

THE PARISH CHURCH *of*
ST GEORGE
EDGBASTON

Registered Charity Number 1134777

**Annual Report and Financial Statements of the
Parochial Church Council for the
Year Ended 31st December 2023**



Incumbent:

The Revd Dr Samuel Gibson
St George's Church
1 Westbourne Crescent
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 3DQ

Bankers:

Santander UK plc
Bootle
Merseyside
L30 4GB

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Cover Image by Andy Butler

Ceramic hanging in the Whitmore Room commissioned by John Surman (1923-2003), architect, artist and former member of the congregation. One of a series of three on display in church, the vicarage and St George's Primary School.

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

APCM version amended Post Audit with revised
signature page - NG

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What are the Parochial Church Council's Tasks?

The PCC cooperates with the Incumbent in the whole mission of the Church. As part of the synodical structure of the Church of England, the PCC makes known and puts into effect any decision made by the Diocesan or Deanery Synods and gives advice to these Synods on any matters the PCC considers appropriate. The PCC is responsible for the financial affairs of the Church; the PCC draws up a budget and has the responsibility with the Incumbent of appointing, paying and dismissing paid officers of the Parish. The PCC is responsible for the care, maintenance, preservation and insurance of the fabric of the Parish church. The PCC is also responsible for the care and maintenance of the churchyard.

VICAR'S REPORT

This has been a remarkable year for our parish, seeing significant growth, development, and outreach in the wider community. As always, I begin my report by summarising the outcomes of our work using the *Statistics for Mission* figures submitted to the national church for 2023. Following this, I will set these figures into context by telling some of the stories of our successes (and challenges) during the calendar year.

During 2023, our worshipping community (the number of people regularly associated with church) was stable at 154. Numbers have stabilised following a period of remarkable recovery and growth post-pandemic 2020-23. Looking underneath that headline figure, there are three pertinent facts. First, our community during 2023 was transient: there were 43 leavers and 28 new joiners. This reflects what we are all experiencing on the ground, as some older members die or move away, and international visitors, newcomers and students settle in the area – and then sometimes move away again after a period to take up work or study elsewhere. We are increasingly an urban, even city centre, church. This presents both great opportunities and challenges for discipleship. Second, our proportion of regular worshippers aged under 18 and aged 18-69 was slightly larger, while the 70+ reduced. Again, this reflects the changing nature of Birmingham as a younger city, as well as some of the challenges for older members of getting to church. Finally, our actual attendance statistics were promising. We had the highest Christmas attendance since 2014 (235), the highest October count since 2015 (88) and a “typical” Sunday of 60 adults and 5 children, broadly in line with pre-pandemic.

Experienced members of St George's observe that, while our numbers have stabilised, we are now a much more diverse congregation in terms of age range, professional background, ethnicity and sexuality than previously. We had a record number of baptisms (18) including new families and their children, and 8 adult baptisms. Seeing a good number of people coming to committed faith in Christ through catechism and nurture is a great joy. The statistics show us that we are generally an open church, with many people able to journey alongside us and with some opting to make the lifelong commitment to the Gospel, which we model through our liturgy and our members' ethic of service.

Various forms of lifelong learning continue to be at the core of our discipleship offer. During 2023, the *St George's Talks* theology programme saw another series of excellent and well-attended lectures. Speakers were drawn from a range of disciplines and backgrounds, and from across the country, enabling the congregation and others from across Birmingham to experience some of the best contemporary thinkers. We thank the following speakers: Bradley Smith (Chair, Prayer Book Society); Nathan Mulcock (Chaplain, Mansfield College Oxford); Nicholas Gibbs (Chartered Engineer and former Warden of St George's); Katie Stock (Curate-in-charge, Christ Church Summerfield); Keith Ward (Emeritus Regius Professor of Divinity, Oxford); Georgina Byrne (Queens Foundation); Juliette Harisson (Birmingham Newman University). Topics were as varied as Pilgrimage, Roman Religion, the nature of Time and Eternity, Missiology, Recycling, and Universal Salvation! In 2023, it was a particular joy to see students and recent graduates engaging with our theology programme, and its providing stimulus to the faith development of a range of people across the generations.

Alongside our public lecture series has run several small groups aimed at faith formation. This has included: a Lent Study morning *Putting Faith into Action* led by Tom Snape (Birmingham Citizens); a home study group on the Psalms led by a range of lay people; a Confirmation group; and a Sunday-evening film screening of *The Chosen* steered by our Curate, which has given many of us refreshment and renewal in our understanding of the life of Jesus. St George's continued to be used as a space for Diocesan training including Reader IME2 and the Birmingham Local Ministry Pathway, of which I am a co-leader.

Junior Church events and activities have continued to flourish, and I thank all those volunteers who have put time into learning for children. A particular highlight was the Good Friday activities, and the excellent Christmas Eve family service, attended by over 100 people and led as collaboration between Suganthi John as storyteller and Zoe Challenor's B'Opera inspired music. Thank you Suganthi and Zoe!

Last year's report identified a key priority for 2023 as "encouraging and enabling the new ministers who will be taking their place in our church." I am glad to report that this is a good work in progress. In June 2023 we were delighted to welcome The Revd George Reeves as Assistant Curate. Fr George was ordained Deacon and began full-time work in the parish and he has gone from strength to strength. St George's now has a good "ministry team" including two Clergy, Jenny Uff as Reader, our Director of Music and Parish Administrator, and a range of volunteers in key charring roles including Simon Kirby (Finance) and Carol Couse (Fabric). We also established a Student Ministry Team with Fr George as Chair, focussing on outreach to younger people. We plan to hold a PCC development day in 2024, as well as a campaign to encourage new PCC members with a more diverse demographic profile.

