes, Brenda Stott, Anita Tippin, Corinne Treacy, John Wadman and Wendy Watts

## **I. Opening Prayers**

David Parker read from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians and led prayers.

## **Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens**

### **2. Election of Churchwardens**

David explained that this meeting is open to all persons on the church's electoral roll and also all residents of the parish, reminding us that the parish church exists to serve everyone in the parish.

David thanked Malcolm Adey and Corinne Treacy for their work as Churchwardens over the last year, when the parish had until recently been in Vacancy, so the wardens carried extra responsibilities. Both had been nominated to serve again, and there were no other nominations, but before they could be re-elected it was necessary to address the rule under which wardens were not permitted to serve for more than 6 consecutive years. In May 2022, to allow Malcolm to serve for a 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the parish had passed the resolution "that the requirement under the CofE rules (Churchwardens Measure 2021 s.3) that a person may not serve as churchwarden for more than six successive periods does not apply to the Parish of St Faith and St Laurence for the year 2022/2023". David said he considered the 6 year rule a good thing in general – the same person serving as churchwarden for too long is not good for that person or for the parish. Caroline Mosley proposed reinstating the 6 year with effect from May 2024, which would allow Malcolm to serve one more term (making 8 years in total):

**Proposal:** that the requirement under the CofE rules (Churchwardens Measure 2021 s.3) that a person may not serve as churchwarden for more than six successive periods does not apply to the Parish of St Faith and St Laurence for the year 2023/2024 will be reinstated from May 2024.

**Proposed:** Caroline Mosley **Seconded:** Peter Stokes **Vote:** Unanimous

### ***Election of Churchwardens:***

Malcolm Adey

**Nominated:** David Arkell **Seconded:** Alan Jones **Vote:** 27 for/1 against

Corinne Treacy

**Nominated:** Paul Bartells **Seconded:** Caroline Mosley **Vote:** 27 for/1 abstention

Malcolm Adey and Corinne Treacy were duly affirmed as wardens for the coming year.

### **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

#### **3. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from David Arkell, Lesley Arkell, Dee Coyne, Gill Hubble, Bronwen Jones, Mark Laurence, Helen Setchell, Hilary Shaylor and Pauline Sitford

David commended to the meeting the booklet containing all the reports on the previous year, and extended thanks to Gill Hubble for all her work in collating the reports and to Peter Stokes for printing the booklets. There had been a few minor errors and glitches (the report from the Gardening Task Group had gone astray, and that from the Mission Task Group was provided separately) which would be corrected before the final version was published on the website.

#### **4. Minutes of the 2021/2022 meeting**

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the 2022 meeting.

**Proposed:** Corinne Treacy      **Seconded:** Len Myers

#### **5. Business as required by the Synodical Government Measure 1969**

- a. Electoral Roll** – Judith Bennett, the Electoral Roll Officer, reported that there were 126 recorded on the roll, made up of 62 residents of the parish and 64 non-residents. Thanks were given to Judith.
- b. PCC Report** – This had been circulated prior to the meeting. A couple of minor errors were noted: the BBQ and Messy Church event for the Coronation would be in May, not June. There were no questions or comments arising.
- c. Financial statements** – These had been circulated prior to the meeting. Loleta Atkinson, Treasurer, reported to the meeting. There had been a healthy surplus on the year, but this was artificially inflated by the fact that fees collected and retained during the vacancy would now have to be paid to the Diocese.

Tim Heyward pointed out that the value for which the Church Hall is insured has not been increased for several years. David acknowledged that this had recently been brought to his attention, and needed to be addressed.

#### **Ratification of Report and Accounts for 2022**

**Proposed:** Brenda Stott      **Seconded:** Sally Griffiths **Vote:** Unanimous

Thanks were expressed to Loleta for all her work.

- d. Fabric, Goods and Ornaments** - A report from the Churchwardens had been circulated in the booklet prior to the meeting. There were no questions received.

- e. A report on the proceedings of the Edgbaston Deanery Synod was circulated in the booklet prior to the meeting. No questions were received.

David Parker reported to the meeting that he had just received confirmation that St Michael's Bartley Green had agreed to join the proposed Oversight Area with St Faith and St Laurence, St Peter's, St Mary's Selly Oak and St Gabriel's Weoley Castle.

- f. Churches Together in Harborne – David Parker reported that he is now meeting the other ministers regularly for breakfast, and this is likely to be the main point of contact for the time being. Brenda Stott has been a member of the group which plans the service for the World Day of Prayer, but has now stood down from this.

Other reports. Referring to the report from the FandGP, Loleta confirmed that the 5% retention on the payment for the Hall Roof project had not yet been requested but we were still liable to pay this in due course.

## 6. Elections

### a. Deanery Synod representatives

Thanks were expressed to Caroline Mosley and Bronwen Jones who have represented the parish for the last year on the Deanery Synod.

David explained that a new Synod must be elected this year, to serve for 3 years. The Deanery Synod representatives also act as the electors for the Diocesan and General Synods. We are entitled to have 4 representatives, but only one nomination has been received.

Caroline Mosley

**Proposed:** Corinne Treacy **Seconded:** Michael Averill **Vote:** Unanimous

David encouraged others to consider offering themselves for this role.

### b. Parochial Representatives of the Laity to the PCC

Before electing representatives to the PCC, the parish needed to confirm its policy with regard to Readers. David suggested that as we only have 2 Readers, it is appropriate that they should automatically be members of the PCC.

**Proposed:** David Parker **Seconded:** Alan Jones **Vote:** Unanimous

There are 4 places for PCC members, to serve for the next 3 years. In addition we already had 3 vacancies, and Peter Gardner has decided to stand down from the PCC, so there are actually 8 places available. 4 nominations had been received, as follows: -

**Name:** *Loleta Atkinson*

**Proposed:** Corinne Treacy

**Seconded:** Beryl Myers



**Name:** *Angela Collingwood*

**Proposed:** Helen Hayward

**Seconded:** Len Myers

**Name:** *Dee Coyne*

**Proposed:** Pauline Sitford

**Seconded:** David Glanvill

**Name:** *Alan Jones*

**Proposed:** Caroline Mosley

**Seconded:** Alex Wright

As there were fewer candidates than places these were voted in on a single vote:

**Proposed:** Corinne Treacy **Seconded:** Thelma Kettle **Vote:** unanimous.

**c. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

It was proposed that we continue with the current Independent Examiner, Ark Aurora Ltd.

**Proposed:** Loleta Atkinson **Seconded:** David Parker **Vote:** Unanimous

**d. Representatives to Churches Together in Harborne**

There was no representative at the moment. There were no volunteers.

**7. Any Questions**

- a.** Peter Stokes suggested that the main issues concerning the congregation were the heating systems and the audio system.

Responding, David explained that the burner for the main church boiler had now been serviced by the manufacturer and was currently working well. However, the life span of a burner was around 25 years and as the present burner is approximately 23 years old thought should be given to replacing it in due course. To replace it may cost around £3k + VAT.

The gas heaters in the Lady Chapel and Choir Vestry were currently not usable: that in the Lady Chapel had been condemned as dangerous fumes were escaping from it, and the Choir Vestry heater had suffered a serious gas leak. He was investigating replacement heaters for these areas.

David noted the concerns about the audio system, and apologised if these had not been addressed with sufficient urgency.

- b.** Corinne Treacy reminded the meeting that the Quinquennial Report was overdue and suggested that we should be cautious about committing to new work before knowing what the Quinquennial will raise.

- c. Susannah Palmer noted that a Bouncy Castle was proposed for the Coronation BBQ and asked if appropriate Risk Assessments and insurance checks had been done. David Glanvill promised to do the necessary.
- d. Helen Hayward expressed thanks to Simon Palmer, Mark Lawrence and Susannah Palmer for the wonderful quality of music in church.

