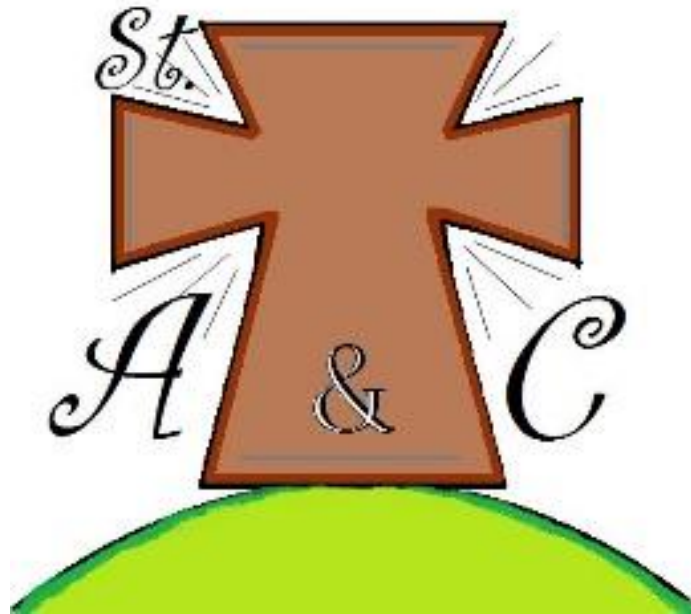


Parish of Luton, St. Anne with St. Christopher



Annual Report 2023

Registered Charity Number: 1134772

Including accounts for year ending 31 December

2023

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PARISH OF LUTON ST. ANNE WITH ST. CHRISTOPHER 2023

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our annual report for 2023. This booklet contains reports and accounts relating to this parish. To comply with the Charities Act, this report contains information that is supplementary to that which is being presented as a Parish Statement to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM).

Aims and Purposes

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Parish of Luton, St Anne with St Christopher, has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Anne Crosby, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of the two parish churches, St Anne's and St Christopher's, in Luton.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship in our churches and to become part of the parish community.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable people to live out their faith as part of the parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for those people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the two churches and their halls.

Achievement and Performance

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services across the parish during the week and over the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

Current patterns of worship comprise: a Sunday morning service at St. Anne's Church (Holy Eucharist except for the third Sunday when an *All Connected* service is held); a varied program of worship entitled *Sunday@4* at St. Christopher's (the third Sunday being a Holy Eucharist); a mid-week service at St. Christopher's (Holy Eucharist except for the first Wednesday which is *Morning Worship*).

Patronal festivals and other special days continued to be celebrated with evening services of Holy Eucharist.

Fellowship time takes place after most services.

Holy Baptism takes place at mutually convenient services There were 8 Baptisms in 2023.

Funeral ministry is undertaken by the vicar.

Weddings potentially take place at both St Anne's and St Christopher's.

The number of electors certified upon the renewed Church Electoral Roll in 2023 is 100.

The parish is part of the Inclusive Church Network.

Deanery Synod

One members sits on the Deanery Synod, along with the Vicar. There is one vacant position.

The Churches

Various maintenance tasks have been completed in both churches, details of which are in the accompanying Churchwarden's report.

Both church halls are regularly hired out to local community groups.

In association with Neville's Funeral Services, *Talking Elephants* groups take place monthly in the halls of both churches.

Both churches have gardens to keep in order. At St Christopher's, a member of the local community volunteers his services, cutting the grass and keeping the borders in order. This has been supplemented by volunteers from the Church community and the Community Pay Back Scheme. St Anne's and St Christopher's both receive working parties from the Community Pay Back Scheme. These groups of people undertake gardening and maintenance work in the church and the grounds under supervision from their supervisor. The Garden of Remembrance in St. Christopher's grounds is significant for the community and is a place where parishioners may have the ashes of their loved ones interred.

Pastoral Care

Some members of the parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. The vicar and lay reader visit and take Holy Communion as appropriate. Those receiving Holy Communion at home are regularly prayed for by the wider church community. Parishioners are also visited in hospital where appropriate and possible.

Due to the leader's retirement, the weekly "Pop in Club" for young children and their carers ceased to run at the end of the summer term. A replacement leader is being sought. Young people attend Luton Unite, an ecumenical town wide gathering of Christian young people meeting at Youthscape.