As Vicar, I feel profound gratitude for all that colleagues and volunteers do to sustain the life of St George's. We are gradually moving towards a more collegial model of governance and activity, based on accountable working groups in different areas of church life, contributing towards the goals and priorities set by the Vicar and PCC. In December 2023, it was announced that The Revd Charlotte Gibson (Curate, St Peter's Harborne) has been appointed as Anglo-Catholic Missioner for the Diocese. She will work with St George's and our four partner churches to develop our mission and evangelism, with an emphasis on reaching students and people in North Edgbaston. Her particular focus will be on enabling us (the congregation and people of St George's) to go out and share the Gospel, in word and deed. We look forward to this widening of our ministry team and capacity.

Finances in 2023 became more stable as a successful Stewardship Sunday in May brought in new givers and some existing donors increased their giving at or beyond the rate of inflation. We are getting closer to breaking even, after several years of challenging deficits. Part of this is due to increased giving and I thank all those who contribute in any way financially to the work of St George's. Another factor has been the tireless work of a small group of volunteers to make hiring out St George's to external groups a viable source of income. I especially thank Andy Butler, Nicholas Gibbs, Keith Uff, Simon Kirby and Anne Game for volunteering time and energy to help external groups use the church building. This represents a considerable use of their free time to support church. In 2024, we will need to consolidate this work by expanding our volunteer base, if the church building is to continue as a financial asset and contribute towards its own upkeep. It is important that, in future years, St George's building is loved and appreciated by as many people as possible, from a diverse range of faiths and backgrounds. During 2023, I entered into discussions with Birmingham City University – our next door neighbours – about how their staff and students can best make use of our space.

There have been several special highlights in the 2023 church calendar. Our Patronal Festival was kept on 23rd April 2023, and we welcomed The Revd Kate Tingle (Curate Holy Trinity, Heath Town) as officiant and preacher – Kate was a long-term ordinand on placement at St George's. Sunday 30th April saw four children admitted to first Holy Communion by Bishop Anne, following their completion of a study course last year.

Of course, 2023 was dominated by the build-up to the Coronation of HM the King. We formed a Coronation Party planning group, which brought together church members and staff from our Church of England Primary School. I must particularly thank Tracy Butler, Pat Bullock and Andy Davies (former Assistant Head) for their dedicated work on this group. We achieved a successful Lottery funding bid for our community-oriented Coronation event.

This allowed us to buy an 80" television screen (now used for all kinds of events) and provide free food and drinks. On Coronation Day (6th May) we held a screening of the service attended by c.80 people of all ages, followed by a fantastic indoor "picnic", music from St George's Primary School choir, and a wonderful free B'Opera performance. I especially thank Zoe Challenor, Phil Ypres-Smith and Jacqueline White for B'Opera's contribution. All in all, I estimate 250+ people passed through church that day including many people from the local estates with whom we had limited prior contact. It was a joyous, multicultural and intergenerational celebration which will be remembered for decades to come. Another highlight were the Community Welcome days held outside church in September. Volunteers offered coffee and sweet treats to passers-by, and some even walked down towards the Vale to encourage people into the building. This resulted in lots of new engagements with students and their families, as well as friends old and new. Hot on the heels of these welcome days was our Harvest Festival, which included a particularly legendary bring and share lunch.

During 2023, we have rediscovered the immense value of eating together as a route to fellowship and church growth. We enjoyed a fabulous breakfast at the *Edgbaston Café* during our Prayer Walk around the north of the parish on 21st October. On the back of this success, Fr George is working hard to lead a regular breakfast fellowship in this neglected part of our patch, starting in January 2024. Sharing meals was integral to Jesus' own method of community-building and we are seeing what happens when different cultures and generations gather round the table – both the table of the Eucharist, and that of ordinary meals.

A future challenge for us will be developing leaders that reflect the growing diversity of our congregation. Another challenge is seeking justice in our local area, which is marred by poverty, addiction, poor housing, litter and loneliness. In summer 2023, St George's became the first Anglican church to join *Birmingham Citizens*, an alliance of faith, community, education and charity organisations promoting grassroots justice in the city. We hope that this will provide resources and inspiration for us to change our local area for better.

Looking back on 2023, I am amazed at the things St George's has been able to achieve, and I am particularly struck by our volunteer profile. We invest in people through teaching, prayer and encouragement; in return, we receive incredible depth and riches from a talented and diverse group of people, each willing to contribute their own gifts to church life, be it music, children's work, organising, finance, administration or anything else! I am filled with gratitude to work alongside and minister to such people. For 2024, as we look further outwards, a key priority will be to identify potential leaders in all kinds of areas, right from the start of people's faith journeys, as they come to

church or events in the neighbourhood for the first time. Developing strong lay leaders will complement our growing “professional” ministry team. Thanks be to God for a wonderful year, and may we be ready to greet 2024 with joy.

Fr Sam Gibson, Vicar

STUDENT MINISTRY TEAM REPORT

In the summer of 2023, Fr Sam and I decided to establish a Student Ministry Team as part of our efforts to be more intentional in our student outreach. It has been a delight to chair this Team since its inception and our meetings have been a source of good conversation and ideas. The Team was initially made up of myself, Fr Sam, Suganthi John, and Beth Gilbert, and since the New Year we have also been joined by Dom Biasi.

Student ministry is an important and growing part of our mission and outreach here at St George’s, and so it has been good to consider what it is about St George’s that draws students. In particular, we have identified our inclusive ethos and our liturgical style of worship (in contrast to the larger student churches which tend to be more evangelical/charismatic and conservative in their theology). Likewise, our commitment to serious adult learning through the *St George’s Talks* has also been identified as a strength of ours, and it was great to have one of our student members, Adlai, deliver a talk earlier this year, which was well-attended and well-received.