## **8. Final words**

David expressed thanks to Caroline Mosley for chairing the PCC so efficiently over the last year, and presented her with a gift of flowers. In turn, Caroline thanked David for his support.

David made some final reflections on the state of the parish, and his appointment as Interim Priest in Charge. He sensed that after the nightmare of Priscilla's illness (not to mention Covid and some other issues) the parish had become rather traumatised, unsettled, lacking in confidence, so it would not have been a good time to advertise for a permanent Vicar. Part of his role was to help restore confidence in the parish, and he had undertaken the role because he could see how much potential there is here, as evidenced by the printed reports to this meeting.

Of course there are challenges – this is a challenging time for all parishes, and this one is certainly not exempt. The finances are not too bad, but we shall need to find a bit more money and start paying more to the Diocese. The church building is believed to be in good condition but who knows what the new Quinquennial inspection will throw up. Perhaps the biggest challenge is the age structure – we are all getting older, so we do need to try to attract children and young families back to church. David said he was delighted that both Simon Palmer and Helen Setchell in different ways were trying to address this, and hoped everyone would support them as much as possible.

David expressed disappointment that the meeting had not managed to fill so many of the posts and encouraged people to offer themselves for the vacant positions.

David ended by reminding everyone of the importance of working constructively together, and being able to disagree without hurting each other, and the meeting closed with the Peace.

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR 2023/2024**

Since the last APCM the Parochial Church Council has met on six occasions to discuss and decide upon matters of business relating to church life.

The church exists to promote the Christian Religion, to offer prayer, worship and pastoral care, and to work in such a way as to offer public benefit to all who might wish to use it or its facilities, including the church hall.

The council has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

At its first meeting, in May 2023, the PCC re-elected Caroline Mosley as lay Vice-Chair and Loleta Atkinson as Treasurer and elected Helen Setchell as Secretary (note taker). Caroline Mosley and Simon Palmer were elected to the Standing Committee, joining the Priest-in-charge, Churchwardens, Treasurer and Secretary who (as agreed in early 2023) are to be ex-officio members of the Standing Committee.

The previous PCC had agreed to streamline the way the PCC operates by making more use of the Standing Committee in implementing agreed policies, allowing the full PCC to concentrate on deciding policy. The number of PCC meetings has been reduced to 6 per year, in May, July, September, November, January and March, and the Standing Committee has met 4 times, in June, October, December and February, and has also transacted business by email.

This greater use of the Standing Committee partially supplanted the role of the previous Finance and General Purposes Task Group, and it was decided to relaunch this group with a focus specifically on buildings and infrastructure. This relaunch was delayed to autumn 2023 to await receipt of the architect's Quinquennial Report. Subsequently the new group adopted the name Church Estate Task Group (CETG).

One of the first tasks of the new PCC was to appoint a new inspecting architect, since the previous architect (Chris Thomas) had retired. After discussion, and drawing on advice from neighbouring parishes, Philip Waghorn was appointed and carried out a Quinquennial inspection of the church on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023. His very detailed report, received on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, itemised a large number of minor items of concern, many of which the CETG will gradually tackle, but the major issue identified was the poor state of the gutters and downpipes. The PCC agreed to prioritise tackling these as a major project and asked the architect to draw up a detailed scheme of works. This was received at the end of February 2024, and tenders for this work are currently being sought.

During the 2023 APCM, questions were asked about the church heating systems and the audio system. Since the burner was serviced in February 2023, the main church heating has worked reliably, but in the same month the gas heater in the Lady Chapel was condemned as unsafe. The PCC initially planned a like-for-like replacement but, as current CofE policy is to replace gas heaters with electrical heaters wherever possible, permission was eventually obtained to replace the Lady Chapel gas heater with a pair of electric radiators. At the same time, the small gas heater in the choir vestry was replaced by another pair of electric radiators, enabling David to use this

as his office even in the middle of winter. These improvements were funded by a generous donation and by a grant held by David, so cost nothing from PCC funds.

Improvements to the audio system have also been made: the unreliable handheld microphone has been replaced with a much better one, and a new digital mixer has been installed which can be remotely controlled from a tablet in the body of the church. Again, the cost of these enhancements was almost entirely met by specific donations.

Heating costs were a major concern during 2023, following a fourfold increase in gas prices from October 2022, but the parish was already committed to receiving its energy via the Parish Buying scheme's Energy Basket (negotiated nationally). Fortunately, in October 2023 the prices reduced significantly, although they are still much higher than a few years ago.

Following a short trial, the PCC decided to purchase a Payaz contactless payment machine for the church. This cost £460 but in the first 6 months of use has received payments totalling nearly £400 so has now essentially paid for itself.

A review of the rents charged to Hall users led to some users agreeing significant increases. During the year, two new regular users (Lyengar Yoga and Mini Athletics) have joined the existing users (Heathcroft Bridge Club, Quinborne Bridge Club and Slimming World), and our weekly income from these 5 groups now totals £400 per week.

As reported in the 2023 report, the PCC had decided to reinstate the principle of assigning at least 5% of its income to charitable causes. The Mission Task Group were asked to suggest suitable causes to support, and the PCC agreed to their recommendation that £800 be given to each of the following four charities: Church Army (Amber project), USPG (Malawi), Book Aid International and Shanti Aid. When donations to other groups raised in specific appeals are included, a total of over £4700 was given to charities during 2023.

The PCC also agreed to increase the amount of Common Fund we are paying to the Diocesan Board of Finance from £36k to £40k for the year 2024.

As announced at last year's APCM, the parish is now grouped in an Oversight Area with the parishes of St Peter's Harborne, St Michael's Bartley Green, St Mary's Selly Oak and St Gabriel's Weoley Castle. No Oversight Minister has yet been appointed to this grouping, and no formal launch has occurred, but the PCC has embraced opportunities to work with these other parishes, and in particular with St Peter's on joint Messy Church sessions for children.

Towards the end of 2023 the PCC agreed to a proposal from the Communications Task Group that the parish magazine be produced quarterly instead of monthly. The principal reason for the change is not cost-saving but rather the difficulty of obtaining enough material every month; by reducing the frequency to quarterly it is hoped that the magazine can be made more relevant to the parish.

The PCC agreed to renew the contract with R T Cleaning and Maintenance for cleaning the church and church hall for a further 3 years from February 2024. One of the PCC members, Corinne Treacy, has an interest in the firm. Corinne was not involved in the re-appointment decision process.

The church wardens, Corinne Treacy and Malcolm Adey are responsible for all the contents of the church, including any movable furniture, books, vestments, plate, and ornaments. After 30 years of service, Helen Hayward retired as Verger for weddings and funerals at the end of 2023. The PCC agreed to advertise locally for a replacement and, after a suitable recruitment process, Corinne Treacy was offered and accepted the post.

Simon Palmer's resignation as Organist and Choirmaster at the end of 2023 came as a shock to all. In January 2024 the PCC discussed its vision for the future of music in our worship. We agreed that music in worship is central to our parish identity and committed ourselves to continuing the tradition of liturgical music. We are extremely fortunate that for the time being Mark Lawrence is willing to organise our music and play for most of our services, meaning that we can take our time over recruiting a permanent replacement for Simon.

Apart from Simon's departure, this has largely been a year of stability and consolidation, when parish life returned to something like "normal" after the traumas of recent years. This report has focussed on matters directly considered by the PCC. However, many parish matters are devolved to the various Task Groups, whose work we commend and whose individual reports accompany this report.

## **The PCC**

### **TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT**

*All page references are to the Annual Accounts, which are at the end of this booklet.*

The **Statement of the Current Account for 2023** is on pages 2 and 3.

**Income:** In 2023 we saw a significant increase in income from lettings, but receipts from planned giving, and collections decreased compared to 2022.

We received donations for the sound system of £2,161.65 and for the heating system of £1,518.

