



THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

Charity Registration Number: 1134253

Diocese of Southwark
Merton Deanery

Annual Report and Financial Statements
31 December 2023

Tandem Accounting
Chartered Accountants
17 Heathville Road
London N19 3AL

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

Report of the Parochial Church Council For the year ended 31 December 2023

Charity Name	The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Merton Priory	
Charity Number	1134253. The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and was registered as a charity with Charity Commission on 11 February 2010.	
Principal Address	Holy Trinity Church, 234 The Broadway, London SW19 1SB	
Governing Document	Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended and Church Representation Rules.	
Objective	To promote in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church.	
Members of the PCC	The Members of the PCC who served during the year or who were serving at the date of this report were:	
	Clergy (ex officio)	Revd Mark Eminson, Team Rector Revd Alison Judge, Team Vicar Revd Simon Asquith, Curate Revd Canon Duncan Swan, Associate Priest
	Lay ministers	Joy Lyons, Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary (SPA)
	Churchwardens	Alison Fletcher Rogers (to 21/05/23) Christ Church Zoe Miller (from 21/05/23) Christ Church Vacancy (from 21/05/23) Christ Church Richard Blades (to 21/05/23) Holy Trinity & St Peter John Eades Holy Trinity & St Peter Delene Edwards (from 21/05/23) Holy Trinity & St Peter Ann Roberts St John the Divine Vacancy St John the Divine
	PCC members	Joanne Powell Christ Church Bruce Warman Christ Church Ben Ooi Holy Trinity & St Peter Vacancy (to 21/05/23) Holy Trinity & St Peter Rachel Cherry (from 21/05/23) Holy Trinity & St Peter Ann Newson St John the Divine Vacancy St John the Divine
	Representatives on Deanery Synod	Michael Brunt (to 21/05/23) Christ Church Abi Erinle Christ Church Martin Lyons (to 21/05/23) Holy Trinity & St Peter Richard Blades (from 21/05/23) Holy Trinity & St Peter Boris Yurkevich (from 21/05/23) Holy Trinity & St Peter Eva Parker St John the Divine Vacancy St John the Divine
	Treasurer	Kerry Porritt, PCC Co-Treasurer (Co-opted) Ann Roberts, PCC Co-Treasurer
	Secretary	Jenny Harper (Co-opted until 21/05/23) Margaret Duncan (Co-opted from 21/05/23)
	Co-opted	Alison Fletcher Rogers (from 21/05/23 to 11/02/24)

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Key Management Personnel	Key management personnel are those in charge of directing, controlling, running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis. For Merton Priory Team Ministry, these are all the members of the PCC and the three DCCs (District Church Councils).
Bankers	<i>Merton Priory PCC, Christ Church and Holy Trinity & St Peter and St John the Divine:</i> CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4JQ <i>St John the Divine:</i> NatWest plc, Wimbledon (B) Branch, 16 Wimbledon Hill Road, London SW19 7NN
Independent Examiner	John Helm ACA Tandem Accounting 17 Heathville Road London N19 3AL
Quinquennial Inspectors	Christ Church – Tim Gough (Austin Winkley and Associates) Holy Trinity - Tim Gough (Austin Winkley and Associates) St John the Divine – Karen Butti (Thomas Ford and Partners)

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Report of the Parochial Church Council For the year ended 31 December 2023

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Merton Priory (“the PCC”) submits its report and the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2023. The financial statements have been prepared in the format prescribed by the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP2019 (FRS102)). The legal and administrative information set out earlier in this document forms part of this report.

1 Aim and purposes

Merton Priory Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector, the Revd Mark Eminson, and the Team Vicar, the Revd Alison Judge, 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 fabric of the three churches of Christ Church, Colliers Wood; Holy Trinity and St Peter, South Wimbledon; St John the Divine, Merton, along with the two separate church halls of Christ Church and St John the Divine.

2 Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England; the PCC seeks by encouraging co-operation between clergy, lay members of our congregation, and the wider community to undertake the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical.

When planning the activities for the year, the Team Rector, Team Vicar and PCC have in mind the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit, and especially the guidance to charities for the advancement of religion. In particular we make it possible for people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Regular worship and prayer open to all: developing knowledge of and trust in God and learning about the Gospel;
- Provision of sacred spaces for personal prayer and contemplation;
- Provision of pastoral care and sacramental ministry for people living within the parish;
- Teaching the Christian faith through sermons, courses, and small groups;
- Preparing people for baptism, first communion and confirmation;
- Leading Collective Worship, assemblies, and classes in church and community schools;
- Provision of activities with a Christian ethos for young people;
- Provision of social and community events and groups which strengthen outreach and fellowship;
- Fostering relationships with other organisations and churches in our parish and borough and cooperating with them in promoting social cohesion and meeting human need;
- Ministering to those who seek marriages and funerals, before, during, and after these events;
- Supporting other charities in the UK and overseas and building active links with these.

To facilitate this work, we maintain the fabric of the three churches and two separate church halls.

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3 Achievements and performance

3.1 Merton Priory Team

Mission Action Plan



3 – 5 Year Vision

What God is calling our church to do and become in the next three to five years

To show God's love to everyone in our parish

For all three churches to be growing, thereby able to better serve our communities

With an especial focus for all three churches to enable growth at St John's and an increased presence on High Path

Core Statement

Our purpose/reason to be here

Faithful to God

Sharing with those in need

Caring for one another

Mission Priority One

Building congregation of St John's from within the Team

Mission Priority Two

Serving the community at High Path

Mission Priority Three

Ministry to young people, including schools

Action Goals for 3 – 5 years

1. Form leadership team to oversee Priority 1
2. Church graft from say HT to SJD
3. Early Service/Messy Church at SJD
4. Different time and/or style of service
5. All of the above grounded in prayer

Action Goals for 3 – 5 years

1. Form leadership team to oversee Priority 2
2. Audit of what the community wants
3. Working with partners on the estate
4. Increasing church/hall use for community
5. All of the above grounded in prayer

Action Goals for 3 – 5 years

1. Form leadership team to oversee Priority 3
2. Developing links with Merton Abbey/Harris
3. Bell-ringing for teenagers
4. The answer is table-tennis!
5. All of the above grounded in prayer

Under our Team Mission Action Plan (see above), now two years in, we have had an active year on several fronts. The overall aim for all three churches is to work together for community engagement around the High Path estate, trusting that thereby growth at St John's might emerge. Under Priority One, significant Evening Services have taken place at St John's with Stations of the Cross in Lent well-supported and a Coronation and Harvest Evensong particularly well-attended, as well as Advent Carols. As for Priority Two, in May a dedicated team undertook to visit and leaflet all the households of the estate, supported by prayer, which led to some fruitful conversations and connections. It also culminated in a fun afternoon in church and at Nelson Gardens on the Feast of Pentecost. Under Priority Three (and also Priority Two), we can make proud mention of the Fun and Games initiative, run jointly by St John's and Griffiths Road Methodist Church, a toddler group in the Hall. These efforts, and others, have often been small and gradual steps in engaging with the community and building up the church and this lesson chimes with several conference days the Team Rector has attended through the Diocese and the National Estate Churches Network.

Across the churches, Weekday Morning and Evening Prayer and Eucharists offered the round of prayer and intercession for the parish. A weekly Monday evening online service, Finding Sanctuary, offers an alternative expression with usually about nine people in attendance, while weekly meditation group at Christ Church linked with the World Community for Christian Meditation averaged six attendees.

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First Communion returned this year to its pre-pandemic slot of the Feast of Christ the King and we were blessed with 13 children being so admitted in a lovely service at Christ Church. Earlier in the year in June, the new Bishop of Kingston, Dr Martin Gainsborough, led a service of Confirmation at St John's, at which we presented 3 adult candidates.