We have also had a number of successful social events aimed primarily at students, including a recent pub trip and day trips to Lichfield and Oxford. It is our hope that there will be more opportunities in the future for similar events aimed specifically at our student members, as well as encouraging students to join in with upcoming church outings and events such as our planned summer trip to Tewkesbury. Special thanks must also go to Steven Fox who, whilst not a member of the Student Ministry Team, does invaluable and much-appreciated work in reaching out to students, being a positive and friendly presence both in church and on campus, and galvanising the student members of St George’s.

Fr George Reeves, Curate

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

The encouraging growth in numbers attending the church during the year has led to more work for the "meet and greet" team at the 10.30 Sunday service. We are grateful to Charles Williams and Tracy Butler for their help with this, and to Charles Williams and David Allen for their help with sidesman duty at the 8 a.m Holy Communion service. This service sadly lost several of the most faithful members of its congregation during the year through death or incapacity. As the Vicar has noted in his Report, the increased use of the church for community activities of various kinds has led to more need for volunteers to assist with opening the church and being present while these activities are going on. We are particularly grateful to Charles Williams, Simon Kirby and Anne Game for their help. We need to recruit more volunteers if these activities are to be maintained or increased.

We are also grateful to several members of the clergy who covered the absence of the Vicar during periods of annual leave or took part in special services, and in particular Canon Dr Andrew Lenox-Conyngham, Rev. Professor Hugh Houghton, Rev. Katherine Tingle, Rev. Jacob Pallett and Rev. John Nightingale. We were also very pleased to welcome Rt. Rev. Bishop Anne Hollinghurst who led our service of admission to Holy Communion for some pre-Confirmation members of the congregation.

Mrs. Carol Couse's report on Fabric matters makes it unnecessary for us to comment on this, but we should record our profound thanks to Carol for undertaking the onerous task of managing the maintenance and improvement of the building, as she has done for many years, and to David Hill for lending his professional expertise to Carol's activities - as well as the all-important job of operating the church's central heating system.

One of the Churchwardens has attended three meetings of the Deanery Environmental Committee. One meeting was held at St George's, where it was possible to demonstrate the new automatic doors and explain the acquisition of the new central heating boilers. The committee has discussed various ways in which churches can improve their energy usage.

We should also record our thanks to Mrs. Jenny Astley for her work in maintaining the church's electoral roll and to Nick Gibbs and to Sen Lin (Leonard) for their work in keeping the wifi system operating. Thanks are also due to Nick for acting as Stewardship Secretary, and to our parish administrator, Mrs Marcia Smith, for her many duties in keeping St George's administration in order.

Above all, we should thank Father Sam and (from July 2023) Father George for their leadership of the parish during a very busy but successful year.

Keith Uff, Churchwarden

Andy Butler, Churchwarden

Reports of Elected Officers and Safeguarding Statement

ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER'S REPORT

At the beginning of 2023 there were 77 names on roll, of which 15 were resident in the Parish. During the year, 3 names were removed due to deaths or non-attendance, and 2 were added. At the beginning of 2024, there are 76 names on roll, of whom 14 are resident in the parish.

Jenny Astley, Electoral Roll Officer

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Parochial Church Council met six times during 2023 with an average attendance of ten members. Each meeting was preceded by a meeting of the Standing Committee (Vicar, Curate, Churchwardens, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and PCC member) to set the agenda.

Members of the PCC are ex-officio or elected at the APCM. The members during the year 2023 were as follows:

Vicar: The Revd Dr Sam Gibson

Curate: The Revd George Reeves (from June)

Churchwardens: Keith Uff and Andy Butler

Representatives on the Deanery Synod: Derek Mertling-Blake (until May), Simon Kirby (until May), Sara Clethero

Elected members (with retirement dates in brackets): Carol Couse (2026), Harriet Ellis (2025 – resigned in November), Nick Gibbs (2024), Simon Kirby (2026) Vice-Chair from May, Justin Pinkess (2025), John Russell (2025) Treasurer, Caroline Shaw (2026), Charles Williams (2024), Jenny Uff (2023) Vice-Chair until May, Phil Ypres-Smith (2024).

David Hill attended meetings of the Standing Committee and PCC as Secretary. Harriet Ellis resigned on taking up a post at Birmingham Cathedral. Jenny Uff did not seek re-election to the Council as she now has greater responsibilities as a Reader at Diocesan level.

There were three notable changes for the PCC during 2023. Under the Vicar's guidance we changed the way our meetings are run, by introducing a new early agenda item called Ministry and Good News, by having a short break in the middle of the agenda, then discussing financial matters after the break. The aim was to finish with the Grace by 9.00pm. Secondly, in the summer we welcomed Fr George our new curate. His enthusiastic

contributions to our meetings encouraged new initiatives in the north part of the parish and among the local student population. The third innovation was the use of the big screen acquired for the Coronation to help with reports and graphs and to use as necessary for FaceTime or Zoom links.

Finance was always a major topic and during 2023 the sharp increase in energy prices was a concern, but we learnt that our financial situation was becoming more stable following a successful Stewardship Sunday. We monitored the Anglo-Catholic Missioner Project and were delighted at the appointment of Mother Charlotte Gibson as Missioner. We heard a presentation by Tom Snape of Citizens UK and the PCC agreed to join Birmingham Citizens. There was discussion about restarting the Friends of St George's. We agreed to install a defibrillator at Church. At every meeting Safeguarding was an important item.

David Hill, PCC Secretary

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

I was appointed to the position of Safeguarding Officer in November 2022. During 2023 I did the required initial training which included zoom meetings and reflective work that went with it.

In the early part of 2024 I attended a Safeguarding Resourcing and Recognition Day which I found very informative.

I bought into church copies of the National Safeguarding Standards which came out in 2023. These are available for people to view or if need be to discuss. Also available are leaflets for people to take which give information on how and who to approach if they have concerns.

A dedicated safeguarding email address and mobile phone number is available. Information about safeguarding is available at the back of church. There have been no referrals made to social care or the police during the year.