The Christmas Fayre raised £1,222 for church fund.

We also received donations that we paid to the: Turkish Appeal, Food Bank, St Basil, Christian Aid, Children Society, City Mission and Malawi. All gratefully received.

**Payments:** The Common Fund for the year, £36,000 was paid in full. The PCC has agreed to increase the amount we pay next year, 2024 to £40,000, in 2023. We are not yet paying the full amount asked for by the diocese.

We made the final payment of £1,546.37, from the Hall repairs investment account, for the hall roof repairs. This was delayed because the company had not provided us with the final invoice.

We repaid £1953.82 of fees to the Diocese which were outstanding from the period of vacancy.

Our heating costs were approximately £4.5k higher than the previous year.

Overall, for the year we had a significant excess of payments over receipts. This is due in part to the fact that we made payments to charities that we did not pay last year:

- Book Aid International - £800
- UPSG Malawi - £800
- Church Army Cardiff - £800
- Shanti Aid (B'ham) - £800

#### **Delegated/Restricted Funds** on page 4 and 5.

- Church Hall and Repair Fund: The balance was reduced by the £1546 transferred to the current account to pay the final roof repairs invoice. And interest added.
- Fabric Furniture and Fittings Fund: No change.
- Other Restricted Funds: Women's Fellowship – Actual balance as confirmed by the Fellowship recorded.

#### **Statement of Assets and Liabilities** on page 6.

The first column includes CBF investment Deposit account (i.e The PCC Investment) balance. The PCC investment account is a reserve account mainly to back up the current account. And the current account balance. It shows the total non-restricted funds.

The second column records the Church Hall & Repair Fund Account, a designated fund, analysed on page 4.

#### **Thank You**

Thanks to all those who have helped with counting recording and banking the income, namely, Brenda, Hilary, Anita, Lesley, Peter and Malcolm. To Judith for managing the hall hire. And to the church wardens, Malcolm and Corinne for their support.

Thanks to Geoff who continues to make the annual grant claims and for his continued support.

Thank you also to those who give generously to the Church.

#### **Parish Giving Scheme**

One last plea, **please join the Parish Giving Scheme**. This delivers the Gift Aid, (tax refund) much earlier, monthly, and it avoids the onerous task of completing and submitting the claim forms at the end of the year.

**Loleta Atkinson, Treasurer**

## **CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT TO APCM 2024**

*The Churchwardens are Bishops' officers, chosen by the parish and admitted to their office by the Bishop or Archdeacon. Once admitted they have formal and legal responsibilities to fulfil.*

Since the Licensing of Revd David Parker as St Faith and St Laurence (SF&SL) Priest-in-Charge on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 for a period of three years, the church has moved on rapidly. It had been decided that the church will be open to the public and since week beginning April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023, the church has been open to the public from dusk till dawn from Monday to Friday inclusive.

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, it had been decided that the Private Prayer sessions carried on manned by Stewards will be stopped from September 2023. Thank you so much to all involved.

Unfortunately, the convent of The Little Sisters of the Poor closed and David, Corinne, Hazel and Vernon attended their last service on July 16<sup>th</sup> at 3pm.

The Churchwardens' visitation was held on October 9<sup>th</sup> 2023. We met with Revd Mike Sermon (Area Dean of Warley and Edgbaston) and all went well.

### **Fabric and Buildings**

The fabric of the Church and the Hall buildings remains in a good condition and are maintained to an acceptable standard. The state of the buildings is monitored on a regular basis and any maintenance and/or repairs needed are agreed through our recently created Church Estate Task Group (CETG), the Standing Committee (SC) and/or Parish Church Council (PCC).

All maintenance services throughout 2023/24 were carried out in accordance with the regulations i.e. bells, boilers, fire extinguishers, intruder alarms, organ, Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) and sound system.

#### *The Church*

No major works were needed this previous year.

We were again delighted to welcome Quinton Co-operative Funeralcare for their Christmas Memorial Service on Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup>, Woodhouse Primary Academy for their Christmas concert on Monday December 11<sup>th</sup>, Bright Horizons Nursery for their Nativity on Monday December 18<sup>th</sup> and Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Primary School pupils and staff for their visits to church. The Church was rented to several choirs and / or instrumental workshops and concerts.

#### *The Hall and Committee Room*

Minor repairs such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing and general maintenance had been carried out this year. The clock in the Committee Room had stopped working and was replaced recently with a new donated one.

There were more regular and occasional hirers for the Hall and the Committee Room. The rental prices requested to the users had been revised to be more consistent across the hirers.

#### *Heating and Sound System*

Following the problems with the gas heaters in the Lady Chapel and in the Choir Vestry in the previous year, the gas heaters in the Lady Chapel and the Choir Vestry/Office were changed in November 2023 to electric ones.

The sound system had been upgraded in November 2023. This included a hand held mic and a remotely controlled digital mixer.

These improvements (heating & sound system) were funded through generous donations from members of the congregation.

#### *Vicarage*

Since March 2022, the Vicarage has been rented on and off. When periods occur that the Vicarage is not rented, utility bills and grounds maintenance has to be taken care of by the Parish Church Council (PCC) whilst the Diocese has to take care of the necessary repairs before renting it. Thankfully these periods have never been too long. We, as Churchwardens, are the Vicarage Sequestrators but Bishop Anne has appointed Richard Hall (Diocesan Clergy Housing Surveyor) to deal with the Vicarage on our behalf. A small quantity of post is still being posted at the Vicarage. Due to the good relationship with the tenants, however, the post is always redirected accordingly.

#### **Quinquennial 2023**

The report confirmed that the church building is generally in good condition. A lot of small issues were identified, however. These were now in the hand of the CETG. The major issue identified, was the church cast iron gutters and down-pipes. Philip Whaghorn (Architect), who did the Quinquennial report 2023, has been commissioned to draw up a scheme on these.

#### **Goods and Ornaments**

As churchwardens we are custodians of the church, including any movable furniture, books, vestments, plate and ornaments. Therefore, we have completed a full inventory to this effect in March 2024. The Terrier and Inventory of property owned by the church has been checked and it is confirmed that all items recorded are accounted for and in reasonable condition.

#### **Grounds**

We are grateful to the gardening team, lawn and hedge cutters and all the Ecochurch working party / litter picking volunteers for keeping the community garden, the front grounds and the church surroundings tidy and well maintained.

#### **Services**

Throughout this year, we had normal and special services.

Chalice Administrators were authorised by PCC and appointed by David during the service held on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2023.

It was decided on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2023, to release the restriction regarding the wearing of mask during Holy Communion and since Sunday June 18<sup>th</sup> 2023, the sign of peace can also be a hand shake.

On May 28<sup>th</sup> we said goodbye to Rachel and Ruth. Thank you Ruth and thank you Rachel for all you had been doing for the Church.



PCC decided that from September 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday Zoom Worship session would stop. At the same time two of the WhatsApp groups were cancelled.

On February 4<sup>th</sup> 2024, after 43 years, we said goodbye to Simon Palmer (Organist and Choir Master) and also to Suzannah Palmer as they were moving on to their new roles at St Peter's.

We have had some lovely special services during this previous year and especially during the last few weeks around Easter. Thank you to all the Singers who sang so wonderfully on Palm Sunday, thank you also to Abigail, Jasmin and Rose who sang so beautifully at the 10am Service on Easter Sunday, and thank you to Mark Lawrence who organised all this. The music and singing were mesmerising. Much appreciated!