These groups all have a Christian foundation, including appropriate worship and valuable fellowship.

Mission and Evangelism

The Church's Life, Ministry and Mission is always on the agenda of PCC meetings, reminding us of our need for mission and evangelism within the everyday life of the churches.

The parish Mission Planning Group has worked to fulfil the current Mission Action Plan so that all we do focuses out into our community, seeking to transform the lives of our neighbours, as we grow in faith and enable others to come to know Jesus.

Ecumenical Relationships

Our two churches are the only two church buildings within the parish. Revd Anne meets regularly with other local clergy in the east of Luton. Revd Anne serves on the Luton Churches Together executive committee and also attends monthly prayer meetings, when possible, with church leaders of all denominations from across the town.

Financial Review

The parish has one bank account and set of accounts. The PCC has responsibility for the parish's finances, supported by the Parish Standing and Finance Committee.

The parish unrestricted income in 2023 was £76,018 and payments of £73,573. The unrestricted bank balance at 31st December 2023 was £52,222. The full details and report are printed in the annual report, which is available to those on the Electoral Roll before the Annual Church Meeting.

Reserves Policy

The policy states that we plan to have to hand the equivalent of three months' regular expenditure, excluding Building and Fabric costs, money that has been designated for specific projects and restricted funds.

Risk Management

All regular worshippers in the parish have been, and continue to be, encouraged to give generously. Both churches have a contactless payment machine. The parish Facebook page and 'A Church Near You' have options to enable people to financially support the parish, and an 'Easy Fundraising' account has been established. Everyone is encouraged to be part of the stewardship scheme and, if they are taxpayers, to gift-aid their giving.

St Christopher's is considerably dependent on rental income to meet most of its essential expenses. Most of the regular congregation at the church are not full-time wage-earners, the majority being aged 60 and above. There seems no easy way of managing these risks at present.

General Policies

The PCC has now agreed a total of twenty parish policies which are reviewed annually, namely:

- Safeguarding – best practice as per the Church of England
- Safeguarding adults when they are vulnerable
- Safeguarding Children
- Church and Hall Evacuation
- Conflict of Interest
- Equal Opportunities
- Domestic Abuse
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Lone Working
- Race Equality
- Reserves
- Risk Management
- Youth and Children's Work
- Coach trips
- Displaying of hirers banners
- Supporting persons in need
- Noticeboards
- Garden of Remembrance
- Advertisers in parish publicity
- Wedding Arrangements

Volunteers

There are a number of volunteers who give of their time and effort and work so hard to keep the parish a lively and vibrant community. We follow the diocesan guidelines regarding child protection and DBS checking. We are

grateful to our churchwarden Michelle Reeves, the parish treasurer Michael Whelan, and safeguarding officer Emma Reid, who have wonderfully fulfilled their duties and responsibilities.

Structure and Governance

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a registered charity.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules.

During 2023 the PCC met on six occasions.

Administrative Information

The Parish of Luton, St Anne with St Christopher, is situated in the Deanery of Luton. It is part of the St Albans Diocese in the Church of England. The Registered Charity number is 1134772.

The Parish Office is located at: Parish Office, St. Christopher's Church Hall, Felix Avenue, Luton, LU2 7LE. Further details in the reports from groups and other financial details can be requested from this address.

REVD ANNE'S REPORT 2023

As the world has begun to know what the "new normal" looks like, so the Parish of Luton, St Anne with St Christopher, has picked up on much that it was beginning before COVID struck. We have made changes that continue to help us become the missional, loving people of God.

However, before we go any further, I want to offer my huge thanks to the Ministry Team: Michelle Reeves, Churchwarden, Dianne Scott, Lay Reader, Olubukola Olowoye, Lay Leader of Worship, together with Fr Grantley Finlayson and Mthr Gladys Finlayson, retired clergy who offer their priestly ministry each month.

Thank you also to Ann Moore, who did not seek re-election as Churchwarden in 2023, and to everyone who has been a part of our parish worship, mission and social and fundraising activities. Each person has something to offer to the life of the parish and I pray that in this next year more of the God given gifts and talents we have can be used for the work of God in this place.