Tracy Butler, Safeguarding Officer

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES

The **Financial Statements and Reports** can be found commencing on page 21.

EDUCATION & WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Membership and Meetings:

Fr Sam (chair), Keith Uff, Jenny Uff, Caroline Shaw, David Hill, Phil Ypres-Smith, Simon Kirby, Suganthi Daniel, Heather Butler, Harriet Ellis, Fr George and Beth Gilbert. (The committee were very pleased to welcome Beth and Fr George during the year. Suganthi and Harriet stood down in the course of the year; we have greatly appreciated their contributions, particularly to children's work.)

The Committee met five times in 2023.

Developments in Worship:

We have been looking to increase opportunities for the congregation to participate in services, always remembering that some value quiet. The Offertory hymn has been reinstated at 10.30, and using the legillum for intercessions has also provided an option for lesson readers to avoid the unprotected steps to the chancel and lectern.

As there were candidates for confirmation at the Cathedral Easter Vigil, we were invited to support them there and not have a vigil at St George's on Holy Saturday; the Easter Ceremonies of new fire and Paschal candle were included in the Easter Day 10.30 service.

Under Fr George's impetus, Sunday evening worship has developed into a contemplative service using the forms of Blessing of Light and Evening Prayer, with some simple unaccompanied singing, and candles and incense burning. During the autumn this was followed by screenings of "The Chosen" – a series imagining the ministry of Christ through the eyes of his disciples and contemporaries.

The much delayed New Revised English Hymnal finally appeared in December. It was reviewed by Phil and Fr Sam, and approved enthusiastically; in early 2024 we recommended it to PCC for approval.

Education:

The series of Friday talks continue to provide fascinating and knowledgeable speakers, and an opportunity to meet and talk with a range of attendees from neighbouring churches (and none) as well as St George's.

The huge screen funded for the Coronation party is also used for showing The Chosen, for speakers slides at talks and training sessions; for slides at meetings, and sometimes for material supporting sermons and services.

The series of Sunday evening sessions studying Psalms that started in the autumn of 2022 continued in the spring of 2023.

On a similar time frame, the First Communion Course that had started in Autumn 2022 to prepare primary school children to start receiving Communion continued, leading to a formal Admission service by Bishop Anne on 30th April.

Junior Church:

We continue with specific provision for the children on three Sundays a month; the children then share their learning, to the delight and instruction of the rest of the congregation. More helpers would be welcomed. On the other Sunday each month the children remain for the full service, sharing in the procession, helping the preacher and watching the ceremonies of the Communion. Suganthi, Emma, and Zoe prepared family friendly and much appreciated services for Good Friday and the Christmas Eve crib.

Jenny Uff, Reader

FABRIC & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Carol Couse (Chair), David Hill, David Allen, John Russell and Andy Butler and Keith Uff (churchwardens)

Even though Faculty Permission for altering our main entrance to the church was granted back in February, there were many delays to actually starting the work. There was much emailing back and forth with members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee and The Victorian Society to resolve the many issues that they raised and it took many months to work out. The automatic door openers were finally installed, the painting of the porch and woodwork was finished and the heating ducts to the South Porch were altered to stop the flow (and waste) of heat to the outer porch, finally, by the middle of September. The door project was then formally dedicated to the memory,

and generosity of Frank Drake, whose recent legacy to St George's funded this much needed work.

Another welcome addition to the South Porch entrance was the installation of a Holy Water Stoup which the PCC approved in November.

We continue to have many difficulties with connecting to a reliable Wi-Fi connection to the church which has severely affected church donations via our card reader.

Lottery Funding provided for a large TV in time to watch the King's Coronation Service and it has since provided us with the means to enhance presentations and the streaming of special films. If it could only improve our sound system within the body of the church, it would be ideal. That, surely, must be our next very needed project!

Installing a life saving Defibrillator to the exterior of the church has proved quite difficult in obtaining the necessary Faculty Permission. We had enormous support from the community in obtaining the funding from our Appeal very early on but it has taken many months to, again, resolve the issues that the DAC put forth. We're now back on track and the equipment has been ordered and will be, hopefully, installed early in the new year.

The PCC had to agree had to agree to some much needed tree work done at the vicarage as ordered by the Diocesan Property Committee which proved to be quite expensive, so rather than face another large bill in future, the PCC has agreed to fund a small sum each year to keep the many trees and shrubs trimmed back.

Carol Couse, Chair

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Simon Kirby (Chair), John Russell (Treasurer), Nick Gibbs; and at their discretion: Andy Butler (Churchwarden), Fr. Sam (Vicar)

At PCC of May, it was agreed that there should be a Finance Committee, working alongside and with the Treasurer to guide our financial planning and control over the next few years. Through discussion, it was agreed that the committee should include the above members.

The first meeting was held on 4th July. The main discussion concerned the need to put the church accounts on a new system. This was partly prompted by a request from David Maw, to whom we owe enormous thanks for his many years' service, who has said that he wishes to cease preparing accounts beyond those of 2023. We also wished to develop a system that had the potential to be used by more than one user so that the work of maintaining accounts could be shared. This pushed the search towards software that runs "on the cloud". It was agreed that as we already used two packages for Gift Aid and church membership, it was worth evaluating the accounting package, My Fund Accounting Online, from the same company in Wolverhampton, Data Developments.

While the evaluation was going on, John Russell was continuing to run the accounts and make all payments from the bank as he had been doing in previous years. He also gave advice and information on various tasks that came up through the year.

The committee held its final meeting of the year on 17th November. Simon Kirby reported on his evaluation of the software and reported that he had had helpful support and advice from Data Developments. He had also been able to reproduce the 2022 accounts using accumulated transactions for the year.

The first draft of the budget for 2024 was agreed for putting forward to the PCC.