## **Appreciation**

Malcolm and I would like to record our grateful thanks and appreciation to:

- The Deputy Wardens, David and Sue Glanvill, for their continuous assistance and support given.
- The sides-persons / stewards, who are the first point of welcome to the church.
- Peter Stokes for compiling and/or printing Parish magazines, pew sheets, orders of service etc.
- The bell ringers, the singers, the Organists who produce some lovely music.
- The cleaners, the flower arrangers who ensure that the church looks beautiful.
- Sally Griffiths, our Lay Reader, for her massive contribution.
- David Parker, our Priest-in-Charge, for all his hard work, his support and for ensuring that our spiritual life continues to develop and grow.
- All our volunteers at St Faith and St Laurence for their continued willingness to give their time to carry out tasks, duties and offer each other encouragement and support.
- A special thank you to Helen Hayward (former Verger), who stepped down from her role after many years of commitment.

## **Malcolm Adey & Corinne Treacy (Churchwardens)**

## **WARLEY AND EDGBASTON DEANERY SYNOD 2023/2024**

The Deanery Synod met three times on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024. St Faith and St Laurence is entitled to elect three lay members, but Caroline Mosley is currently the only lay representative for the parish. Simon Palmer also agreed to become a member and was appointed by the PCC in July 2023 but subsequently resigned following his departure from the parish in February 2024. Revd David Parker is automatically a member of the Synod as priest in charge.

Deanery Synod operates on a three year cycle and the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023 was the final meeting of that cycle. The meeting was held at Christ Church, The Quinton. The two General Synod representatives, Dawn Braithwaite and Guy Hordern gave their personal reflections on the "Living in Love and Faith" debate that had been held at General Synod in February. They discussed both the difficulties and the positives that came out of the debate. The need for kindness, listening to others and mutual respect of different opinions was emphasised as we all move forward.

Dan Mayes, Property Director for CofE Birmingham and Alan Fraser gave a presentation on the current crisis in social housing, particularly locally, and the diocese's response. The diocese is one of three running "Coming Home" pilot schemes. These follow a CofE Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community report on housing policy. Alan is an experienced social housing professional and is a lead in the pilot. Dan and Alan described two projects in Winson Green and Weoley Castle where they are working with the local churches in collaborating with developers to deliver new social housing schemes. Further projects are being investigated.

Details of the Common Fund collection rate across the CofE Birmingham were presented. The Birmingham Diocesan Board of Finance projected a budget deficit of between £800,000 - £1 million for 2023.

Julia Howl, Deanery Environmental Champion, gave updates on the CofE Birmingham net zero actions. Parishes were encouraged to achieve Eco Church awards as this would help push the diocese in achieving its own Eco Diocese silver award.

The formation of our oversight area with St Mary's Selly Oak, St Gabriel's Weoley Castle, St Peter's Harborne and St Michael & All Angels Bartley Green was announced.

Thanks were offered to all the deanery synod representatives and to the steering committee and lay officers of the synod at the end of their terms.

The October meeting, the first in the Synod's next three year cycle, was held at St James, Rounds Green. It began with elections and Ian Thorley, from St Mary the Virgin Bearwood was elected as Deanery Synod Lay Chair. Julia Howl, from St Peter's Harborne was elected as Deanery Synod Secretary. Guy Hordern, Peter Pretlove, Paul Geddes, Rev Charlie Butler and Rev David Gould were elected to join Ian, Julia, and Area Dean Mike Sermon as members of the Standing Committee.

Archdeacon Jenny Tomlinson spoke about the roles of archdeacon and of deanery synod. She highlighted that the synodical process has the power to lead to change with the example of how an issue raised by a Church of England Birmingham parish had moved through the deanery, diocesan and General synods, before ending in a case before the Supreme Court.

Canon Mark Pryce, Director of Ministry (and a Chaplain to the King), spoke about his role and the importance of support and training for everyone called to ministry, whether full or lay. He outlined the training and support that would be available to authorised local preachers, oversight ministers and oversight areas.

Andy Winmill, recently appointed Director of Mission Support, spoke about his background working with Urban Devotion, a Christian community transformation project in North Birmingham. He then described the work of the Mission Support team, which offers resources to parishes for all aspects of local mission. Andy also outlined the support that would be available to oversight areas as they explore missional opportunities.

Updates we received from the diocesan synod and environment representatives. The first Oversight Ministers were announced.

Unfortunately, neither David nor myself were able to attend the February 2024 meeting which took place at Holy Trinity, Smethwick.

The Area Dean's notes state that the main topic of the evening was a finance presentation from Karen Preece, Diocesan Director of Finance and Sonia Hudson, Finance Manager. There was gratitude and thanks for the generous giving of the deanery's parishes who had met 98% of their Common Fund Pledges in 2023. The wider financial picture for the CofE Birmingham is unfortunately not so good and we are facing a significant financial deficit for 2023 and a growing financial deficit for 2024. Many dioceses are feeling a significant financial squeeze too, as are parishes and all of our own household budgets. As a result, however, hard questions are being asked about the current structure of the diocese and our ability to support the level of stipendiary ordained ministry that we currently enjoy.

The financial presentation was followed by a short act of worship, thanking God for the many blessings that have been received individually and collectively as a deanery, and praying for the future.

The meeting ended with networking in small groups, discussing the future work of the deanery and its parishes.

**Caroline Mosley**

## **REPORTS FROM TASK GROUPS AND CHURCH ORGANISATIONS**

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TASK GROUP**

Children's ministry work is linked to our neighbouring parish of St Peter's Harborne and together we work with the aim of sharing God's love, spreading the good news of salvation through Jesus, God's Son and helping each other to grow through the Holy Spirit with children in an engaging way.

St Faith and St Laurence hosted two Messy Church opportunities during the last year linked to Social Committee events. We celebrated the King's Coronation in May 2023 with families able to plant seeds for new growth, think about Kingship by making crowns, flags, cakes etc and join in our community through sharing in the barbeque, ice cream van and bouncy castle fun. Our Messy Church in December 2023 led into St Faith and St Laurence's Christmas Fair. Everyone was invited to create cards, decorations, door hangers, the Christmas story etc using a wide range of craft materials. It was special to be able to hold this advent event in the church by the twinkling Christmas Tree. The children and their families were then able to enjoy the Fair, especially meeting Father Christmas.

Members of our Church Community were warmly welcomed to attend St Peter's Harborne Family Day in June and their Advent celebrations at the end of November, so it is a blessing that there have been some activities available for families during the past 12 months. Whilst the number of children attending is relatively small, offering opportunities for Christian Fellowship is worthwhile and rewarding and I am grateful for the support given to our Children's Ministry

from those who are willing to run an activity table but also others who provide refreshments and help prepare and clear up afterwards.

The next Messy Church event at St Faith and St Laurence is planned for Saturday 20th April 2024 and Sue Glanvill, Julia Reid and I are planning New Beginnings / St George's Day activities with some baking, crafting and fun things to do.

In this way, joint events that both parishes can share will enable the continuation of children being welcomed into our church communities and provide opportunities for us all to grow in love, deepen our faith and together, work for God.

**Helen Setchell**

## **CHURCH ESTATES TASK GROUP**

This recently formed Task Group was previously the Finance and General Purposes Task Group. Its remit is to oversee the church buildings, contents (fabric) and its grounds. It does not include major spending which remains the province of the PCC and/or Standing Committee. Its seven members, chosen for their expertise and knowledge, have met twice and have begun to study the Quinquennial 2023 Report in detail, to undertake our own inspection and to plan urgent work needed to maintain the fabric of the church and its surrounds.

An additional requirement is that the church strives to reduce energy use and associated carbon emissions and the TG will subsequently propose an action plan "Towards Net Zero Carbon" for the PCC from which the church will benefit.

**David Arkell**

## **CHURCH FLOWERS**

Flowers have been arranged on the main altar and Lady Chapel every week except during Advent and Lent. The whole church is decorated for Easter and Christmas. The Advent ring is decorated on the lead up to Christmas.

Again, my thanks to the small band of ladies who arrange the flowers in church. They do an excellent job. We are always happy to welcome new volunteers to the list of arrangers.