Thank you too, to Michael Whelan the parish treasurer who has diligently attended to the financial business of the parish, Emma Reid the parish safeguarding officer who has attended to the safeguarding needs of the parish and to Dianne Scott who has served as PCC secretary.

God has been good to this parish during the past year. Each week we seek to share with one another where we have seen Jesus in the lives of ourselves and others we know. The WhatsApp Prayer Group and Parish Chat have continued to flourish. The Prayer Group offer a safe space for prayers to be offered for a wide range of situations and people; Parish Chat enables the congregation to keep in touch with one another, sharing the joys and sorrows of life, information and updates.

During the year, new people have come along to worship in the parish, enabling us to continue to grow younger and more diverse. This is an ongoing work in progress. As we read in Acts 2: 47 (NRSV) 'praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved'. As a worshipping community God has gifted us with continued spiritual growth. A small but committed group of people gather week by week to deepen their faith, to seek to grow as disciples of Christ. God continues to draw people to join us in our worshipping community. At the end of 2023 plans to create a new service, entitled All Connected were formulated for St Anne's. This will be an all age interactive service, preparing people to recognise elements of the service should they come to a service of Holy Eucharist. This means that both churches will be offering a service that is accessible to people with little or no experience of church.

Beyond our worship, we have further embedded our engagement with our wider community. At St Anne's, Welcome Space, Community Refreshment Stop, Bacon Butty Morning, Talking Elephants and Craft groups enable people to engage with the church in ways that meet their needs. Similar opportunities have been offered at St Christopher's: Round Green Community Lunch, Talking Elephants and a craft group. Our Social and Fundraising events have been well received by those of the wider community who have participated. Quiz Nights, Tea @ 2, Craft Fairs and the Christmas Crib and Tree Festival are among the events that the local community look out for.

We have sought to continue working ethically, seeking inclusion and justice for all people. The Fairtrade Cake Baking Competition draws people from across the town to participate, including the Luton Council of Faiths. One visitor this year was delighted to see that one entry was suitable for Vegans- something that we have learnt from and will be encouraged to build on in the future.

As people returned to pre-pandemic shopping patterns and the economic crisis has deepened, fewer people donated to our monthly Foodbank collections. It was therefore decided that we would cease our monthly collections, replacing them with boxes in each church to accept donations, with a couple of times a year having a concerted push to collect extra food for the Luton Foodbank.

We have continued to join with town wide events: the Peace Walk; Luton Pride; the Fairness Taskforce; the Food First Luton Network and the Community Network. I continue to serve on the Luton Churches Together executive. I now also serve on the Luton Council of Faiths

Mission is a vital and integrated part of who we as a parish are. We seek to share the love of God, inviting others to come to worship and events. The congregation are encouraged to give the weekly pew sheet away along with flyers for individual events. The Mission Planning Group, has met throughout the year. The Mission Group is a group of people who are committed to sharing the love of God with all. This is not a closed group. If you have a passion for wanting to share the love of God with family, friends and our local neighbourhood, please speak to me. God continues to bless us both as a parish and individually. Prayer embeds all that we do; before each event and group, we pray for the event. After the event we give thanks for the people who have attended. As we have been faithful, God has been faithful to us.

I was invited to attend the Mixed Ecology Symposium in recognition of our work in Mission. At this residential held at Launde Abbey, Clergy and Diocesan staff shared experiences of things that were working well, things we had tried and hadn't worked as expected and indeed the things that were abandoned because they just didn't work. This excellent symposium informed thinking and led to attending a day conference where further missional exploration took place.

I continue to offer weekly Collective Worship at Wenlock Church of England Junior school, as well as speaking and praying at the termly service at St Mary's Church. It is wonderful to lead worship and share the word of God with approximately three hundred children and twenty adults each week. In addition, a program of education is offered for each year group, in St Anne's, linked to the RE curriculum. Crawley Green Infants School are visiting St Anne's twice a year to learn about the Christian faith. Hart Hill Nursery also has a regular programme. In the Autumn term the children explore Remembrance Day and later take part a Christingle service. During the Spring term they are introduced to Lent, while the summer term focuses on Pentecost and preparing the children to move on.

This year has been a year of many blessings. It has contained its challenges, not least that our finances are very challenging as can be seen in our accounts and our treasurer's report.