The Team combined forces for the Merton Nightshelter Project again this year, using Holy Trinity as a venue, but allowing a broader pool of volunteers from across the Team. We hosted about 12 guests on a Friday night over a seven-week period, including Christmas. Thank you to Alison Fletcher Rogers, who coordinated the project for us.

As ever, it has been an active and positive year for the work of Merton Citizens. This is a community organising alliance of different organisations that work together to champion positive change and social justice in our neighbourhood and our Team is one of the founder members. Holy Trinity welcomed our Citizens Organiser Vitoria Russo Gaino as a visiting preacher in March, to update the wider congregation and encourage more participation in the work of Citizens. Perhaps partly as a result of this, we managed an impressive turnout at the South London Listens event in Clapham in November, not only of church members, but also other local colleagues from our parish. We continue to campaign on Housing, Mental Health, Living Wage and Refugee welcome, and Christ Church has several times hosted workshops under the Refugee strand, working towards getting Merton Council accredited to be a Borough of Sanctuary. For the second year, we were involved in the Scriptural Reasoning event during inter-faith week. As Citizens UK looks toward a General Election in 2024 one strand of their Agenda is Climate Justice and the Team Vicar attended several Zoom meetings around this topic. We celebrated Creationtide and each church has continued to strive to "reduce, reuse and recycle". All building work is undertaken with a view to reducing our carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Another area of our common work consists in Racial Justice as we seek to implement the Southwark Diocese Anti-Racism Charter. We discussed this issue at PCC and preached about it on several occasions, including welcoming a guest speaker at Holy Trinity from local organisation Accoutre Centre for Learning during Black History Month. Further afield, the Team Rector was invited to a reception dinner for the Bishop of Barbados during Windrush week since he has joined the Kingston Episcopal Area Racial Justice Group as Vice-Chair. He and other church members attended the National Service of Thanksgiving at Southwark Cathedral on Windrush Day itself, as well as the annual thanksgiving service at the Cathedral in Black History Month. Returning to Wimbledon, the Team was delighted to participate in an event at Wimbledon Quarter, organised by our friend the Revd Hannah Neale and her group BAME Voice, we ourselves being part of a panel discussion about identity and race.

The Curate and Team Rector attended the AGM of Inclusive Church at St John's Waterloo as a backdrop to all three churches keeping a dedicated Inclusive Church Sunday in June.

God in the Pub, a monthly discussion of issues of faith and life, has continued with lively conversation and conviviality, having an average attendance of around 15 people.

The MP3 Parish Pantomime enjoyed its tenth outing with an entertaining take on "The Three Musketeers". Funds raised were donated to St John the Divine heating and lighting appeal.

In October, six of us took part in a retreat at Hilfield Franciscan Friary in Dorset, which was a stimulating and blessed time of worship and study, conversation and feasting and time apart for reflection. We hope to return before too long.

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We communicate with those who live in our parish through regular door-to-door leaflets before Christmas and Easter, through our websites and through flyers distributed in schools and other community places; as well as via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, the website and e-notices.

2023 was the eighth year of contributing to the Diocese through the Parish Support Fund. Once again, and notwithstanding an ongoing cost-of-living crisis, it has been a heroic effort that the three churches met their commitments in full. During the year we have also given to a number of charities, both through planned donations and special collections (see note 4b on page 24). For 2024 we have pledged not only to cover our own full ministry costs of £172,600, but give £4,300 above and beyond that towards poorer parishes.

The PCC continues to promote cooperation between Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) in implementing our safeguarding action plan, has considered Safeguarding at PCC meetings, and has complied with the 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. We are pleased we now have a team of five PSOs and a DBS administrator, which has enabled us to encourage participation in training, raise awareness of a range of safeguarding issues and complete a safeguarding audit for the Team. In November at Holy Trinity we kept a Safeguarding Sunday, introducing the congregation to the new Church of England National Safeguarding Standards as well as commissioning some of our PSOs. Our Health and Safety Officers have worked together to share good practice, draw up action plans for each church to ensure that we are fully compliant with our Health and Safety policy, and reported findings to the PCC. The PCC also complies with statutory requirements with regard to employment, access and health and safety.

The combined electoral roll for the parish in 2023 was 376 (Christ Church 66, Holy Trinity 281, St John the Divine 29); this number does not include children or the many people with a more fringe relationship with our churches. We also maintain congregational lists of all our contacts, which comply with the requirements of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations), which came into force in May 2018. This year we recruited two church members to help oversee our GDPR duties and a fresh data audit is planned for 2024.

3.2 Christ Church

This year has seen some major steps forward in our desire to enhance Christ Church as a place of worship and welcome to our community. We have continued to work with our Architect, Tim Gough of Austin Winkley and Associates, on a project to provide a kitchenette/tea point, storage and two toilets at the west end of the church. In December we installed new lighting at the East end of the church which has greatly enhanced the chancel area. Fundraising has been ongoing. George Fletcher Rogers travelled through 150 underground stations in one day. Joy Lyons has been raising money through a Sponsored Park Challenge. The Candlelit Christmas Market was a delightful occasion and much enjoyed by the local community and stall holders. Other sales and events continue - including the sale of Vicarage Honey.

Our congregation is growing and building. We are still saddened that we have fewer families but we are now occasionally being joined by one or two young people. Easter attendance this year was 6 children and 63 adults. At Christmas 35 children and 123 adults attended services including a very happy Community Carol Service which included old friends Colliers Wood Chorus and Singlegate School and, joining our regulars, a new choir Solis. Average Sunday attendance throughout 2023 was two children and 49 adults. This year it has been lovely to welcome six children into the family of the church in Baptism. The First Communion service hosted at Christ Church was a beautiful occasion and Ethan Mecwan, Ryan Mecwan and Jason Taamale, members of Christ Church, were three of the candidates.

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It was our delight to host a special service on 23rd July for Sr Chris as she entered into vows in the Single Consecrated Life. Bishop Christopher came to receive her vow and preside and preach. It was a lovely occasion and we are very grateful to Sr Chris SCL for her active commitment to Christ Church and being part of the preaching rota.

During the year, we conducted three funerals. This included a packed congregation who came to pay their respects and say farewell to Mardelle Jordan a much loved and greatly missed member of Christ Church congregation.

Christ Church bell tower continues to be very popular with visiting bands. Our own band of Bell ringers are also flourishing.

Christ Church is looking to the future and the celebration for our 150th Anniversary. We give thanks to God for the witness of this congregation, and our friendships with so many organisations and people in this vibrant and diverse community.

3.3 Holy Trinity & St Peter

Within one building, Holy Trinity has a main worship area, clergy vestry, St Peter's Chapel, committee room, kitchen, church hall, St Cecilia Room; and an area of the church is set aside for quiet prayer. The church is widely used by outside agencies and the DCC has a licence under faculty to allow London Together Korean Church to use the church on Sunday afternoons.

The Warm Space initiative soon dwindled in take-up in January, so we have not pursued it again this winter. Thanks are due to churchwarden John and other helpers for hosting it.

We enjoyed several occasions of fellowship and hospitality, usually with the expert culinary oversight of Richard Blades, such as pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, a Dawn Eucharist feast and Harvest Supper; also, a revived Trinity Sunday tea in the garden and Coronation party at the vicarage.

The Christmas Fair was again a most enjoyable and well-supported community and fundraising occasion. Our profit was an incredible £5,848, aided by the return of a raffle, overseen by Libby Charlton; thanks go to her, all helpers and especially coordinator Richard Blades, in his sixth and final Fair! Through December we enjoyed our usual school carols and Christmas Carols with full choir and the Team Rector was invited back as the guest preacher at the National Sri Sathya Sai Christmas gathering in Tolworth.