**Anita Tippin**

## **CHURCHWOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

In 2023 the Fellowship once again had a lovely programme of speakers and meals out. We started our year in March with Mike Wilkes who showed us wonderful slides of Nature in Action. In case Woodgate Valley Fire Service weren't able to visit us at the last moment in April, a member had prepared an "Alphabet" quiz which did have to be used and she also told us of an incident she was involved in at Lloyds Bank in Quinton!!

In May we went to The Bell in Harborne for our Spring Lunch, then in June Peter Stokes told us about his pilgrimage Walking the Camino de Santiago. Mary Bodfish talked to us about Smethwick in World War 2 in July. After a break in August, we held the AGM in September together with another Quiz.

In October we had a demonstration of Chinese Painting by Glynis Wilson, then in November Peter came again to repeat his talk, this time with pictures as the technology had failed in June!! Our year finished in December with a Christmas Lunch at the Court Oak.

Once again Caroline Marshall did a good job putting together the programme, Carol Mason looked after the finances and Wendy Watts dealt with the monthly raffle. My thanks go to them and all members for their support and making the drinks and bringing raffle prizes. Sadly, we lost one member during the year, leaving a membership of 18.

Any lady who may be interested in coming along would be made very welcome – our programme is on the Notice Board in the Hall lobby. For any more details, please do contact me.

**Helen Hayward**

## **COMMUNICATIONS TASK GROUP**

The Communications Task Group is chaired by Caroline Mosley with Peter Stokes and Revd David Parker as members.

Caroline Mosley is responsible for website maintenance, Facebook, Twitter (not currently used) and as back up for the weekly email via Churchsuite. Peter Stokes compiles and edits the magazine and produces the weekly pewsheets. David Parker produces the weekly email and is back up for the website maintenance.

The group met once in 2023 to discuss the future of the magazine. Peter Stokes highlighted that we didn't have the content or people needed to produce a full Magazine every month. It was also felt that the constant pressure of the next monthly deadline was an obstacle to people contributing.

After discussion and careful consideration, we decided to reduce the frequency at which the Magazine is published for a trial period. From 2024, the Magazine will be issued four times a year with Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter issues. The Spring issue will focus on Lent, Holy Week and Easter and the Winter issue on Advent and Christmas. The first issue of the new cycle was produced in March 2024. The change is also a deliberate attempt to make the Magazine more relevant to our parish life. It is hoped that the a longer production schedule will encourage more people to contribute articles about the church and its activities. We would welcome feedback on the new format and schedule.

New members are urgently sought for the TG. If you have any interest in helping with our work, please do get in touch.

**Caroline Mosley**

## ECO CHURCH

St Faith and St Laurence (SF&SL) Eco Church Task Group was created in 2019. Eco Church, provided by A Rocha UK are members of The Climate Coalition, and are encouraging as many Christians and churches as possible to take part. This shows others that we serve a God of Creation and adds our efforts to those of others for the greatest combined impact.

SF&SL is the proud owner of the Eco Church bronze award and the Eco Church silver award is just round the corner.

Birmingham Diocese has applied for the Eco Diocese silver award and if they get it, it will be the first diocese to achieve the silver status. Thanks to all Birmingham Diocese churches' hard work!

The Church of England (CofE) General Synod has recognised the climate emergency and called on all parts of the Church to become "net zero carbon" by 2030. The collective approach to "net zero carbon" is underpinned by six principles: Well maintained, buy renewable, waste less, electric not gas/oil, generate more and offset the rest. A requirement is for Parish Church Councils (PCC) to adopt an action plan towards "Net Zero Carbon". SF&SL PCC has delegated this task to the newly Church Estate Task Group (CETG) and with my recommendations as the Parish Environment Contact (PEC), we shall build a practical path to "net zero carbon". This will aim to help SF&SL reduce its energy use and associated carbon emissions.

Another requirement is for churches to complete an Energy Footprint report. This has to be completed yearly and I am pleased to report that SF&SL has this year decreased its carbon footprint by reducing its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>e). This has been possible by switching to LED, buying renewable energy, replacing the gas radiators in the Choir vestry/office and the Lady Chapel for electric ones, servicing our boilers and generally being careful and saving energy by 'switching off'.

Our Parish Environment Contact (PEC) meetings are ongoing and we have more members. We try to meet in different churches so we can visit the church and see what has been achieved and what the next projects are. The aim of our meeting is to care for the environment, help each other parishes with Eco Church awards; how to engage the congregation, politicians and neighbours on our journey to net zero carbon; how to work together by sharing ideas and knowledge; how to connect with the Diocese. On Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023, we held a litter picking / working party to celebrate the start of the Churches Count on Nature and the Great Big Green Week. This was a chance for us to look after 'God's Acres'. We are not numerous, but a very good and efficient team. Thank you to all who helped.

We include environment articles, notices and / or tips in our weekly emails and pew sheet and quarterly magazines.

**Membership:** Laurie Deimel, Corinne Treacy and Royston Treacy

**Corinne Treacy (Parish Environment Contact)**

## **GARDENING**

Due to bad weather and health issues in the team not a lot has been done in the garden since last Autumn. The wild garden in the front of the church going down to the road was one of the factors that helped get the Eco bronze award and is looking good. The raised beds need tidying as do the paths and beds. The south border at the front of the church is going to be cleared of weeds and some shrubs and will have slate put down in keeping with the church.

David and Lesley Arkell have done a good job with the rose bed and the garden at the front. The daffodils are looking good as well as many of the shrubs. There is a lot of work to be done and any help would be very much appreciated.

### **The Gardening Team**

## **MINISTRY TEAM**

Since Rachel Luckman left the parish in May 2023, the Ministry Team comprises David and Sally.

During the last year, the only change to the regular monthly pattern of services is that we have discontinued the Zoom service of Evening Prayer on the 2nd Sunday of each month because this was poorly attended, and the only participants were also worshipping with us in person.

In coordination with the uniformed organisations, we have tried to arrange that in alternate months one 10am Service of the Word is “All Age”: in practice such services were held in May, July, October (Harvest), December (Christingle) and March (Mothering Sunday). For the Harvest service we were also joined by the choir of West House School. As usual on Remembrance Sunday we were joined by the local squadron of the Air Training Corps, to which David is now Chaplain.

Special evening services during the year included the All Souls Memorial Service on 5th November, Music and Readings for Advent on 3rd December, the Carol Service on 17th December and communion services on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday.

On Saturday 10th February, to prepare us for Lent, a Quiet Morning was held in church in partnership with St Mary’s Selly Oak. The morning was led by Canon John Austen and was much appreciated by the participants; it is hoped to make this a regular event.

During Advent, a series of discussion groups was held using material on the topic “Hope”. During Lent we used Paula Gooder’s book “Women of Holy Week”, reflecting on six of the women during the six Thursdays in Lent and then the remaining three on the first three evenings of Holy Week – the participants found this material stimulating and it provoked lively discussion.

The only baptism during this period was performed during a Service of the Word on 25th June. There was one wedding, in July 2023. During the last 12 months between us we have officiated at 16 funerals, of which 7 were in church.

We have also taken communion regularly to a number of parishioners who are no longer able to get to church.

We are trying to maintain and strengthen links with local schools and other groups. In the run up to Christmas we welcomed Woodhouse School and Bright Horizons Nursery to church for Christmas performances. Also in December a small group of children from Welsh House Farm Primary School came to hear the Christmas story, to sing two carols and to look around the church. In January David hosted a class from Our Lady of Fatima School who enjoyed seeing the church and hearing the organ. Just before Easter, we both went to Woodhouse School to lead an assembly on the theme of “Holy Week”. Sally continues to lead a monthly service at Queen Mother Gardens, and David assists with a monthly service at William Lench Court, celebrating communion there in alternate months.