To further the work of God in this parish, everyone in the congregations, as the family of God, will need to engage with the work of the parish.

This may be answering God's call to read the Bible in church, lead intercessions, serve as a server or a sidesperson/welcomer in our worship. It may be to help with maintenance of our buildings or serving teas and coffees at events. There are many ways that each one of us can serve God in this parish.

Please pray about what God is asking you to do and then offer your gifts and talents.

Let's together make 2024 a great year. A year when we grow as the people of God in this place.

Every Blessing
Revd Anne

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy states that the church will train and equip church officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and recognise and respond to abuse.

In line with the above statement, we also follow the diocese 'Safeguarding Dashboards'. In doing so our PCC members ensure their training is up to date having the foundation pathway and Domestic Violence Awareness. DBSs have been updated this year for those that had reached their three-year renewal. The Vicar, Church Reader and all PCC members all have these requirements. Across the year there has been three 'group

training sessions' for Safeguarding training these have been offered to those who have difficulty accessing technology and they have proved to be successful. These sessions continue to be offered each month for those who wish to do them this way.

Safeguarding continues to have a monthly update on the PCC agenda to ensure we are working together to meet the needs of our congregation and the wider community. There have been three issues of safeguarding reported during 2023. These matters have been dealt with according to the relevant Safeguarding policies and guidance by the Parish Safeguarding officer, the Vicar, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Emma Reid (Parish Safeguarding Officer)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL as at 31st December 2023

Churchwardens:

Michelle Reeves

Vicar and chairperson:

Revd Anne Crosby

Elected Members:

Ann Moore (Deanery Synod Rep)

Verma Denny

Carol Mitchell

Olubukola Olowoye

Emma Reid

Jason Reid

Dianne Scott

Sandra Tuffnell

Michael Whelan (Treasurer)

Susan Whelan

CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT 2023

In the Parish of Luton St. Anne with St. Christopher during 2023 we have been reduced to just one Churchwarden. When I first took on the role there were four Churchwardens with two responsible for St. Anne's and two responsible for St. Christopher's, but all having an awareness of what is happening in the Parish and a knowledge of what is happening in each Church. With this in Mind I would like to reach out to the congregation at both Churches to ask you to consider what you could do to support me in this role. If you

would like to know more about what the Churchwarden does, please do not be afraid to ask. Whilst it would be great to have at least one more Churchwarden to share the load I would be grateful of any help that you could offer to make sure that both Churches are functioning smoothly.

During the year across the parish the gas boilers have been serviced, the emergency lighting and fire extinguishers have been tested and the routine maintenance has been carried out in both Churches. The kitchen in St. Anne's has also had its annual Service.

The lighting in the main hall at St. Anne's has been upgraded to LED to help reduce the energy costs going forward.

We continue to have the Community Payback teams coming in to help with the upkeep of the grounds, however they are not as regular as they once were due to the volume of work they have.

I would like to finish by thanking everyone who has helped with the upkeep and maintenance of the Church during the past year, you have done a fantastic Job!

Michelle Reeves

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Parish of Luton, St. Anne with St. Christopher is a charity, and its members are Trustees of the charity; as such its constitution and operation are bound by legal requirements. The principle function of the PCC is "promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church".¹ The PCC, and her Standing Committee, met regularly during 2023 (usually St. Christopher's Jubilee Room). A new Building and Fabric Committee has also been established.

PCC meetings always open with prayer and the Gospel reading for the day. Safeguarding, Finance and the care of our buildings always feature on the meeting agendas alongside consideration of the spiritual life of the parish.

At our meeting in May we were joined by Bishop Richard (of Bedford) as part of his pastoral tour of PCCs.

The parish continues to face a challenging financial situation. Nevertheless, the members of the PCC have continued to work hard, working together in love as we seek the flourishing of those we serve in both the Church and the wider community.

Dianne Scott (PCC Secretary)

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org>

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Luton Deanery consists of the Anglican Parishes of Luton plus Woodside and Caddington in the Archdeaconry of Bedford. The Synod is a body consisting of clergy together with lay representatives from every parish elected on a three- yearly basis. Those elected also serve on the Parochial Church Council. During 2023, our elected Deanery Synod Representatives were: Ann Moore and Dianne Scott (to July); Revd Anne Crosby and Dianne Scott -as vicar and licensed lay reader- also serve on Deanery Synod.