Congregational numbers picked up for Easter with 171 people, although numbers were down at Christmas with 264. Usual Sunday attendance throughout 2023 was 80 adults and 50 children. The twice-monthly Early Service alone continued in its popularity with usually about 60 apiece of adults and very young children.

Junior Church has grown further, for which we are thankful to Emma Austin and her team; we often have about 25 children. Emma has also helped the children to lead the service once a term, which is an inspiring development. We enjoyed our third acted-out Nativity, thanks to our Curate, Revd Simon Asquith, which involved some 80 children, and whose finale of chorus crescendo and rising star prop was truly awe-inspiring!

In a different liturgical direction, many have also valued greatly twice-yearly healing services.

Our musical life has gone from strength to strength under our Director of Music, Michael Lees, aided by volunteer musicians Jeremy Roberts, Liz Holder and Vivien Halstead, and talented singers under Tracy Lees. We are mindful that our wonderful organ is in need of some "tlc" soon!

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Baptisms increased again with 30 children welcomed into the fellowship of the church through Baptism.

For young children and carers, T3 (Trinity, Tots & Toys) has had a very well-attended year, while the large volume of our work in schools has continued. The Team Rector is ex officio governor of Holy Trinity and The Priory schools, while the Curate has also become a governor at The Priory. They take it in turns to conduct weekly assemblies (with an occasional eucharist) in them both and each school attends church four times a year. The Schools' Sunday service this year was a triumph with an enormous attendance, helped by the involvement of a joint schools' choir and also the "unveiling" of our new mural; thanks to all school children and church members who provided photographs of themselves for this Coronation-Year project and especially to Simon Burder and Kate Wilson, two of our artists at church, whose commitment and skill are clear for all to see. The Team Rector – and now Curate – also visit Pelham School (a community school) half-termly.

Ministry to Care Homes is also important for us, so a team has visited Queens Court for a Songs of Praise and a Communion each month and now South Park Residential Home once a month, as well as visiting the sick in their homes for holy communion. At Queens Court we held two memorial services: one for long-time volunteer driver Joe (whom many of us remember before COVID, bringing residents to church every week); and a second general memorial service with the Mayor of Merton in attendance.

Across the year, we conducted three funerals for parishioners. We also hosted a Dying Matters Awareness evening with local funeral directors, Poppy's, which was an informative and sensitively-conducted occasion for those able to attend.

It has been a year replete with opportunities for the Team Rector, Curate and other church members to represent the church at ecumenical, inter-faith and civic events, an important part of our witness and working together for the common good. These included: singing at the Haydons Road Recreation Ground event for the Coronation; coordinating the Thy Kingdom Come ten days of prayer across local churches and our two church schools; the Shavuot service and meal at Wimbledon Synagogue; a New Met for London evening in Mitcham; the Pan-African Peace Symposium at the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Morden; an Interfaith Service on Ladies' Day at the Shree Ghanapathy Temple in Effra Road; the commissioning of new ministers at Trinity United Reformed Church and Everyday Church. In keeping with this theme, for the second year, we shared a service on Pentecost with Pastor Park and his congregation with the experience of hearing the Gospel proclaimed in Korean particularly memorable. Our own keeping of Remembrance Sunday was as fitting as ever, but also enhanced by Simon's sermon, building on a day in the church archives in Woking and by having a live bugler, our own Esther Burder. The Team Rector and Curate have also helped to cover several deanery churches who are in vacancy, which sometimes explains their absence on a Sunday morning!

Looking to the future, we are so grateful for people's generosity, but realise our finances are presently over-stretched, so we forecast a loss this year. One consequence is that the DCC has voted to suspend payments of the tithe for 2023 and 2024. As well as seeking ways to increase income, we are also seeking to involve more church members in a range of areas of church life and work; after all, we are a family where everyone has gifts of time and talents to offer for the health and flourishing of all.

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3.4 St John the Divine

The church comprises a church building, lovingly restored some years ago, and a hall building. These are located on separate sites, the hall being on the other side of the road from the church. As well as services the church provides a venue for Morden Park Choral Society practices and concerts and for Merton Music Foundation who use it weekly for children's choir practice and for other musical events. The proposed redevelopment of High Path estate, which may incorporate the site of the Church Hall, with the development of a new Church Hall, has now been further postponed and estimated dates for this range between 5-7 years' time. Nevertheless our current hall continues to be used by a range of community groups from dance to martial arts and Woodcraft Folk. We continue to host, free of charge, Care4Calais who are working with refugees living in local accommodation. They run a weekly food and clothing bank which gives out over 750 items including food, clothing and toiletries. We are keen to make our buildings a community resource.

A new venture in the hall is the Fun and Games Toddler Group which meets each Thursday morning in term time. This is being run as a joint venture for St John's and Griffiths Road Methodist Church (an annexe of Lantern Methodist Church in Raynes Park). Angela Linton Smith and Alison Judge lead, with excellent support from Bianca Sanasi, a local parent.

It has been a good year for social events. MP3 Players used St John's to good effect in January for a wonderful pantomime 'The Three Musketeers'. And in February there was a return to the very popular Parish Ale (aka Beer Festival). Numerous Morris Dancers of all traditions entertained and tours of the Bell Tower from our Bell ringers made for a very successful fundraising event.

St John's Bell Tower is a very popular tower for visiting ringers keen to experience our excellent bells. Our own band flourishes and we are delighted to host The Eight Bell Practice on behalf of the Surrey Association of Bell Ringers, thanks to Pam Donovan who leads this.

Overall our congregational numbers have remained much the same, that is to say small but highly committed. Average Sunday attendance throughout 2023 was 14 adults. Easter attendance was 21 adults and at Christmas 24 adults. Our carol singing around the estate was a joy as we encountered local residents and waved to others.

During the year we have had one funeral from St John's district.

We continue to enjoy a good relationship with Merton Abbey School being involved in assemblies throughout the year. The Team Vicar visits Nursery and Reception classes and Year 1 children visit the church. It is always a highlight when Key Stage 2 have their Christingle service in church. The church drive continues to be used for 'kiss and drop' allowing pupils who are driven to school by car to alight safely as parking restrictions on High Path make dropping children off problematic.

We look to further work with members of our Merton Priory Team to reach out to our neighbours on High Path.

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4 **Quinquennial Inspections**

Christ Church. A quinquennial inspection was due in 2023 and has been completed in January 2024.

Holy Trinity & St Peter. A quinquennial inspection was last carried out in October 2021 and revealed the need for a lot of minor repair and re-decoration work. In the spring, around our Dedication Festival weekend, we embarked on fundraising to begin this work of re-decoration. We were delighted to raise in the region of £13,000, which enabled us to pay for major improvement of the reception area and committee room, as well as the door, guttering and fascias outside. This was made possible, too, by hours and hours of volunteers' work, led by the churchwardens John Eades and Delene Edwards among others. We hope to continue with other areas of the church, though will likely need the help of grant money.

St John the Divine. The struggles with our beautiful church building continue. Despite efforts to secure a faculty, raise funds and install a new heating and lighting system we are still at the work in progress level. We truly want to move away from fossil fuels and this is proving quite challenging for a building of our size and character. We have had a visit and advice from our new Inspecting Architect, Karen Butti, from Thomas Ford and Partners. Karen has also completed our Quinquennial Inspection which was due in 2023.

5 **Looking to the future**

We will continue in prayer and action for our Team MAP, leaning on the Lord for His guidance and blessing. Fun and Games is one sign of new life, links with the schools are promising, while we haven't fully explored building up the congregation at St John's from within the Team.