### **David Parker and Sally Griffiths**

## **MISSION TASK GROUP**

The Mission Task Group is led by Pauline Sitford and the other members are Judith Bennett, Sue Glanvill, David Parker, Hilary Shaylor and Peter Stokes.

During the last year the group met twice, in June and October. The main focus of the October meeting was to decide which organisations should be recommended to the PCC for support through Away Giving. After discussion four were chosen: USPG’s Malawi projects, Book Aid International (providing books around the world), the Church Army’s Amber Project (helping young people in Cardiff who have mental health issues) and Shanti Aid (a Birmingham charity helping women who are victims of domestic abuse). Based on this recommendation the PCC subsequently donated £800 to each of these four, which represent two international and two domestic causes, in each case one church-based and one secular.

Through Pauline we maintain existing links with missionary organisations. Recently our link with the Diocese of Upper Shire in Malawi has been limited, but we are now in touch with a new priest in Liwonde and will be exploring ways to rebuild this link.

If anyone has questions or is interested in joining this Task Group, please contact Pauline.

### **Pauline Sitford**

## **MUSIC**

Simon Palmer resigned as Organist and Choirmaster with effect from 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Simon had been in the role for 43 years and had provided many musical highlights over the years. He will be missed. His departure was marked with a special service and presentations on the 4<sup>th</sup> February.

The PCC has endorsed the important part that music plays in the life of St Faith & St Laurence. The process of recruiting a new organist will be started shortly. We are extremely fortunate that Mark Lawrence, Deputy Organist, agreed to coordinate our music in the meantime. He is doing an excellent job.



## **SAFEGUARDING TASK GROUP**

Safeguarding is the action the Church can take to promote a safer culture and is about protecting people with regards to their health, wellbeing and human rights. Everyone who partakes in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a safer Church for all.

We take safeguarding seriously at St Faith and St Laurence (SF&SL) and we try to ensure that everyone feels welcomed, respected and safe.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has complied with its duty to promote a safer church by implementing good safeguarding practice and having due regard to the House of Bishop's guidance.

The PCC has reviewed and ratified the Safeguarding & other Policies document on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024. These policies are available to view or download on our website at [www.saintfaithandsaintlaurence.co.uk](http://www.saintfaithandsaintlaurence.co.uk) and as hardcopies displayed in the Narthex in the Church and in the lobby of the Hall building.

All necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks have been carried out. The Safeguarding training courses required for all SF&SL Volunteers and Trustees are ongoing and well on their way. Face to face via video sessions were given on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and October 14<sup>th</sup> 2023 by Corinne (Facilitator). All church activities and non-church activities have been reviewed and authorised by PCC at the meeting held on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2023. This procedure will be carried on yearly.

SF&SL Dashboard is at Level 3 with 67% progress and SF&SL Hub which is an extension to the dashboard is at stage 3 – Both are ongoing. These are the mechanisms used to assess how thoroughly the parish has completed its obligations with regard to implementing Safeguarding policies and practices, and indicate that good progress has been made but some further work remains to be done.

The Church of England (CofE) has been developing the following five Standards which have been published (Culture, Leadership & Capacity, Prevention, Recognising & Assessing & Managing Risk, Victims & Survivors and Learning & Supervision & Support). This is to help the Church identify their safeguarding strengths and areas for development, to continually improve practice.

We would like to thank you for supporting our Safeguarding policies.

**Sally Griffiths, David Parker and Corinne Treacy**

## **SOCIALS TASK GROUP**

We have been able to hold a full timetable of events this year following the disruption caused by the Pandemic.

Following our visit to the Serbian Church in October 2022, we planned to invite them to visit us in the spring of 2023, but due to Father Nenad contracting double pneumonia this was cancelled.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> May we held a Coronation Barbeque, preceded by a Messy Church. We hired a Bouncy Castle and an Ice Cream van which proved extremely popular. I must offer my thanks to Helen Setchell and her team for the Messy Church and to Steven Shaylor for his cooking skills at the barbeque. The weather was particularly kind and added to the success of the day.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> June we organised a coach outing to Hartlebury Castle (the former seat of the Bishops of Worcester) which brought much of the local history to life.

The 8<sup>th</sup> October saw us hosting our annual Harvest Lunch which, as in previous years, was well attended and brought a renewed feeling of community spirit and goodwill following the pandemic.

2023 concluded with our Annual Christmas Fayre which was the most successful since well before the pandemic. We commenced with a Messy Church which was well supported, followed by the Fayre, which saw a range of stalls, both third party and "home grown". Simon Palmer produced live music which was relayed into the hall, and also enjoyed by the many people sitting in the church. We raised £1222 towards church funds.

We held our first meeting of 2024 on the 6<sup>th</sup> March and discussed events for the coming year. Four provisional events are planned and we may try to include a couple more. Those agreed so far are:

April: St. George's Day Skittles Evening with a Fish & Chip Supper

October: Harvest Supper

November: Christmas Fayre

I have to thank all those who supported our events throughout last year and we look forward to welcoming you again this year at these events.

**David Glanvill**

## **STAY AND PLAY**

How wonderful to see that Stay & Play has started again. It only attracts a small group of under 3's. However this is an extremely happy group and very cooperative between parents and children with lots of interaction going on between both.

It is under the supervision of 3 pairs of church members, plus Vernon, Hazel and John who attend every week. The fees remain at £2 per family and the money goes towards church funds.

**Hilary Shaylor**

## **PRIEST IN CHARGE'S LETTER**

Last year's APCM followed only a month after my formal Licensing as Priest in Charge at St Faith and St Laurence. In my closing remarks, I said that I saw my role as restoring confidence in the parish after a traumatic few years. I believe that the last year has seen this begin to happen, as several people have commented to me on how much happier and more settled the parish seems. I hope this is true, and that it will continue. To me, the most striking thing is that I have actually changed very little – the parish has a great tradition and is well served by its existing teams, so my role has mainly been to support what was already happening.

So I want to thank everyone who contributes in any way to the life of the parish for making my first year so enjoyable, and for all your work. This set of reports gives a good impression of the breadth of parish life and the number of people responsible: thank you all! It is invidious to start singling out individuals for thanks – I'm bound to miss someone – but there are a few people who I really want to mention:

Sally Griffiths does so much as Reader, not just in preaching and leading worship but also through her spiritual care for everyone (including me). The last few months have not been easy for Sally, so I am especially grateful for her continued support.

Malcolm and Corinne have carried out their duties as churchwardens conscientiously, and have been gracious with me when I have made mistakes.

Caroline Mosley has been very generous in sharing her experience as PCC Vice-Chair, helping me clarify my ideas, and occasionally correcting my English. We all owe her an enormous debt of gratitude for volunteering to assemble and edit this set of reports.

As Treasurer, Loleta Atkinson has gone beyond the call of duty in responding to my requests to explain obscure items in the accounts. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated Treasurer.

Helen Setchell has made my life much easier by taking notes at meetings so efficiently, and I admire her enthusiasm for coordinating Messy Church (which is not my forte!).

Though I am not really musical myself, I appreciate how important music is to worship at St Faith and St Laurence. We continue to be extremely blessed by the quality of our musicians. At Christmas, when so many people commented on how wonderful the music was, I found it bittersweet, knowing that just after Christmas I would have to announce that Simon and Susannah Palmer were about to leave us. Their contribution to the musical life of the parish over more than 4 decades was amazing, and we rightly thanked them in February. But we must also thank Mark Lawrence, who has kept things going wonderfully since Simon left, and organised excellent singers for Easter.

To all those I haven't mentioned by name I extend equally sincere thanks.

Overall, in parish life this has been a year of consolidation and even modest growth. In common with the rest of the Church of England, we do face challenges over the years ahead, not least because of our age structure. We cannot solve all the world's problems, or even all the CofE's problems – all we can do is continue working together, faithfully trying to serve God and our brothers and sisters, and trust to God for the rest.