The Luton Deanery Synod met four times in 2023. Our parish has not been represented on every occasion. However, the following report (edited from a summary provided by Area Dean, David Kesterton) provides a good overview of events.

In February there was a presentation from *Engage Worship* which introduced us to some of the new materials they have produced. *Azalea* gave a presentation on their work in the town in our June session. In October we heard from the *Diocesan Adviser on Parish Giving* with a particular emphasis on how we can make use of digital giving. We were also given the opportunity to input to the cathedral's listening exercise which is reviewing its life and work. At our final meeting of the year in November we had a presentation from the *University Chaplaincy Team* and heard about the newly funded project work on the theme of *growing younger and more diverse* which will be coming to Luton during 2024.

During the year a quiet day was held jointly with Dunstable Deanery and some people took part in an evening pilgrimage to the Abbey. Wenlock school which has previously been a "deanery school" moved to be under the Diocesan Multi Academy Trust ahead of the autumn term. At the end of August we held a deanery barbecue.

The questions and concerns raised by the *living in love and faith* process were shared on a number of occasions by some of our parishes and we also set up a mechanism for those who wish to explore these blessings to be able to do so.

We try and create a varied programme of topics for our meetings and avoid having a "meeting for a meetings sake". There will be new opportunities for mission in the years ahead with the aid of new funding so I do encourage parishes to fill vacancies if at all possible and represent the diversity of the Church of England in our town and surrounding villages.

PCC Secretary

BUILDING AND FABRICS COMMITTEE

Our Buildings & Fabrics Committee is a sub-group of the PCC. It is responsible for the routine maintenance, improvements and upkeep of both Churches, Halls and grounds and is carried out throughout the year by a small group of volunteers.

It also advises the PCC about any necessary work that might involve major expenditure.

We have only recently started up again since Covid-19.

Before Covid-19 we started to insulate the Churches and Halls where possible to help keep heating costs down and now we have recently started changing our old lights to LEDs to support our Carbon footprint.

We are also now concentrating on our Quinquennial reports to complete the jobs that need doing.

Jason Reid

CHARITIES COMMITTEE

The challenging financial situation of the parish during 2023 meant that our intention to donate 10% of unrestricted income to charity was not viable.

However, the PCC facilitated monthly retiring collections in each church, encouraging the congregations to directly support those charities recommended by the Parish Charities Committee:

LOCAL: NOAH; NATIONAL: CHURCH URBAN FUND; INTERNATIONAL: USPG

PCC Secretary

TUESDAY CRAFT GROUP AT ST. ANNE'S

The craft group had a successful year . We held T@2 and it was very well received by all who were able to participate it was well supported as always . It's great to see people sharing time together and enjoying the afternoon . The two fairs that were held this year also were successful. The group were able to support two charities in the wider community this Christmas firstly the Salvation Army Christmas appeal . Then we collected an assortment of donations and gave them to Noah enterprise welfare centre. Both charities were very grateful to receive the donations. The group was nominated for an award called bags of kindness which was a complete surprise which were give out to the larger community . Some of us responded to a request for little knitted elephants cosies to put on small Easter eggs for the charity chums . We are looking forward with hope that we all will be able to continue meeting and sharing our time together.

Denise Dove

SATURDAY CRAFTERS

Saturday Crafters continue to meet on the fourth Saturday of most months, in either the Church or the Jubilee Room. Although this is a relatively small, it is an industrious group often with a variety of different crafts going on, lots of laughter, chatting and plenty of tea or coffee. Crafters can bring their own project along or can help

with creating new altar frontals. Do come and join us one month.

PARISH CRAFT FAIRS

During the course of the year we held four Parish Craft Fairs in St. Christopher's Church. Local crafters hire stalls and display hand crafted items that are for sale, and of course refreshments are always available. The Parish Craft Fairs have proved popular with local crafters, and those who come into the church to browse and buy. The Fairs are the ideal place to find something special for that person who is difficult to buy for. As well as being fun, the Craft Fairs raise much needed contributions for our Parish funds. If you haven't yet been to one of the Parish Craft Fairs, then check the date of the next one and pop in.