As the Church of England authorised Prayers of Love and Faith for use in parishes in December, we look forward joyfully to offering those prayers of blessing for same-sex couples to church members and the wider community within Sunday services and wait for the process of authorisation for standalone services of blessing.

In March, we are involved in a Kingston Episcopal Area Racial Justice Group event, centring on the twin themes of "I don't see colour" and "what makes a good ally in the cause of racial justice". We hope this will continue to stimulate ideas and discussion within our own church and community life.

This year also heralds both a London Mayoral and a General Election, which will be opportunities to engage with our allies in Merton Citizens and across London Citizens. In turbulent times with the ongoing war in Ukraine, the tragic loss of life in Israel and Gaza, the climate crisis and daily struggles for many at home, we hope and pray that our faith and work will seek always to proclaim the faith, hope and love we believe we find in Christ; to paraphrase the prophet Micah, may we "do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God".

6 **Personnel**

The Team Rector, the Revd Mark Eminson, is responsible for Holy Trinity, while the Team Vicar, the Revd Alison Judge, is responsible for Christ Church and St John the Divine. Mark, having been ordained 16 years, will be taking his first ever sabbatical in the summer of 2024. The Revd Simon Asquith has been formally "signed off" in his training by the Diocese, so is free to seek his next post, but we hope we may keep him as long as possible into 2025; we have all benefitted from his ministry and gifts of character. Joy Lyons, SPA (Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary), continues in her work of pastoral care for members of Christ Church and to co-ordinate the Prayer Group; her work is valued greatly. The Revd Canon Duncan Swan, Associate Priest, has assisted at St John's

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when he can. Sr Chris SCL is a committed member of Christ Church and has the Bishop of Southwark's permission to preach which we value.

The DCCs set rates of pay for employees in accordance with the skills and responsibilities of their roles and with the aim of recruiting and retaining high quality staff; we continue to abide by the commitment made in 2014 to pay no one less than the London Living Wage, as set by the Living Wage Foundation, which was £13.15 per hour from the beginning of 2023. The PCC has indicated a wish to become accredited as a Living Wage Employer.

A staff pension scheme with the Church Workers Pension Fund was introduced on 1 January 2015, which was well before the PCC's workplace pensions staging date of 1 June 2016. It is available to all employees regardless of salary level and the PCC contributes 5% of gross salary provided the employee also contributes a minimum of 5%.

7 Financial Review

The PCC's main sources of funding are the free will offerings of church members and others in attendance at church meetings, and income from hiring out the church buildings.

7.1 Financial Activity and Financial Position

We remain mindful of the impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having on many people.

Total income for the year increased by £20,231 to £340,300 (2022: £320,069) as set out in the accompanying financial statements on pages 17-34. Of this total, £12,917 was restricted income.

Total unrestricted donations and legacies were £177,779 which was a £11,084 increase from the previous year's figure of £166,695. Gift Aid from tax efficient giving totalled £25,581 (2022: £30,025),

Church and hall lettings strengthened further, raising £128,340 in 2023 compared to £115,135 in 2022, an increase of £13,205. Income from fundraising events at £12,924 saw a small drop against the previous year (£16,960).

Total expenditure increased by £62,128 to £371,428 (2022: £309,300) with increases across several of the major expense headings (see note 4).

We were pleased to be able to meet our pledged contributions to the Diocesan Parish Support Fund of £165,800 in 2023. The Parish Support Fund pays for our parish clergy and other diocesan resources, as well as a contribution to poorer parishes.

The team as a whole happily contributed £16,715 (2022: £13,189) to mission giving and donations. The increase is in part due to Holy Trinity, for operational reasons, paying over its 2022 annual charitable tithe in 2023.

In summary, the deficit for the parish on unrestricted funds was £29,952, with an overall deficit of £28,640, after unrealised gains on investments which totalled £2,488. The net movement of funds is a deficit of £28,640 (2022: a surplus of £5,416).

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

Report of the Parochial Church Council For the year ended 31 December 2023

7.2 Reserves Policy

The PCC has examined the requirements for free reserves, i.e., those unrestricted funds not invested in tangible fixed assets. Given the nature of Merton Priory Team Ministry's work and ongoing financial uncertainty due to the effects of the cost-of-living crisis, the PCC considers that the free reserves requirement should be held at three months' routine general fund expenditure, plus committed future expenditure on other projects, where funds permit. This is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. At 31 December 2023, the PCC had net free reserves of £227,924 (2022: £247,962) as outlined below, which the PCC acknowledges well exceeds the total free reserves requirement of £110,712 (2022: £79,918).

	2023 £	2022 £
Total reserves	307,301	329,196
Less: restricted funds	(25,241)	(25,301)
Less: endowment funds	(18,249)	(16,877)
Less: unrestricted tangible fixed assets used in the continuing work of the PCC	(35,887)	(39,056)
	227,924	247,962
Free reserves requirement:		
Reserve agreed by PCC	88,686	74,168
Balance allocated to the anticipated cost of fabric repairs	22,026	5,750
	110,712	79,918

All three churches are planning significant expenditure in 2024 and beyond. Christ Church is planning major work in to coincide with their 150 year anniversary celebrations; this includes work around the altar, redecorations of the church, moving the font and putting toilets into the church. They have already spoken to the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) and have appointed an architect.

Holy Trinity has completed extensive kitchen refurbishment and redecoration in recent years, and has no immediate plans for further major works.

St John the Divine will be spending significant sums on a new lighting and heating system with associated electrical works, for which they are likely to be applying for grant funding alongside other fundraising for the project. The timing is dependent on funding being secured.

So although the free reserves position at 31 December 2023 may be looking very healthy, it is clear that all three churches are mindful of their responsibility in thinking ahead to the appropriate use of the PCC's charitable reserves.

7.3 Investment Policy

Funds not immediately required for working capital are partly placed on short term deposit and partly invested in longer-term investment funds. The PCC currently uses the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund, Charities Aid Foundation investment funds and M&G Charity Funds. The PCC expects to do some work in the near future on drawing up a formal investment policy.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

Report of the Parochial Church Council For the year ended 31 December 2023

7.4 Going Concern

Each year it is the PCC's responsibility to state whether or not the financial statements have been drawn up on a going concern basis (see the accounting policy note on page 17). Going concern is the assumption that an entity, in this case the PCC, has the resources (financial or otherwise) needed to continue operating for the foreseeable future and, in particular, for at least 12 months from the date of approval by the PCC of these financial statements. If the going concern principle did not apply, then the accounts would be drawn up on an insolvent basis.

8 Volunteers

We are grateful to all our churchwardens for their many and varied labours: Zoe Miller in her first year at Christ Church, John Eades and Delene Edwards (also in her first year) at Holy Trinity and Ann Roberts at St John's (returning to a previous ministry). Our co-treasurers, Kerry Porritt and Ann Roberts, have steered us wisely and efficiently through our financial affairs, while Margaret Duncan has joined us as PCC Secretary. It has been encouraging to welcome Zoe, Delene and Margaret in these new roles for them, which come with significant responsibility; well done to them!

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so tirelessly on our behalf to make our churches the lively and vibrant communities they are. As well as those in licensed lay roles, we particularly want to mention all those who work behind the scenes and in the more invisible areas of our church life.

9 Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and is a Registered Charity.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The PCC consists of 18 elected members, six from Christ Church, six from Holy Trinity and six from St John the Divine, plus the team clergy. During the past year the PCC has met six times.

A range of issues are discussed during PCC meetings, including considering ministry needs, parish communications and planning for key events in the parish, as well as hearing reports from the individual churches and having oversight of the Mission Action Plans for all three churches. The PCC has authority for finance across the parish.