**David Parker**

**ST. FAITH AND ST.LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**ACCOUNTS**

**31 DECEMBER 2023**

**ARK AURORA LTD**  
Chartered Accountants  
The Maltings  
2 Anderson Road  
Bearwood, Birmingham  
**West Midlands B66 4AR**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE PCC OF  
ST. FAITH AND ST. LAURENCE**

---

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 2 to 7.

**Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Independent Examiner**

The charity's trustees 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 section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement**

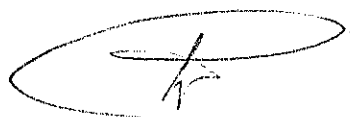
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

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 the management committee 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 respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with s.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.



The Maltings  
2 Anderson Road, Bearwood  
Birmingham  
West Midlands B66 4AR

Gee Ark FCA  
Ark Aurora Ltd  
Chartered Accountants

**ST. FAITH AND ST.LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**

		<b><u>2023</u></b>		<b><u>2022</u></b>	
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
<b>Incoming resources from donors</b>					
Planned giving	Envelopes & SO	33603		40961	
	Charities Aid/GYE	<u>-</u>	33648	<u>-</u>	40961
Collections	Loose Plate	2675		3069	
	Gift Aid	2535		1043	
	Weddings, etc	<u>4810</u>	10020	<u>9975</u>	14087
Donation	General Fund	-		-	
	Garden Fund	-		-	
	Votive Candles Fund-	149		170	
	Organ Fund	-		-	
	Roof	-		-	
	Flower Fund	<u>-</u>	149	<u>-</u>	170
Appeals	Advent	-		-	
	Christingle	-		-	
	Lent	-		-	
	Other	5235		-	
	Disaster relief	<u>-</u>	5235	<u>455</u>	455
Grants & Insurance claims		<u>4235</u>		<u>4612</u>	
			53287		60285
Other voluntary incoming resources					
Legacies			37		546
<b>Income from investments</b>					
Bank interest			540		219
<b>Income from charitable and ancillary trading</b>					
Fees		1469		-	
Magazine		1231		271	
Hire of church hall		16443		11578	
Insurance claim		-		-	
Coffee		580		1009	
Fund raising events		41		975	
Fair Trade		-		-	
Stay & Play	-	782		369	
Printing		94		-	
Sundry		<u>233</u>	<u>20873</u>	<u>848</u>	<u>15049</u>
<b>Total Receipts</b>			<b><u>£ 74737</u></b>		<b><u>£ 76099</u></b>

**ST. FAITH AND ST. LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**

<b>PAYMENTS</b>		<b><u>2023</u></b>		<b><u>2022</u></b>
<b>Grants/Donations</b>				
Overseas mission and relief agencies	2684		455	
Home mission and other	63		315	
Church organisations	800		-	
Secular charities	<u>1105</u>	4652	<u>-</u>	770
<b>Operation of facilities</b>				
Church heat & light	6589		3210	
Church repairs	2962		943	
Church cleaning	2853		3080	
Church grounds maintenance	428		-	
Hall heat, light & water	2659		1581	
Hall repairs	219		1259	
Hall cleaning	3675		4370	
Hall telephone	687		583	
Vicarage expenses	<u>-</u>	20072	<u>823</u>	15849
<b>Church management and administration</b>				
Diocesan Common Fund	36000		36000	
BDBF Fees	3460		-	
Affiliations	-		-	
Clergy expenses	318		318	
Upkeep of services	2485		397	
Insurance	3860		4220	
Stationery and printing	1654		2195	
Bank charges	193		179	
Task groups	-		-	
Wages & Honorarium	4758		8238	
Accountant's fees	780		702	
Sundry expenses	<u>5151</u>	<u>58659</u>	<u>730</u>	<u>52979</u>
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b><u>£ 83383</u></b>		<b><u>£ 69598</u></b>
<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>		(8646)		6500
Transfer from/(to) Church and Hall Repair Fund		1546		-
Transfer from Fabric Fund		-		-
<b>Balances at 1 January 2023</b>		<b><u>26413</u></b>		<b><u>19913</u></b>
<b>Cash and Bank balances at 31 December 2023</b>		<b><u>£ 19313</u></b>		<b><u>£ 26413</u></b>

**ST. FAITH AND ST. LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**CHURCH AND HALL REPAIRS FUND, RECEIPTS  
& PAYMENTS ACCOUNT – DESIGNATED FUND**

	<b><u>2023</u></b>	<b><u>2022</u></b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Receipts	-	-
Interest from CBF Deposit Fund	<u>943</u>	<u>304</u>
	943	304
<b>Payments</b>		
Expenses	-	-
Excess of Receipts over Payments	943	304
Transfer from/(to) Church and Hall Repair Fund	(1546)	
<b>Bank balance at 1 January 2023</b>	<u>30052</u>	<u>29748</u>
<b>Bank balance at 31 December 2023</b>	£ <u>29449</u>	£ <u>30052</u>

**FABRIC, FURNITURE AND FITTINGS FUND, RECEIPTS  
& PAYMENTS ACCOUNT – DESIGNATED FUND**

	<b><u>2023</u></b>	<b><u>2022</u></b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Transfer from General Fund	-	-
Interest from CBF Deposit Fund	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>
	-	-
<b>Payments</b>		
Expenses	-	-
Excess of Payments over Receipts	( - )	( - )
<b>Bank Balance at 1 January 2023</b>	<u>18</u>	<u>17</u>
<b>Bank Balance at 31 December 2023</b>	£ <u>18</u>	£ <u>17</u>



**ST. FAITH AND ST.LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023 (CONTINUED)**

**OTHER RESTRICTED FUNDS**

The following groups are affiliated to the PCC and their funds are restricted

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
<b>Women's Fellowship</b>		
Receipts	-	-
Payments	<u>127</u>	<u>      </u>
<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>		-
<b>Bank Balance at 1 January 2023</b>	<u>983</u>	<u>983</u>
<b>Bank Balance at 31 December 2023</b>	<u>£ 856</u>	<u>£ 983</u>

**ST. FAITH AND ST. LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023 (CONTINUED)**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

**Monetary Assets**

	<b>Church General Fund</b>	<b>Church &amp; Hall Repair Fund</b>	<b>Fabric Furniture &amp; Fitting Fund</b>	<b>Minor Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>	
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Cash in Hand	15	-	-		15	116
Bank Current Account	1940	-	-	856	2822	10446
CBOF Deposit Account	<u>17373</u>	<u>29449</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46840</u>	<u>46903</u>
<b>Total Cash</b>	<u>19328</u>	<u>29449</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>856</u>	<u>49651</u>	<u>57465</u>

**Other assets**

**Parish Hall**

The parish hall has not been professionally valued but is estimated to be have a current market value of £510426 (and has been insured for this amount).

**ST. FAITH AND ST. LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 using the Receipts & Payments basis.

**Funds**

General funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any special restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC. These include funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC.

The accounts include monetary transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible. They do not include the accounts of other Church groups that owe an affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

Subject to the above, receipts and payments include income as received and expenditure when irrevocably paid.

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

The following assets are recognised but not valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

Movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal.

Land and Buildings held on behalf of the PCC.

Other fixtures, fittings and office equipment where the PCC is free to dispose of such assets without faculty and where the original cost exceeded £1,000.

Amounts owing from the Inland Revenue where a formal claim has been made.

Any other amounts owing to the PCC including church hall lettings and insurance claims.

Legacies where formal notification of entitlement and amount has been received at 31<sup>st</sup> December by the PCC.

Investments held beneficially by the PCC.

Closing cash and bank balances are as shown in the receipts and payments account.

The following liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

Any Loans or overdrafts advanced to the PCC.

Any arrears of Diocesan Common Fund.

Creditors for goods or services where the supply has been received and invoiced by 31 December.