On 3rd December, we received the distressing news that John Russell had been admitted to hospital. Fortunately, as previously agreed, he had sent in the necessary forms to the bank so that Simon Kirby had just been added to the list of account signatories, giving him access to online viewing of the bank account and the ability to bring account data into the accounting system.

The new system started to be used in earnest during December in that transactions relating to 2024 were put on the system, ready for the start of the year. Nick Gibbs and Simon Kirby were starting to devise procedures for the Gift Aid and Finance systems to work efficiently together.

Simon Kirby, Chair

STEWARDSHIP

General Fund donations from individuals to the work of St George's increased during the year by 6.6% from £58,568 to £62,417. CPI inflation was 4% for the 12 months to December indicating that we kept pace with inflation with a slight improvement despite losing some of our pledged givers. The Vicar led a stewardship campaign in May which added new pledged donations as well as inspiring existing donors to increase their pledged amounts.

We are extremely grateful for all donations great and small. A characteristic of stewardship giving at St George's is the extraordinary generosity of some members of the congregation. Just 2 households gave 25% of the total, 7 gave 50% and 17 gave 75%. A further 84 households contributed the remaining 25%. For the sustainability of our funding we need to encourage broader stewardship commitment in the worshipping community.

360 separate donations were recorded by anonymous donors totalling almost £2,000. The median donation was £10.

Gift Aid allows us to recover 25% from HMRC for donations made by named donors who have declared themselves to be tax payers. GASDS (Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme) gives us a further opportunity to recover 25% on anonymous donations made at church gatherings subject to certain limits and conditions. We recovered Gift Aid or GASDS on 95% of the value of General Fund donations.

We introduced a "digital collection plate" in Advent 2022. By the end of 2023 we had collected £2,048 from card or 'phone payments in church and a further £3,200 was enabled by having this digital facility as a channel on our website. Most regular payments are received digitally through Bank Standing Orders and we continue with traditional methods through stewardship envelopes and open plate collections of cheques, notes and coins.

As Simon Kirby has noted above, the year was one of planning for change in our processes as we prepared for the retirement of our Accountant and our Treasurer. My main task of claiming Gift Aid and GASDS and accounting to HMRC for those donations has only been possible with the close cooperation of David and John and I am extremely grateful for their support over more years than any of us can remember clearly!

The change project has worked seamlessly through Simon Kirby's leadership and the new, streamlined, digital processes and coding for 2024 will make analysis easier and workflows clearer for those who follow us.

Nick Gibbs, Gift Aid Secretary

REPORTS OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES

BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

Six people receive Guidelines notes and three take Daylight notes. I would be pleased to order more copies if people request them.

Eve Kirby

THE MONTHLY LUNCH

On 11 July 1989 a new activity was initiated at St George's as The Lunch Club, so July 2024 will be its 35th anniversary. It provided an opportunity for the then three congregations to meet over an informal lunch. Rose Dixon, Irene Mountford, Muff Mirams and Nancie Goode organised it initially, with Ivy Broad taking over from Nancie soon after and Lesley Tilley eventually taking over from Ivy. Pat Bullock succeeded them in 2010.

Over the years it has evolved into the current offering of a cold buffet, being held on the second Thursday of each month, following the 11:30 said Eucharist. Attendance during 2023 varied between 11 and 25 with an average of 17, and it continues to provide monthly fellowship and generate a small surplus for church funds. Unfortunately snow forced cancellation in March 2023.

Pat Bullock

JOINED UP READING

The Joined-up Reading Group which meets on a Monday evening once a month, usually attracts about seven or eight people. Most of us are from St. George's. Some, however, are from other local churches. We read a book and discuss it. Books that we have read in the last year include:

"Christianophobia: Christianity under attack" by Rupert Shortt.

"Being Orthodox" by Martin Dudley. Martin Dudley, himself, led the discussion. Many thanks to Colin Goodier for arranging this.

"Reflections on the Psalms" by C S Lewis

"Failure" by Emma Ineson

"Super Infinite" by Katherine Rundell. It was suggested that each person brings to the discussion a Donne poem.

"Adventures in Belief" by Keith Ward

"William Tyndale" by Melvyn Bragg. A very brief history.

"Word from Wormingford" by Ronald Blythe

In December we shared a meal and a very enjoyable play-reading of "Racing Demon" by David Hare.

Eve Kirby

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

The Children's Society provides specialised support that empowers young people to make positive changes and rediscover hope. Many of those who have been helped in turn work with the Society to help others. To find out more about the work of the Society please visit their website.

The money collected by the Box Holder scheme gives the society a regular income and helps to fund these projects. In 2023 the 15 St George's Box Holders gave a total of £637.17. A huge thank you for your contributions.

Our box opening month is January and contributions can be made in the form of cash or cheque. If you are a new contributor and require a Gift Aid form please ask me.

The Christingle service was deferred to Candlemas 2024.

Pat Bullock (Box-Holder co-ordinator)

PARISH MAGAZINE

During 2023 the magazine appeared the usual eleven times, with a double issue for August and September, and continued to provide, as well as the editor can contrive, a mixture of church news and articles of church and general interest, intended to connect with members, old friends who keep in touch and local organisations. Vicar and Curate alternated in providing their monthly reflections. This year saw a more extensive use of illustrations than formerly, but this is of course largely dependent on contributors. A less welcome development was the loss of a number of advertisers, which in these straightened times seems likely to be an ongoing problem.

As always, I am grateful to my contributors, to our friendly and helpful printers, Bromsgrove Printing Co. and to David Allen the advertisement manager, who keeps the operation viable.

Justin Pinkess, Editor

SEWING GROUP

We are still meeting on a fortnightly basis and are pleased we are able to share the meetings between us so that we can be in a home rather than the Whitmore Room (although we are very grateful of this space when needed). As usual some of us do more talking than sewing!