Ann Moore

CREATIVE SCRAPBOOKING

We are a small group who enjoy sharing and creating our memory albums and crafting alongside enjoying some light refreshments. To help you create your memories there are a selection of tools on hand for you to use, there is also a selection of papers or card which can be purchased. Not all our members choose to scrapbook, we have paper crafters who use a die cutting machine to make boxes, bags etc, card makers and some crochet. Whatever your craft you are welcome to join us, maybe you can learn something new. Within the group we support each other with ideas and inspiration. There is a small fee which covers the use of tools and refreshments. We look forward to seeing you for some much needed me time!

Emma Reid

LUTON UNITE

Luton Unite meets at Youthscape on the first Friday of the month, during term-time, from 7-9.30pm. It puts on exciting events for young people from Years 7-13. The evening is an opportunity for them to meet other young people from different churches and denominations across the town, and to be part of a growing, vibrant group. The aim is for young people to experience the breadth and depth of the Christian community in Luton. The sessions are run by Youth workers from Youthscape, along with volunteer leaders from the different churches.

The evening starts with time to socialise with friends, before assembling for worship. Live music and games along with the opportunity for prayer are well received. This year, the worship band has been encouraging young musicians to join them. Leaders take turns to open up the Word. This year we have focused on the parables of Jesus. The evening concludes with a social activity. Popular events have included; karaoke, movies, murder/mystery, dessert cafe and a silent disco.

In addition to the main event, on the third Friday of the month, smaller groups meet for Luton Unite 1. This provides an opportunity to go deeper into the scripture introduced at the main event. The February half term allows young people to attend a Weekend at Home. This year, we looked at the gifts we have been given by

God, and how best to use them. During the summer holiday, a four day camping event, Satellites, is scheduled.

If you know any young people who would like to know more about these events, please come and speak to me.

Annette Considine

ST. ANNE'S SCOUT GROUP- BEAVERS, CUBS & SCOUTS

2023 was a big year for the group, celebrating our 75th anniversary. We held a group camp and had a visiting cave pod and zoo, as well as a traditional campfire, marshmallows and a lot of noise....erm singing!! A weekend to remember for us all and fitting that our focus, even after 75 years is on our youth members and activities and experiences for them.

Over the last year the group has grown a little, with every section increasing their numbers slightly. We have hiked, camped, attended District activities and encouraged our young people to try lots of new things. They have enjoyed cooking, pioneering, caving and climbing. We have visited the St. Anne's Community Garden and the River Lea where we were Junior River Wardens. Our leaders and the behind the scenes support continue to give their time and energy freely and the group simply wouldn't function without them all. All in all, a great year and of course, we are looking forward to the next 75 years of fun!

Tanya Allen

TALKING ELEPHANTS

The Talking Elephants bereavement support group meets at St Anne's Church on the third Thursday of the month from 10-11.30am, and at St Christopher's Church on the first Tuesday of the month from 7-8.30pm. We are pleased to host these sessions alongside Nevilles Funeral Service, as part of their wider project. Special thanks to Michelle, who is our regular representative from Nevilles. I give thanks for their team and all that they do.

Although the groups are small, averaging 3-4 visitors, I am pleased to report that each member appears to find their time with us fruitful. The atmosphere is relaxed and welcoming. It is wonderful to see God at work as bonds of trust and friendship develop. People use the space to suit their need whether it is to share their story or listen to others. We share laughter and tears, as tea and coffee flows.

Our Blue Christmas service was appreciated by those in attendance. There were favourable comments about the calm, peaceful environment; the appropriate music and opportunities for reflection. The atmosphere during refreshments was positive and warm.

Some members have moved forward to find solace within the Parish through further opportunities, such as attending services or joining various groups. We share information about local events that might be of benefit. For example, sharing details of the Total Wellbeing programme. I pray that our churches continue to support and comfort all those who come along.

Annette Considine

MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP

During 2023, a new intercessory prayer group was started at St. Anne's. This takes place on the first Thursday of every month in term-time and is headed up by Lay Leader of Worship, under the leadership of Bukky Olowoye. All are welcome to come along to this informal gathering where prayers are offered for the Church, the world and for individuals and their needs.