**ST. FAITH AND ST.LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**ACCOUNTS**

**31 DECEMBER 2023**

**ARK AURORA LTD**  
Chartered Accountants  
The Maltings  
2 Anderson Road  
Bearwood, Birmingham  
**West Midlands B66 4AR**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE PCC OF  
ST. FAITH AND ST.LAURENCE**

---

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 2 to 7.

**Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Independent Examiner**

The charity's trustees 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 section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement**

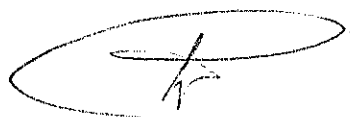
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

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 the management committee 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 respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with s.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.



The Maltings  
2 Anderson Road, Bearwood  
Birmingham  
West Midlands B66 4AR

Gee Ark FCA  
Ark Aurora Ltd  
Chartered Accountants

**ST. FAITH AND ST.LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**

		<b><u>2023</u></b>		<b><u>2022</u></b>	
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
<b>Incoming resources from donors</b>					
Planned giving	Envelopes & SO	33603		40961	
	Charities Aid/GYE	<u>-</u>	33648	<u>-</u>	40961
Collections	Loose Plate	2675		3069	
	Gift Aid	2535		1043	
	Weddings, etc	<u>4810</u>	10020	<u>9975</u>	14087
Donation	General Fund	-		-	
	Garden Fund	-		-	
	Votive Candles Fund-	149		170	
	Organ Fund	-		-	
	Roof	-		-	
	Flower Fund	<u>-</u>	149	<u>-</u>	170
Appeals	Advent	-		-	
	Christingle	-		-	
	Lent	-		-	
	Other	5235		-	
	Disaster relief	<u>-</u>	5235	<u>455</u>	455
Grants & Insurance claims		<u>4235</u>		<u>4612</u>	
			53287		60285
Other voluntary incoming resources					
Legacies			37		546
<b>Income from investments</b>					
Bank interest			540		219
<b>Income from charitable and ancillary trading</b>					
Fees		1469		-	
Magazine		1231		271	
Hire of church hall		16443		11578	
Insurance claim		-		-	
Coffee		580		1009	
Fund raising events		41		975	
Fair Trade		-		-	
Stay & Play	-	782		369	
Printing		94		-	
Sundry		<u>233</u>	<u>20873</u>	<u>848</u>	<u>15049</u>
<b>Total Receipts</b>			<b><u>£ 74737</u></b>		<b><u>£ 76099</u></b>

**ST. FAITH AND ST.LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**

<b>PAYMENTS</b>		<b><u>2023</u></b>		<b><u>2022</u></b>
<b>Grants/Donations</b>				
Overseas mission and relief agencies	2684		455	
Home mission and other	63		315	
Church organisations	800		-	
Secular charities	<u>1105</u>	4652	<u>-</u>	770
<b>Operation of facilities</b>				
Church heat & light	6589		3210	
Church repairs	2962		943	
Church cleaning	2853		3080	
Church grounds maintenance	428		-	
Hall heat, light & water	2659		1581	
Hall repairs	219		1259	
Hall cleaning	3675		4370	
Hall telephone	687		583	
Vicarage expenses	<u>-</u>	20072	<u>823</u>	15849
<b>Church management and administration</b>				
Diocesan Common Fund	36000		36000	
BDBF Fees	3460		-	
Affiliations	-		-	
Clergy expenses	318		318	
Upkeep of services	2485		397	
Insurance	3860		4220	
Stationery and printing	1654		2195	
Bank charges	193		179	
Task groups	-		-	
Wages & Honorarium	4758		8238	
Accountant's fees	780		702	
Sundry expenses	<u>5151</u>	<u>58659</u>	<u>730</u>	<u>52979</u>
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b><u>£ 83383</u></b>		<b><u>£ 69598</u></b>
<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>		(8646)		6500
Transfer from/(to) Church and Hall Repair Fund		1546		-
Transfer from Fabric Fund		-		-
<b>Balances at 1 January 2023</b>		<b><u>26413</u></b>		<b><u>19913</u></b>
<b>Cash and Bank balances at 31 December 2023</b>		<b><u>£ 19313</u></b>		<b><u>£ 26413</u></b>

**ST. FAITH AND ST. LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**CHURCH AND HALL REPAIRS FUND, RECEIPTS  
& PAYMENTS ACCOUNT – DESIGNATED FUND**

	<b><u>2023</u></b>	<b><u>2022</u></b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Receipts	-	-
Interest from CBF Deposit Fund	<u>943</u>	<u>304</u>
	943	304
<b>Payments</b>		
Expenses	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Excess of Receipts over Payments	943	304
Transfer from/(to) Church and Hall Repair Fund	(1546)	
<b>Bank balance at 1 January 2023</b>	<u>30052</u>	<u>29748</u>
<b>Bank balance at 31 December 2023</b>	£ <u>29449</u>	£ <u>30052</u>

**FABRIC, FURNITURE AND FITTINGS FUND, RECEIPTS  
& PAYMENTS ACCOUNT – DESIGNATED FUND**

	<b><u>2023</u></b>	<b><u>2022</u></b>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Transfer from General Fund	-	-
Interest from CBF Deposit Fund	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>
	-	-
<b>Payments</b>		
Expenses	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Excess of Payments over Receipts	( - )	( - )
<b>Bank Balance at 1 January 2023</b>	<u>18</u>	<u>17</u>
<b>Bank Balance at 31 December 2023</b>	£ <u>18</u>	£ <u>17</u>



**ST. FAITH AND ST.LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023 (CONTINUED)**

**OTHER RESTRICTED FUNDS**

The following groups are affiliated to the PCC and their funds are restricted

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
<b>Women's Fellowship</b>		
Receipts	-	-
Payments	<u>127</u>	<u>      </u>
<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>		-
<b>Bank Balance at 1 January 2023</b>	<u>983</u>	<u>983</u>
<b>Bank Balance at 31 December 2023</b>	<u>£ 856</u>	<u>£ 983</u>

**ST. FAITH AND ST. LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023 (CONTINUED)**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

**Monetary Assets**

	<b>Church General Fund</b>	<b>Church &amp; Hall Repair Fund</b>	<b>Fabric Furniture &amp; Fitting Fund</b>	<b>Minor Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>	
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Cash in Hand	15	-	-		15	116
Bank Current Account	1940	-	-	856	2822	10446
CBOF Deposit Account	<u>17373</u>	<u>29449</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46840</u>	<u>46903</u>
<b>Total Cash</b>	<u>19328</u>	<u>29449</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>856</u>	<u>49651</u>	<u>57465</u>

**Other assets**

**Parish Hall**

The parish hall has not been professionally valued but is estimated to be have a current market value of £510426 (and has been insured for this amount).

**ST. FAITH AND ST. LAURENCE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 using the Receipts & Payments basis.

**Funds**

General funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any special restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC. These include funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC.

The accounts include monetary transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible. They do not include the accounts of other Church groups that owe an affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

Subject to the above, receipts and payments include income as received and expenditure when irrevocably paid.

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

The following assets are recognised but not valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities:

Movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal.

Land and Buildings held on behalf of the PCC.

Other fixtures, fittings and office equipment where the PCC is free to dispose of such assets without faculty and where the original cost exceeded £1,000.

Amounts owing from the Inland Revenue where a formal claim has been made.

Any other amounts owing to the PCC including church hall lettings and insurance claims.

Legacies where formal notification of entitlement and amount has been received at 31<sup>st</sup> December by the PCC.

Investments held beneficially by the PCC.

Closing cash and bank balances are as shown in the receipts and payments account.

The following liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

Any Loans or overdrafts advanced to the PCC.

Any arrears of Diocesan Common Fund.

Creditors for goods or services where the supply has been received and invoiced by 31 December.