Our group is 25 years old in September so I have re-visited my sewing folder and include in this annual report a few notes about very happy and interesting times over the last quarter of a century.

The first meeting was held at my house on 19th September 1999. As well as a note in the Pew Sheet news of our meeting was included in the Birmingham Evening Mail. I think 25 years ago a reporter for the Mail trawled through parish magazines and produced a feature on local groups/ clubs and this is where Beryl, not a member of our congregation, found the details of St. George's Sewing Group. Beryl arrived at my house for the first meeting and missed very few meetings over the years and we were all very sad to hear the news she had passed away in November 2023.

The first term we met in the Whitmore Room a couple of times and I think there was some talk of a group project to but nothing came of that until 2004 when we began planning a 'banner', still hung in church for baptisms and first displayed at the Easter Day Service in 2005.

In 2007 we made Colonial Bonnets. An extract from a website I found at the time - Roses from the Heart, is a project created by Artist Dr Christina Henri as "the first Memorial to all women sentenced to transportation as convicts to Australia. 25,566 Cloth bonnets (pattern taken from a 1860s servants bonnet) symbolises the women whose lives have been shrouded by a veil of amnesia for far too long".

I have a note that we were working on a cushion in memory of Rita Allport in 2012 and the cushion can still be found in church.

We are talking about a Summer Outing and still enjoying stitching and chatting.

Carol Austin

VERGER'S REPORT

The new copier is proving to be useful and above all else reliable. The big screen TV is being used at services and the various lectures and events during the year. My thanks as ever to the ever dwindling cleaning crew especially Carol Couse, Caroline Shaw and Jenny Ashley as we get used to a new time slot in the day. If anyone else has the time to join us they are more than welcome.

Charles Williams, Verger

COMMUNICATIONS

We have continued to publicise our services and events far and wide over the past year, making full use of social media as an effective communications tool. More and more people will look to these platforms to find out about local churches and so it is important for them to be kept up to date with relevant information and content, including photos of our activities. In addition to our existing Facebook and Twitter presence, we have also set up an Instagram account to reach a new audience. As I said early on in my curacy, St George's is a church which is made for Instagram, and it is a delight to be able to share images of our beautiful building. These platforms complement our excellent website, which we know a lot of people look to in order to find out about us.

As well as 'new media', we also continue to produce more traditional communications such as flyers and leaflets, and have started producing a 'term card' three times a year detailing upcoming events beyond our regular worship. These have been distributed across the parish and in the school, as well as on the University of Birmingham campus. If anyone would like to assist with 'leaflet drops' in future please do speak to me. Our banner outside church also offers an eye-catching appeal focused specifically on students, and we have started twice-yearly 'community welcome events' with free coffee and snacks distributed outside church to passers-by. It is my hope that in the coming year we will continue to think of new and innovative ways to communicate our message and our mission to the parish and beyond, and think outside the box about new ways in which we can reach those parts of the parish that often get overlooked. All ideas would be most welcome.

Fr George Reeves, Curate

PCC FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In relation to the financial statements, Charity law requires the PCC to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of the PCC's affairs and of its financial activities for that year. In preparing the financial statements, the PCC are required to:

- a) Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- b) Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- c) State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- d) Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the PCC will continue.

The PCC are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the PCC and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act of 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the PCC and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Risk Management

The PCC keep under review the major strategic and operational risks which they face to ensure that systems have been established and all necessary steps have been undertaken to minimise these risks.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the PCC to maintain the general fund, which represents its free reserves, at least at a level which approximately equates to three months' worth of general expenditure at current levels plus nine months' premiums on the church insurance policy. The PCC believes that such a level of reserves is needed to ensure that their ongoing commitments can be met.

Other Fund raising activities during the year 2023 by Special Agency Collections ,
not being part of PCC funds but raised to be paid out to whom it beneficially belongs,

These amounts are not included as income or expenditure in our
2023 accounts but are set out below for information.

	£ <i>Details</i>	£ <i>Totals</i>
1 Christian Aid		
2023 Christain Aid week (Monthly Lunch Pat Bullock)	60	
2023 Christian Aid week website donation	50	
2022 Christian Aid late allocation	200	
Steven Fox organised a special collection for the Christian Aid Ukraine Christmas Appeal which raised	665	
Total collected and forwarded to Christian Aid		975
2 The Children's Society		
Home collecting boxes counted and banked net direct to Childrens Society Bank Acc.	637	
Total collected by Pat Bullock and forwarded to The Children's Society		637
3 Christmas Charity Collections for Ladywood Community Project		
Bucket collections at services in church	228	
Total Collected for Ladywood Community Project		228
4 St George's Primary School Cake Sale to assist with school trips		
Collection in church 5th February 2023	70	
Total collected for St George's Primary School		70
5 Quiz organised by Dom Biasi in aid of Canvas Birmingham		
Collection on church card reader 19th November 2023	66	
Gift Aid recovered on eligible donations	11	
Collected by Dom Biasi directly (Separate donation from PCC Urban Mission Fund of £1,000)	130	
Total collected for Canvas Birmingham		207
6 Inner City Kids		
Vicar's birthday Facebook appeal (Less PayPal fees)	200 -5	
Total collected for Iner City Kids		195
7 Fees collected on behalf of Birmingham D B of F from Weddings, Funerals etc.		918
8 Organ fees collected for Special services		910
TOTAL		4,140

St George's Church, Edgbaston

Registered Charity Number 1134777

Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council

for the 12 months to 31 December 2023

<div>St George's Church, Edgbaston</div> <div>Registered Charity Number 1134777</div> <div>Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council</div> <div>for the 12 months to 31 December 2023</div>									
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PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST GEORGE'S, EDGBASTON

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES for the 12 months to 31 December 2023