PCC Secretary

HOUSE GROUP

"House Group" meets most Thursday evenings during term-time in St. Christopher's *Jubilee Room* at 7pm.

This group exists to help and encourage us to "go deeper" in our walk with Jesus and understanding our Christian faith.

We aim to make Bible study fun and accessible for everyone who wants to take part. During 2023, this learning has included: a Lent course covering *the Beatitudes*; an Easter course entitled *the Message of the Resurrection*; a series about Jesus' twelve disciples; an "environmental" themed series for *Creation* season and a more meditative study for Advent.

We begin our evenings with tea/coffee and end in prayer together. In between we sometimes sing, we usually laugh, we always learn!

Whatever your favoured learning style or ability, everyone is welcome to House Group. If you haven't been yet and want to give it a try just turn up on the night or, for more information, catch me after church or contact me on: readerstannechris@gmail.com

Dianne Scott

Parish of Luton, St Anne with St Christopher

Treasurer's report for the year ending 31 December 2023

The calendar year 2023 was another challenging year for the parish. As for many organisations, the Parish has faced increased costs, particularly as regards gas and electricity, which have increased substantially because of the repercussions of the war in Ukraine. However, we did manage to increase our overall receipts by a greater amount, and the extra receipts were used to increase our parish share contribution to £30,500 (2022: £18,000).

Unrestricted Fund Receipts:

The major sources of the receipts of the parish were from stewardship and pledges, rental income resulting from the hire by external parties of the parish buildings and tax rebates. Stewardship and pledges received rose by 4% to £24,266 (2022: £23,334). Rental income received from both the halls and churches fell by 8% to £15,440 (2022: £16,799). Tax rebates received were £13,952 (2022: £0). In 2023, the parish applied for a gift aid scheme in the name of Parish of Luton, St Anne with St Christopher and were able to claim and receive tax refunds covering 2020, 2021 and 2022. Generally, our Parish worked very hard in the year and small increases in income were also seen across several other headings.

Overall, receipts Increased by 47% to £76,018 (2022: £51,763).

Unrestricted Fund Payments:

Payments have increased by 50% to £73,573 (2022: £48,975). The light, heat and water charge increased by 139% to £19,246 (2022: £8,053). As explained already, our parish share contribution increased by 69% to £30,500 (2022: £18,000). These two changes are the main reasons for increases in payments.

Restricted Fund Receipts and Payments:

Restricted fund receipts of £3,472 in 2023 related to donations for the buildings and fabric fund of St Christopher. Restricted fund payments related to payments made in respect of the maintenance of St Anne's church £3,084 taken from the St Anne's buildings and fabric fund and £47 taken from the Edible Round Green fund.

Bank balances:

The current account balance increased by £1,337 to £52,222 (2022: £50,885).

The restricted funds account increased by £341 to £56,660 (2022: £56,319).

Interest from the business reserve account £1,221 (2022: £54).

The year ahead:

I believe that the year ahead will be another challenging year for the parish. There are expected to be cost pressures generally with inflation running at 4%. There are also concerns that energy costs, though not as high as in 2023, will still be high in 2024 by historical standards, a particular worry, as we have three large buildings to heat.

Our prospects will hinge on the results of our efforts in the following areas:

1. Increasing our congregation size.
2. Increasing our rental income.

3. Mitigating energy costs.

I would like to thank all members of the PCC for their support during the year.

Thank you to all the people who have given financially to the parish in any way. Your donations are vital in allowing the important work of the parish to continue.

Thank you to all those who have gift aided their donations. This enables the parish to claim an extra 25% of your donation from the government if you are a UK taxpayer.

Thank you to Colin Sparshott who is the new Independent Examiner for the Parish.

M.Whelan Treasurer 06/03/2024.

Independent Examiner's report to the Parochial Church Council of St Anne's with St Christopher's, Luton

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2023 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ('the Regulations') and **s.145 of the Charities Act 2011** ('the Act').

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and **s.144(2)** of the Act does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of this report


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

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- i. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or
- ii. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Date:

4/3/24

Name:

COLIN SPARSHOTT

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or
body:

F.C.C.A.