The PCC has assessed the major risks to which the PCC is exposed, in particular those relating to the specific operational areas of the charity, its investments, and its finances. The PCC believes that, by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring that controls exist over key financial systems, and by examining the operational risks faced by the church, it has established effective systems and procedures to mitigate those risks.

The PCC appoints six foundation governors at Holy Trinity School and two at The Priory School, and members of our congregations also serve as governors appointed by Southwark Diocesan Board of Education. This year two governors were appointed to Holy Trinity School.

The PCC Standing Committee, which consists of the Team Rector, Team Vicar, six Churchwardens, Secretary and co-Treasurers, has met on several occasions. The Curate has recently also been invited to attend these meetings. This group has set the agenda for the PCC meetings and ensured its smooth running. In addition, the PCC Business Committee – Team Rector, Team Vicar, co-Treasurers and Secretary – has met to make certain that all aspects of church business are covered.

Our new PCC Secretary, Margaret Duncan, has commented that "what really stood out for me, apart from learning new skills for the new role, was St John's efforts to increase the church membership by visiting the residents of High Path estate and the Team winter night shelter for the homeless".

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

Report of the Parochial Church Council For the year ended 31 December 2023

10 Responsibilities of Trustees for the Financial Statements

The PCC is responsible for preparing the report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice. Charity law in England and Wales requires the PCC to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the PCC and of the income and application of income of the charity for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the PCC is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the activities of the charity will continue.

The PCC is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enables them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the governing document. The PCC is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The PCC is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included in the charity's website.

11 Approval

The PCC has elected to have an independent examination rather than an audit of the financial statements. The role of Independent Examiner is a personal appointment and this has been carried out by John Helm. Mr Helm has indicated his willingness to continue in this role and accordingly a resolution will be submitted to the forthcoming Annual Parochial Church Meeting to re-appoint him as the PCC's Independent Examiner for 2024.

The report of the PCC was approved by the PCC on 24 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



The Revd Mark Eminson
PCC Chair

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

Report of the Independent Examiner to the Parochial Church Council of Merton Priory

I report on the accounts of the Parochial Church Council of Merton Priory for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 17 to 34.

Respective responsibilities of PCC and examiner

The PCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC 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 examiners' report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. 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 the seeking of explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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



John Helm
Chartered Accountant
24 April 2024

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

Statement of Financial Activities For the year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Endowment Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Endowment Funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Income from:	2								
Donations and legacies		177,779	11,624	-	189,403	166,695	14,129	-	180,824
Charitable activities		2,289	-	-	2,289	1,885	-	-	1,885
Other trading activities		141,013	313	-	141,326	132,103	-	-	132,103
Investments		5,518	980	-	6,498	2,867	580	-	3,447
Other		784	-	-	784	1,810	-	-	1,810
Total Income		327,383	12,917	0	340,300	305,360	14,709	0	320,069
Expenditure on:									
Raising funds	3	3,706	-	-	3,706	5,762	-	-	5,762
Charitable activities	4	354,745	12,977	-	367,722	290,912	12,626	-	303,538
Total Expenditure		358,451	12,977	0	371,428	296,674	12,626	0	309,300
Net gains/(losses) on investments		1,116	-	1,372	2,488	(3,434)	-	(1,919)	(5,353)
Net income	5	(29,952)	(60)	1,372	(28,640)	5,252	2,083	(1,919)	5,416
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		(29,952)	(60)	1,372	(28,640)	5,252	2,083	(1,919)	5,416
Total funds brought forward		287,018	25,301	16,877	329,196	281,766	23,218	18,796	323,780
Total funds carried forward		257,066	25,241	18,249	300,556	287,018	25,301	16,877	329,196

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

Balance Sheet As at 31 December 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Endowment Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Fixed Assets						
Tangible Assets	6	35,887	-	-	35,887	39,056
Investments	7	39,851	-	15,824	55,675	53,099
		75,738	0	15,824	91,562	92,155
Current Assets						
Debtors	8	42,440	-	-	42,440	36,329
Cash At Bank and In Hand		165,624	25,241	2,425	190,865	221,583
		208,064	25,241	2,425	233,305	257,912
Creditors - Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	9	24,311	-	-	24,311	20,871
Net Current Assets		183,753	25,241	2,425	208,994	237,041
Net Assets		259,491	25,241	18,249	300,556	329,196
Represented by:						
Endowment Funds	10	-	-	18,249	18,249	16,877
Restricted Income Funds	11	-	25,241	-	25,241	25,301
Unrestricted Income Funds	12	257,066	-	-	257,066	287,018
Total Funds		257,066	25,241	18,249	300,556	329,196

The financial statements were approved by the PCC on 24 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



The Revd Mark Eminson
PCC Chair



Dr Kerry Porritt
PCC Co-Treasurer



Ann Roberts
PCC Co-Treasurer

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

I Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP (FRS 102)). The financial statements are drawn up on the historical cost basis of accounting except for the revaluation of leasehold land and buildings and investments which are shown at market value.

The Parochial Church Council of Merton Priory was formed in May 2009 from the amalgamation of three separate parishes: Christ Church, Colliers Wood; Holy Trinity & St Peter, South Wimbledon; St John the Divine, Merton. These financial statements incorporate the income and expenditure, assets and liabilities of the combined parish, including comparative figures for the previous year. The finances of the three individual churches are maintained separately and are therefore accounted for as designated funds.

The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe an affiliation to another body or those that are informal gatherings of church members.

The PCC meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

Going Concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern and accordingly the accounts have been drawn up on a going concern basis.

Income recognition

Voluntary income and donations (including legacies) are accounted for once the PCC has entitlement to the income, it is probable the income will be received, and the amount of income receivable can be reliably measured. Income from the recovery of tax on gift aided donations is accounted for in the period to which the relevant donation is received. Grant income is recognised on a receivable basis.

The income from trading activities includes rental income from the letting of church premises which is accounted for when earned. It is shown gross, with the associated costs included in fundraising costs.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Expenditure recognition

Expenditure is accrued as soon as a liability is considered probable, and the amount of obligation can be measured reliably. Longer term liabilities are discounted to present value. The PCC is not registered for VAT and accordingly expenditure includes VAT where appropriate.

Expenditure included in Raising Funds includes amounts incurred in obtaining grants and other donations and property maintenance costs.

Expenditure on church activities includes those costs incurred to fulfil the PCC's principal objects, as outlined in the Report of the PCC. These include grants payable and governance costs. Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded, if that award creates a binding or constructive obligation on the PCC. The Diocesan Parish Support Fund is accounted for when due. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the PCC and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These costs include costs related to the independent examination and legal fees.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

I Accounting Policies (continued)

The PCC contributes to employees' pension plans with the Church Workers' Pension Fund (see Note 4a). Rentals under operating leases are charged as incurred over the term of the lease.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Consecrated and benefice property of any kind is excluded from the financial statements by Section 10(2)(a) and (c) of the Charities Act 2011.

Moveable church furnishings are held by the Team Rector and Churchwardens on special trust for the PCC. They are considered inalienable property and require a faculty for disposal. They are listed in the churches' inventories, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time). Items are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful economic life other than where insufficient cost information is available. Individual items of furnishings with a purchase price of £1,500 or less are written off when the asset is acquired.

Equipment and Fixtures & Fittings and such other functional equipment used on a continuing basis for the work of the PCC is depreciated on a straight-line basis over five years (equipment, currently none held) or ten years (fixtures and fittings). Individual items of equipment and fixtures & fittings with a purchase price of £1,500 or less are written off when the asset is acquired.

Fixed Asset Investments

Investments are valued at market value at 31 December.