		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	TOTAL FUNDS	
	Note	General £	Designated £	Funds £	Funds £	2023 £	2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES							
Incoming resources from donors	2(a)	96,787	-	-	-	96,787	83,011
Other voluntary incoming resources	2(b)	1,720	10,376	2,675	-	14,771	33,367
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	2(c)	17,880	-	-	-	17,880	20,168
Other ordinary income resources	2(d)	0	-	-	-	0	781
Income from investments	2(e)	3,395	-	-	204	3,599	1,366
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	2	119,782	10,376	2,675	204	133,037	138,693
						Note 4	
RESOURCES USED							
Activities directly relating to the work of the church	3(b)	142,994	-	-	-	142,994	130,813
Church management and administration	3(c)	930	-	-	-	930	950
Grants	3(a)	-	-	-	-	0	0
TOTAL RESOURCES USED	3	143,924	0	0	0	143,924	131,763
						Note 4	
NET INCOMING/ (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		(24,142)	10,376	2,675	204	(10,887)	6,930
						Note 4	
TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS							
General to						0	(10,000)
Mission Development						0	10,000
Clergy Stipend to					(204)	(204)	(236)
General		204				204	236
General to						0	(10,000)
Fabric						0	10,000
General to						0	(5,759)
Boiler						0	5,759
		204	0	0	(204)	0	0
GAINS AND LOSSES ON INVESTMENTS							
Unrealised	7	392	0	0	471	863	(2,267)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(23,546)	10,376	2,675	471	(10,024)	4,663
						Note 4	
BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD AT 1 JANUARY							
As previously reported	4	82,969	57,666	7,757	8,524	156,916	152,253
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER 2023							
	4,5	59,423	68,042	10,432	8,995	146,892	156,916

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST GEORGE'S, EDGBASTON

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 December 2023

	Note	£	2023 £	2022 £
FIXED ASSETS				
Digital Organ			40,451	40,451
			(40,451)	(40,451)
			0	0
Investments	5,7		15,362	14,499
			15,362	14,499
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	8	10,598	8,126	
Short term deposits	5	76,449	73,204	
Cash at bank and in hand	5	54,377	68,087	
		141,424	149,417	
LIABILITIES: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR				
	9	(9,894)	(7,000)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			131,530	142,417
NET ASSETS			146,892	156,916
FUNDS				
Unrestricted:				
General	4,5	81,545	82,969	
Designated	4,5,10	45,920	57,666	
Restricted	4,5,10	10,432	7,757	
Endowment	4,5,10	8,995	8,524	
		146,892	156,916	

Approved by the Parochial Church Council at their annual meeting on 12 May 2024

and signed on its behalf on 14 July 2024 by:

Reverend Dr. Samuel Gibson M.A. PhD (Vicar):

Mr Simon Kirby (Treasurer):

John F Russell
Hon Treasurer
until 12th May 2024

Samuel Gibson
Simon Kirby

The notes on pages 24 to 29 form part of these accounts.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST GEORGE'S, EDGBASTON
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the 12 months to 31 December 2023

1 Accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets which are shown at market value.

Funds

General Funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC. *Designated Funds* have been set aside by the PCC for a particular purpose, but are unrestricted and may be redesignated by the PCC for any other purpose. *Restricted Funds* have been given to the PCC to be used only for particular purposes. *Endowment Funds* have been given to the PCC with the condition that the capital given is to be retained, and only the income from the capital expended.

The accounts 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 their main affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

Incoming resources

Collections are recognised when received by or on behalf of the PCC not when banked. Planned giving receivable under gift aid is recognised only when received. Income tax recoverable on gift aid donations is recognised in the same accounting year as the income is recognised, not in the year when it is recovered. Grants and legacies to the PCC are accounted for when the PCC is notified of its legal entitlement and the amount is due. Income from the letting of church premises is recognised when due. Dividends and interest are accounted for when receivable. Realised gains or losses are recognised when investments are sold. Unrealised gains or losses are accounted for on revaluation of investments at 31 December.

Resources used

Expenses are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Fixed assets

The Church and associated buildings are owned by the Diocese of Birmingham. The cost of repairs, renewal of fixtures and additions of new items of furniture or new fixtures are paid for by the PCC. All such costs are expensed to the SOFA in full in the year in which the expense is incurred with the exception of the digital organ which was fully depreciated straight line over 12 years from 2007 to 2018.

Investments

Investments are stated at market value at December 31.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST GEORGE'S, EDGBASTON
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the 12 months to 31 December 2023

2 INCOMING RESOURCES

2(a) Incoming resources from donors

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	TOTAL FUNDS 2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Gift aid	56,308			56,308	51,396
Income tax recovered	14,077			14,077	13,873
Non - gift aid	2,050			2,050	4,486
Collections and donations	9,173			9,173	6,815
Use of Church	15,179			15,179	6,441
	<u>96,787</u>			<u>96,787</u>	<u>83,011</u>

2(b) Other voluntary incoming resources

<i>Designated</i> : BDBF contribution towards Curate costs in Mission fund	4,375			4,375	
<i>Designated</i> : BDBF paid out to parishes the balance held for Parsonage fund	6,001			6,001	
Legacies				0	19,000
Donations to New Boiler fund (incl tax £1,914)				0	8,814
Donations for defibrillator		2,500		2,500	
Donations to restricted Fabric fund (inc tax £35)		175		175	175
Energy grant from Birmingham Diocese				0	5,378
Grant for new equipment (audio visual)	1,720			1,720	
	<u>12,096</u>	<u>2,675</u>		<u>14,771</u>	<u>33,367</u>

2(c) Income from charitable and ancillary trading

Magazine	1,750			1,750	2,136
Fees and other charges	0			0	3,182
Car parking	16,130			16,130	14,850
	<u>17,880</u>			<u>17,880</u>	<u>20,168</u>

2(d) Other ordinary income resources

Sundry	0			0	781
	<u>0</u>			<u>0</u>	<u>781</u>

2(e) Income from investments

Dividends and interest	3,395		204	3,599	1,366
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TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES 2023