Address:

48 LINCOLN CRESCENT
BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8HW

Parish of Luton, St Anne with St Christopher

Charity number 1134772

Receipts and Payments Accounts

For the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Last Year £
Receipts				
Stewardship and pledges	24,266		24,266	23,334
Gift aided envelopes	629		629	567
Donations and bequests	4,692	3,472	8,164	13,423
Specific collections	548		548	686
Income tax refund	13,952		13,952	0
Collections - loose	4,340		4,340	2,087
Collections - weddings	495		495	582
Weddings and funeral fees	4,331		4,331	2,336
Refreshments	402		402	231
Hall and church rental	15,440		15,440	16,799
Fundraising events	4,634		4,634	3,405
Bookstall & bible reading notes			0	25
Buildings and fabrics	242		242	
Pop in club	436		436	
Insurance claims	390		390	1,000
Interest received	1,221		1,221	54
Total Receipts	76,018	3,472	79,490	64,529

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Last Year £
Payments				
Light, heat and water	19,246		19,246	8,053
Insurance	4,363		4,363	4,160
Repairs and renewals	7,495	3,131	10,626	28,215
Hall and church rent refunds	520		520	400
Service requirements	623		623	320
Maintenance grounds	271		271	595
Parish share scheme	30,500		30,500	18,000
Youth group and junior church	0		0	57
Charitable donations	839		839	739
Administration, stationery and stamps	682		682	324
Internet / telephone	1,335		1,335	1,109
Wages	0		0	48
Photocopier / printer	1,537		1,537	1,423
Clergy expenses	2,983		2,983	3,413
Envelopes / legal / inscriptions	737		737	912
Bible reading notes	0		0	9
Refreshments	138		138	263
Sundry expenses	45		45	45
Buildings and fabrics	0		0	1,042

Fees	2,259		2,259	1,082
Total Payments	73,573	3,131	76,704	70,209
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Last Year £
Net of receipts / payments	2,445	341	2,786	-5,680
Receipts c/f				1,108
Cash funds last year end	49,777	56,319	106,096	111,776
Cash funds this year end	52,222	56,660	108,882	107,204
Cash Funds				
Deposit account	46,575	52,000	98,575	54
Current account	5,647	4,660	10,307	107,150
	52,222	56,660	108,882	107,204

Notes

1. Parish Share Liability

Parish Share Liability in respect of:	2023	2022
	£	£
2023	19,732	0
2022	31,246	31,246
2021	18,422	18,422
2020	0	20,000
Total	69,400	69,668

The present policy of the Diocese is to consider writing off balances over 3 years old, if proposed by the Deanery. The 2020 balance of £20,000 has been written off under these arrangements. The total parish share liability is not reflected in the above receipts and payments accounts.

2. Creditors	2023	2022
	£	£
Light and heat	1,407	1,407
Fees due to the Diocese	236	0

The light and heat creditor is a disputed liability in respect of our previous gas supplier. Neither of these creditors have been reflected in the above receipts and payments accounts.

3. Charitable Donations	2023	2022
	£	£
USPG	113	96
The Bishop's Harvest Appeal	172	0
Church Urban Fund	143	0
The Children's Society	126	330
Noah Enterprise	113	0
Beds & Herts Historic Church Trust	40	40
Grassroots	0	177
Churches Together	30	40
Local Donations	102	56
	<u>839</u>	<u>739</u>

4. Restricted Funds

Building Projects St Anne	2023	2022
	£	£
Balance Brought Forward	32,987	32,687
Receipts		300
Payments	-3,084	
Balance Carried Forward	<u>29,903</u>	<u>32,987</u>

Building Projects St Christopher	2023	2022
	£	£
Balance Brought Forward	20,416	32,014
Receipts	3,472	9,258
Payments		-20,856
Balance Carried Forward	<u>23,888</u>	<u>20,416</u>

Edible Round Green Project	2023	2022
	£	£
Balance Brought Forward	2,916	87
Receipts	0	3,208
Payments	-47	-379
Balance Carried Forward	<u>2,869</u>	<u>2,916</u>

Total Restricted Funds	2023	2022
	£	£
Balance Brought Forward	56,319	64,788
Receipts	3,472	12,766
Payments	-3,131	-21,235
Balance Carried Forward	<u>56,660</u>	<u>56,319</u>

Signed on behalf of the trustees of
the
Parish of Luton, St Anne with St
Christopher

M.Whelan
Treasurer