Debtors

Debtors are included at the settlement amount due. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation arising from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are recognised at their settlement amount.

Fund accounting

The funds held by the charity are either:

Unrestricted general funds that can be used for PCC ordinary purposes. These include funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC. Apart from the PCC General Fund, all other unrestricted funds are designated to the three individual churches and are therefore reported as designated funds.

Restricted funds represent donations received for a specific object or invited by the PCC for a specific object. The funds may only be expended on the specific object for which they were given. Any balance remaining unspent at the end of each year must be carried forward as a balance on that fund.

The *permanent endowment fund (St John the Divine)* was given for building a new church, completed in 1914, with the income from the remaining endowment capital to be used on the fabric of the existing building.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

2 Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Donations & legacies				
Offerings and donations	152,225	9,809	162,034	143,480
Income tax reclaimed	24,176	1,405	25,581	30,025
Legacies	1,000	-	1,000	2,000
Grants	378	410	788	5,319
	177,779	11,624	189,403	180,824
Charitable activities				
Fees for weddings and funerals	2,289	-	2,289	1,885
	2,289	0	2,289	1,885
Other trading activities				
Bookstall, magazine etc sales	62	-	62	8
Fund raising events	12,924	-	12,924	16,960
Lettings income	128,027	313	128,340	115,135
	141,013	313	141,326	132,103
Investments				
Dividends	1,039	-	1,039	1,038
Bank Interest	2,192	547	2,739	1,036
Rent from land	2,287	433	2,720	1,373
	5,518	980	6,498	3,447
Other				
Insurance claim	784	-	784	1,810
	784	0	784	1,810
	327,383	12,917	340,300	320,069

The figures for Donations do not include gifts banked directly to charities for Christian Aid Week or cheques sent direct to the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Appeal. The parish also makes significant contributions in kind, such as the substantial amount of food given each year to the Wimbledon Food Bank.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

3 Expenditure on Raising Funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Costs of fundraising events	3,344	-	3,344	4,609
Costs of supporting regular giving	362	-	362	1,153
	3,706	0	3,706	5,762

4 Expenditure on Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Parish Support Fund	172,100	-	172,100	165,800
Staff costs (note 4a)	20,522	-	20,522	15,761
Church Life & Outreach	4,638	83	4,721	12,398
Missionary & Charitable Giving and Gifts (note 4b)	13,280	3,435	16,715	13,189
Provision of Office & Support	14,097	8,400	22,497	22,013
Provision of Buildings and Facilities	126,508	1,059	127,567	71,137
Governance costs	3,600	-	3,600	3,240
	354,745	12,977	367,722	303,538

Included within expenditure on church activities (see note 4 above) are the following staff costs:

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Gross salaries	20,340	-	20,340	15,586
Pension contributions	182	-	182	175
	20,522	0	20,522	15,761

These staff costs exclude the amounts paid to Southwark Diocese for the stipendiary clergy, who are funded through the Parish Support Fund. Employer's National Insurance is currently covered by the government's Employment Allowance. All employed staff are paid at least the London Living Wage. Information on the staff pension scheme is given below.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

During the year the churches employed various part-time staff, as follows:

- Holy Trinity: the post of Parish Administrator was vacant throughout 2023 and a Director of Music was in post for the full year (2022: from October); the church employed one Bookkeeper (2022: one).
- Christ Church and St John the Divine jointly employed an Organist/Music Leader (2022: one), and each church employed a Cleaner (2022: one each).

4a Staff Pensions

Merton Priory PCC participates in the Pension Builder Scheme section of the Church Workers Pension Fund (CWPF) for lay staff. CWPF is administered by the Church of England Pensions Board, which holds the CWPF assets separately from those of the Employer and other participating employers.

The Church Workers Pension Fund has two sections:

1. the Defined Benefits Scheme;
2. the Pension Builder Scheme, which has two subsections;
 - a. a deferred annuity section known as Pension Builder Classic; and,
 - b. a cash balance section known as Pension Builder 2014.

Pension Builder Scheme

Both sections of the Pension Builder Scheme are classed as defined benefit schemes.

Pension Builder Classic provides a pension, accumulated from contributions paid and converted into a deferred annuity during employment based on terms set and reviewed by the Church of England Pensions Board from time to time. Discretionary increases may also be added, depending on investment returns and other factors.

Pension Builder 2014 is a cash balance scheme that provides a lump sum which members use to provide benefits at retirement. Pension contributions are recorded in an account for each member. Discretionary bonuses may be added before retirement, depending on investment returns and other factors. The account, plus any bonuses declared is payable, unreduced, from age 65.

There is no sub-division of assets between employers in each section of the Pension Builder Scheme.

The scheme is considered to be a multi-employer scheme as described in Section 28 of FRS 102. This is because it is not possible to attribute the Pension Builder Scheme's assets and liabilities to specific employers and means that contributions are accounted for as if the Scheme were a defined contribution scheme. The pensions costs charged to the SOFA (Statement of Financial Activities) in the year are the contributions payable (2023: £182; 2022: £175).

A valuation of the Pension Builder Scheme is carried out once every three years. The most recent valuation was carried out as at 31 December 2022. The next valuation is due as at 31 December 2025.

For the Pension Builder Classic section, the valuation revealed a surplus of £34.8m on the ongoing assumptions used. At the most recent annual review, the Board chose to grant a discretionary bonus of 6.7% following the strong funding position over 2023. There is no requirement for deficit payments at the current time.

For the Pension Builder 2014 section, the valuation revealed a surplus of £8.5m on the ongoing assumptions used. There is no requirement for deficit payments at the current time.

The legal structure of the scheme is such that if another employer fails, **Merton Priory PCC** could become responsible for paying a share of the failed employer's pension liabilities.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

4b Expenditure – Missionary & Charitable Giving and Gifts

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Giving to Church overseas & missionary societies:				
Joshua Orphan & Community Care, Malawi	-	-	-	1,967
Embrace the Middle East	-	-	-	451
International Rescue Committee	-	-	-	184
Red Cross Somalia	-	-	-	284
The Leprosy Mission	2,100	-	2,100	-
Gifts to Relief & development agencies:				
Toilet Twinning	-	-	-	364
Christian Aid	1,800	-	1,800	-
Ukraine Appeal	-	-	-	161
Turkey-Syria	11	95	106	-
Gaza Hospital	-	224	224	-
Giving to Home mission & church organisations:				
Christian CARE Merton	-	369	369	332
Bishop of Southwark's Lent Appeal	-	414	414	1,241
Faith in Action – Merton Homelessness Project	2,100	-	2,100	2,134
Merton Night Shelter	4	310	314	668
Accoutre Centre Learning	2,100	-	2,100	-
Don Foodbank	-	589	589	-
Annual Donation	200	-	200	-
Toddlers Group	-	65	65	-
Gifts to Secular Charities:				
Children Society	-	202	202	-
Merton Citizens (part of Citizens UK)	1,365	-	1,365	1,300
South London Refugee Association	-	-	-	1,967
London Air Ambulance	1,800	-	1,800	-
Book Trust	-	-	-	375
Jigsaw4u	1,800	-	1,800	786
Samaritans	-	-	-	225
Shooting Star Hospice	-	-	-	375
Time is Precious	-	-	-	375
Save the Children	-	1,167	1,167	-
	13,280	3,435	16,715	13,189

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

5 Net Income

	2023 £	2022 £
This is stated after charging:		
Depreciation of owned assets	7,529	7,091
Independent examination fee (including preparation of financial statements)	3,600	3,240
Other fees paid to independent examiner	-	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

6 Tangible Fixed Assets

	Fixtures, fittings & equipment £
Cost	
At 1 January 2023	105,126
Additions	4,360
Disposals	-
	<u> </u>
At 31 December 2023	109,486
Depreciation	
At 1 January 2023	66,070
Charge for Year	7,529
	<u> </u>
At 31 December 2023	73,599
Net Book Value	
At 31 December 2023	<u> </u> 35,887
At 31 December 2022	<u> </u> 39,056

Moveable Church Furnishings:

None of the three churches hold any moveable church furnishings purchased since 2001 which are capitalised and depreciated over their useful economic life (see Accounting Policies).