130,158	2,675	204	133,037	138,693
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Note 4

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST GEORGE'S, EDGBASTON
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the 12 months to 31 December 2023

3 RESOURCES USED

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	TOTAL FUNDS	
	£	£	£	2023 £	2022 £
<i>3(a) Grants</i>					
Missionary and charitable giving	0			0	0
<i>3(b) Activities directly relating to the work of the church</i>					
Ministry					
Diocesan Common Fund	55,860			55,860	60,780
Working expenses of incumbent	1,983			1,983	1,172
Assistant Clergy expenses	78			78	193
Administration expenses	3,225			3,225	2,537
New equipment (audio visual, computer)	2,324			2,324	2,880
Secretarial assistance	6,496			6,496	6,261
Vicarage maintenance:	1,032			1,032	810
Church running expenses					
Gas and electricity	20,188			20,188	14,404
Insurance	8,766			8,766	8,220
Church maintenance				0	
Routine repairs, maintenance, cleaning	7,783			7,783	6,387
Director of Music	6,711			6,711	6,353
Organists ,choir,music.	1,697			1,697	669
Parish magazine expenses	1,489			1,489	1,325
Training, development, lent books, cards	434			434	379
Social events and fund raising	1,285			1,285	509
Upkeep of services (altar requisites, music, books)	1,100			1,100	1,458
Credence table and covers	0			0	1,240
Sundry	421			421	43
	120,872			120,872	115,620
<i>Designated Mission Fund;</i>					
SWPorch welcome project	12,730			12,730	2,334
Curate house property deposit	1,067			1,067	0
Curate house rent	7,863			7,863	0
Curate working expenses	462			462	0
	22,122			22,122	2,334
Restricted funds:					
New boiler		0		0	12,859
<i>3(c) Church management and administration</i>					
Examination of accounts	930			930	950
TOTAL RESOURCES USED 2023	143,924	0		143,924	131,763

Note 4

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST GEORGE'S, EDGBASTON
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the 12 months to 31 December 2023

4 Analysis of movement on funds

	At 31.12.22	Movements in the current year						At 31.12.23
		Incoming Resources	Resources Used	Net incoming (outgoing) resources	Transfers between funds	Gains and (losses) on investments	Net movement in funds	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted								
General excluding legacies	37,659	119,782	(121,802)	(2,020)	204	392	(1,424)	36,235
General legacies	45,310	0	0	0	0	0	0	45,310
General sub-total	82,969	119,782	(121,802)	(2,020)	204	392	(1,424)	81,545
Designated: Parsonage	0	6,001	0	6,001	0	0	6,001	6,001
Designated: Fabric	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,000
Designated: Mission Development	47,666	4,375	(22,122)	(17,747)	0	0	(17,747)	29,919
	140,635	130,158	(143,924)	(13,766)	204	392	(13,170)	127,465
Restricted								
Fabric	4,067	175	0	175	0	0	175	4,242
Defibrillator	0	2,500	0	2,500	0	0	2,500	2,500
Urban mission	3,690	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,690
	7,757	2,675	0	2,675	0	0	2,675	10,432
Endowment								
Clergy Stipend	8,524	204	0	204	(204)	471	471	8,995
Total per Statement of Financial Activities	156,916	133,037	(143,924)	(10,887)	0	863	(10,024)	146,892

Note 2 Note 3

5 Analysis of net assets by fund

	Fixed assets	Debtors	Short term deposits	Cash / Bank	Liabilities	At 31.12.23
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted						
General	6,967	9,673	51,916	22,883	(9,894)	81,545
Designated Fabric	0	0	10,000	0	0	10,000
Designated Parsonage	0	0	6,001	0	0	6,001
Designated: Mission Development	0	925	0	28,994	0	29,919
	6,967	10,598	67,917	51,877	(9,894)	127,465
Restricted						
Fabric	0	0	4,242	0	0	4,242
Defibrillator	0	0	0	2,500	0	2,500
Urban Mission	0	0	3,690	0	0	3,690
	0	0	7,932	2,500	0	10,432
Endowment						
Clergy Stipend	8,395	0	600	0	0	8,995
Total per Balance Sheet	15,362	10,598	76,449	54,377	(9,894)	146,892

See Note below

CBF Deposit Account	11,658
CBF Combined Account	64,791
	76,449

Note: For administrative purposes money is held on behalf of all funds in a single bank current account and in a combined CBF short term deposit account.

6 Salaries, wages, honoraria and fees

7 Investments within Fixed assets.

In the endowment clergy stipend fund there are 5,793 shares in CBF Fixed Interest Securities Fund with a net asset value of £8,385 (2022: £7,914) and a historical cost of £7,543 (2022:£7,543).

8 Debtors

9 Liabilities: Amounts falling due within one year

Accruals and other creditors

- 28 -

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST GEORGE'S, EDGBASTON

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the 12 months to 31 December 2023

10 Designated, Restricted and Endowment Fund details

Designated

	Purpose
Fabric	To maintain and restore the fabric of the Church
Parsonage	For maintenance of the vicarage particularly when the incumbent changes.
Mission Development	To support projects that will be of missional benefit to St George's Church and parish

Restricted

	Purpose
Fabric	To maintain and restore the fabric of the Church
Defibrillator	To provide and maintain a local defibrillator at Church
Urban Mission	To support the Church to enable it to help urban causes outside the parish.

Endowment

	Purpose
Clergy Stipend	The income (only) is applied towards vicar's working expenses

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Parochial Church Council of St George's

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 21 to 29.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement

I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

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 charity 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.



Name: Anna Madden

Relevant professional qualification or body: FCA

Address: Curo Chartered Accountants, Curo House, Greenbox, Weston Hall Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 4AL

Date: 17/7/24