Fixtures & Fittings:

Christ Church: The church sound system was purchased in 2009 and is now fully depreciated.

Holy Trinity: The grand piano (purchased in 2002) and refurbishment of the reception area (2007) are both fully depreciated. The audio-visual system was installed in 2015 and will be depreciated over ten years. The original kitchen improvements from 2002 were disposed of and a new kitchen installed in 2022, which is being depreciated over ten years.

St John the Divine: A lighting control panel was purchased in 2018 and is being depreciated over ten years. A new heater was installed in 2023 and is being depreciated over 10 years.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

7 Fixed Asset Investments

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Endowment Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Market Value				
At 1 January 2023	38,647	14,452	53,099	58,369
Net of purchases and sales	88	-	88	83
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation	1,116	1,372	2,488	(5,353)
At 31 December 2023	39,851	15,824	55,675	53,099
Market value represented by investments in:				
Charibond Charities Fixed Interest				
Common investment Fund shares	3,235	15,824	19,059	17,324
CBF Investment Fund shares	26,616	-	26,616	25,775
Polka Theatre – interest in the freehold	10,000	-	10,000	10,000
	39,851	15,824	55,675	53,099

Christ Church: CBF Investment Fund shares: Trust Fund T0169, held by the Diocese of Southwark as custodian trustee, originated from the sale of a passageway in 1951 for £200. Dividends are reinvested.

St John the Divine: CBF Investment Fund shares: Trust Fund T0046 held by the Diocese of Southwark as custodian trustee. The fund was a permanent endowment (capital) for building a new church, completed in 1914, with the remaining capital invested to provide an income restricted to work on the fabric of the building.

Holy Trinity: Charibond Charities Fixed Interest Common Investment Fund. The unit trust invests in government and corporate fixed interest securities.

The Polka Theatre: a nominal figure of the PCC's interest in the freehold of the Polka Theatre (240 The Broadway, London SW19 1SB) which is subject to a long-term lease. This has not been the subject of an independent valuation.

8 Debtors

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Prepayments and other debtors	1,966	-	1,966	2,944
Gift Aid recoverable	19,422	-	19,422	18,273
Accrued income	21,052	-	21,052	15,112
	42,440	0	42,440	36,329

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

9 Creditors - Amounts Falling Due Within One Year

	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Accruals	15,557	-	15,557	13,610
Pension creditor	49	-	49	32
Income received in advance	8,705	-	8,705	7,229
	24,311	0	24,311	20,871

10 Endowment Funds

10a Current Year	At 1 January 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains/ (losses) £	At 31 December 2023 £
St John the Divine (permanent) Mackrell Trust (T0046/capital)	16,877	-	-	-	1,372	0
Total	16,877	0	0	0	16,464	18,249

10b Prior Year	At 1 January 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains/ (losses) £	At 31 December 2022 £
St John the Divine (permanent) Mackrell Trust (T0046/capital)	18,796	-	-	-	(1,919)	16,877
Total	18,796	0	0	0	(23,028)	16,877

This fund was a permanent endowment (capital) for building a new church, completed in 1914, with the remaining capital invested to provide an income restricted to work on the fabric of the building.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

II Restricted Funds

I Ia Current Year	At 1 January 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers	Gains/ (losses) £	At 31 December 2023 £
PCC						
Curate Housing	0	8,400	(8,400)	-	-	0
Youth Work	1,976	-	(83)	-	-	1,893
Merton Night Shelters	0	-	-	1,690	-	1,690
Christ Church						
Merton Night Shelters	1,958	-	(268)	(1,690)	-	0
Children's Society	408	202	(202)	-	-	408
Christian Aid	427	-	-	-	-	427
Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call	194	15	(209)	-	-	0
Faith in Action	574	-	-	-	-	574
Christian Care	204	231	(368)	-	-	67
150th Anniversary Fund	871	(333)	(538)	-	-	0
Hymn Book Fund	295	-	-	-	-	295
Mission & Charities – Other	0	237	(237)	-	-	0
Holy Trinity						
Merton Night Shelters	4,603	-	(41)	-	-	4,562
Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call	0	197	(197)	-	-	0
Flower Fund	4	-	-	-	-	4
Other Restricted Donations	2,338	1,645	(1,838)	-	-	2,145
St John the Divine						
Bells Centenary Project	2,258	560	(522)	-	-	2,296
Mission & Charities	(100)	783	(74)	-	-	609
Church Maintenance & Repairs: Mackrell Trust (T0046/income)	9,291	980	-	-	-	10,271
Total	25,301	12,917	(12,977)	0	0	25,241

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

II Restricted Funds (continued)

I Ib Prior Year	At 1 January 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers	Gains/ (losses) £	At 31 December 2022 £
PCC						
Curate Housing	-	8,400	(8,400)	-	-	0
Youth Work	2,499	-	(523)	-	-	1,976
Christ Church						
Merton Night Shelters	1,771	187	-	-	-	1,958
Children's Society	408	-	-	-	-	408
Christian Aid	427	-	-	-	-	427
Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call	194	-	-	-	-	194
Faith in Action	574	-	-	-	-	574
Christian Care	-	536	(332)	-	-	204
150th Anniversary Fund	537	334	-	-	-	871
Hymn Book Fund	295	-	-	-	-	295
Holy Trinity						
Merton Night Shelters	3,542	1,211	(150)	-	-	4,603
Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call	564	256	(820)	-	-	0
Flower Fund	4	-	-	-	-	4
Junior Church collections for charity	1,125	-	(1,125)	-	-	0
Other Restricted Donations	309	2,783	(754)	-	-	2,338
St John the Divine						
Bells Centenary Project	2,258	-	-	-	-	2,258
Mission & Charities	-	422	(522)	-	-	(100)
Church Maintenance & Repairs: Mackrell Trust (T0046/income)	8,711	580	-	-	-	9,291
Total	23,218	14,709	(12,626)	0	0	25,301

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

II Restricted Funds (continued)

Descriptions of the main restricted funds are as follows:

PCC

- **Curate Housing:** monthly rent is payable to Southwark Diocese and is covered by a very generous restricted donation.
- **Youth Work:** this was originally the balance held by Morden Baptist Church when the Fusion Youth Group was transferred to the Merton Priory Team. The Fusion Youth Group no longer exists and Morden Baptist Church does not want the funds returned to them. The PCC decided in January 2018 that this fund could be used for any youth work across the three churches, and at the start of 2023 was used to fund a Sunday evening outreach at St John's.

Christ Church

- **Merton Night Shelter:** Christ Church is one of the locations for the night shelter for the homeless during the winter months and this fund represents incoming donations and outgoing expenses. In 2023 it was agreed to move this to a PCC fund to reflect it as a parish-wide activity.
- **150th Anniversary Fund:** in 2024, Christ Church will be 150 years old. This fund was established to gather the proceeds, from appeals and fundraising, to be used for the enhancement of the building and projects within the local community. This fund has now been spent and future activity will be through a designated unrestricted fund.
- **Hymn Book Fund:** this was a specific appeal in 2012 for the purchase of new hymn books. Christ Church DCC will be reviewing what happens to the remaining balance.

Holy Trinity

- **Merton Night Shelter:** Holy Trinity is one of the locations for the night shelter for the homeless during the winter months and this fund represents incoming donations and outgoing expenses. In 2023 it was agreed to move this to a PCC fund to reflect it as a parish-wide activity.
- **Junior Church collections:** regular Sunday collections by the children which are sent to a charity of their choice.
- **Other Restricted Donations:** the balance represents the remainder of a gift for future development of the prayer corner and other general appeals including towards the costs of hosting a 'warm space' in the Winter months.

St John the Divine

- **Mission & Charities:** restricted donations for charities.
- **Mackrell Trust (T0046):** an ancient permanent endowment for building a new church, held by the Diocese of Southwark as custodian trustee. The capital is not available for use but the interest may be used on the maintenance and repair of the church.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

12 Unrestricted Funds

12a Current Year	At 1 January 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains/ (losses) £	At 31 December 2023 £
Unrestricted						
PCC General Fund	1,000	1,270	(2,747)	(2)	-	(479)
Designated Funds (General)						
Christ Church	46,591	70,715	(81,420)	-	276	36,162
Holy Trinity	45,931	180,302	(181,220)	-	840	45,853
St John the Divine	58,016	57,214	(69,684)	(4,360)	-	41,186
Designated Funds (Specific)						
PCC: MP3 Players	558	-	-	-	-	558
Christ Church:						
Hall & Church Repairs Fund	716	-	(311)	-	-	405
Bells Fund	3,394	1,026	(58)	-	-	4,362
150th Anniversary Fund	4,828	16,856	(3,782)	-	-	17,902
Holy Trinity:						
Marian Esling Legacy (income)	42,307	-	-	-	-	42,307
Annual Tithe	11,700	-	(11,700)	-	-	0
Special Projects Fund	32,923	-	-	-	-	32,923
Fixed Assets Fund	36,972	-	(6,746)	348	-	30,574
St John the Divine						
Fixed Assets Fund	2,082	-	(783)	4,014	-	5,313
Total	287,018	327,383	(358,451)	0	1,116	257,066

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF
MERTON PRIORY**

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

12 Unrestricted Funds (continued)

12b Prior Year	At 1 January 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains/ (losses) £	At 31 December 2022 £
Unrestricted						
PCC General Fund	1,000	1,404	(1,404)	-	-	1,000
Designated Funds (General)						
Christ Church	42,548	78,937	(74,520)	-	(374)	46,591
Holy Trinity	53,650	168,832	(168,091)	(5,400)	(3,060)	45,931
St John the Divine	47,097	50,269	(39,350)	-	-	58,016
Designated Funds (Specific)						
PCC: MP3 Players	558	-	-	-	-	558
Christ Church:						
Hall & Church Repairs Fund	716	-	-	-	-	716
Bells Fund	2,620	774	-	-	-	3,394
150th Anniversary Fund	-	5,144	(316)	-	-	4,828
Holy Trinity:						
Marian Esling Legacy (income)	42,307	-	-	-	-	42,307
Annual Tithe	12,200	-	(5,900)	5,400	-	11,700
Special Projects Fund	32,923	-	-	-	-	32,923
Fixed Assets Fund	44,065	-	(7,093)	-	-	36,972
St John the Divine						
Fixed Assets Fund	2,082	-	-	-	-	2,082
Total	281,766	305,360	(296,674)	0	(3,434)	287,018

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

12 Unrestricted Funds (continued)

Designated (General) Funds are funds which have been designated by the PCC to each DCC for unrestricted purposes.

Designated (Specific) Funds are funds which have been designated by each DCC for specific purposes.

PCC

- **MP3 Players Fund:** in some years, the parish drama group stages a production where 50% of the surplus is retained by the PCC and 50% designated to help with the costs of future MP3 productions.

Christ Church

- **Hall & Church Repairs Fund:** was established with income from the Colliwobbles toddler group which group has not restarted since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Bells Fund:** will be used for the maintenance of the bells in the church.
- **150th Anniversary Fund:** in 2024, Christ Church will be 150 years old. This fund will be used for the enhancement of the building and projects within the local community.

Holy Trinity

- **Marian Esling Legacy (income):** the remaining interest on the Marian Esling Legacy Fund which is designated for capital projects.
- **Annual Tithe:** Holy Trinity has historically given away 5% of its unrestricted voluntary income, excluding fundraising and investment income, to charitable causes each year. In 2023 it paid out it's 2022 tithe and has suspended it's tithe giving for 2023.
- **Special Projects Fund:** following a generous legacy and a gift weekend in 2018, the DCC felt it was appropriate to put aside some of this money to be used at a later date on special projects around the church that would enhance the building, such as refurbishing the kitchen and relocating the chapel to make it more accessible.
- **Fixed Assets Fund:** the remaining cost of tangible fixed assets, from where they are now depreciated.

St John the Divine

- **Fixed Assets Fund:** the remaining cost of tangible fixed assets, from where they are now depreciated.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

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

13 Operating Lease Commitments

The total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are payable:

	2023 £	2022 £
Not later than one year	706	706
Later than one year and not later than five years	881	1,587
	1,587	2,293

The previous printer/photocopier lease expired on 12 April 2021. The PCC signed a new lease on 9 April 2021 which commits the PCC to total lease payments of £3,528 over five years.

14 Capital Commitments

The PCC has the following capital commitments, which it expects to complete in 2024:

	Expected Cost £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £
Christ Church				
Decoration of Chancel	20,976	20,976	-	-
Protection of Organ	1,050	1,050	-	-
Holy Trinity				
No capital works planned for 2024	0	-	-	-
St John the Divine				
Heating & Lighting	70,000	-	70,000	-
	92,026	22,026	70,000	0

15 Related Party Transactions and Balances

The expenses of three (2022: three) members of the PCC amounting to £10,923 (2022: £8,722) in relation to travel, housing, training and retreats were met by the PCC during the year.

Aggregated unrestricted donations from PCC members totalled £9,235 (2022: £15,810).

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF MERTON PRIORY

Statement of Financial Activities For the year ended 31 December 2023

16. Income & Expenditure Analysis	PCC		Christ Church		Holy Trinity		St John the Divine			Total £
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Income from:										
Donations and legacies	41	8,400	42,955	352	113,676	1,843	21,107	1,029	-	189,403
Charitable activities	66	-	1,389	-	729	-	105	-	-	2,289
Other trading activities	1,143	-	44,070	-	61,070	-	34,730	313	-	141,326
Investments	21	-	179	-	4,044	-	1,274	980	-	6,498
Other	-	-	-	-	784	-	-	-	-	784
Total Income	1,271	8,400	88,593	352	180,303	1,843	57,216	2,322	0	340,300
Expenditure on:										
Raising funds	3	-	478	-	2,080	-	1,145	-	-	3,706
Charitable activities	2,744	8,483	85,093	1,822	197,586	2,076	69,322	596	-	371,428
Total Expenditure	2,747	8,483	85,571	3,512	199,666	2,076	70,467	596	0	373,118
Net gains/(losses) on investments	-	-	276	-	840	-	-	-	1,372	2,488
Net income	(1,476)	(83)	3,298	(1,470)	(18,523)	(233)	(13,251)	1,726	1,372	(28,640)
Transfers between funds	(2)	1,690	-	(1,690)	348	-	(346)	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	(1,478)	1,607	3,298	(3,160)	(18,175)	(233)	(13,597)	1,726	1,372	(28,640)
Total funds brought forward	1,558	1,976	55,529	4,931	169,833	6,945	60,098	11,449	16,877	329,196
Total funds carried forward	80	3,583	58,827	1,771	151,658	6,712	46,501	13,175	18,249	300,556