

St George's (New Thundersley) - Minister's report 2024

In case anyone was wondering I have now been serving as the Minister of St George's for nearly 5 years. Doesn't time fly when you are having fun! For the purposes of continuity and accountability I have kept the layout of my report the same for 2024 as for 2023 so that, those of you who are enthusiastic enough, can compare how we are doing this year compared to last!

Outreach

We begin with outreach. We continue to hold our core outreach activities namely Seniors Tuesday Club, Toddler Group and Legacy XS. It was a delight just a few weeks ago to join with the Tuesday Club in celebrating their 20th anniversary. It was a great afternoon with live music, lovely food and a visit from Bishop Adam. There have been special events through the year as well such as our Church anniversary event, coronation celebration for the community and of course the ever popular Christmas Festival. Once again we hosted Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs in Santa's grotto on the Friday evening and they loved their visits.

We have had several men's breakfasts over the last few months with engaging and interesting speakers. It is always good to see that there is a roughly 50/50 split of men who are regular church congregation members and those on the fringe of even completely unconnected visitors.

Services

This year we continued our varied pattern of Sunday services aimed at developing our prayer focus, understanding of the Lord's Table, sharing of our own experiences of God's work in our lives all in the context of making our worship accessible to all. We hold a monthly book of common prayer communion service which honours our heritage and 9:30 communion services are structured but not stuffy or starchy.

The biggest development this year has been with Messy Church. In January we began our focus on expanding our monthly Saturday afternoon messy gatherings to include features aimed at those without young families so that we focus on building connections between Messy Church families and the wider church family.

Each messy weekend our Saturday gathering takes the place of our 11am Sunday service to ensure that the workload of services is not too onerous as well as encouraging all who would normally attend at 11am on a Sunday to come instead on the Saturday afternoon when our young families are willing and able to come.

Alongside corporate worship we have added a seminar for adults to each Messy gathering as well as facilities for teenagers and of course the prayer room is open for those wanting to be in prayer for families and young people during this time. All this is rounded off with a shared meal in the hall. I will be quite frank and say that I am still hoping to see more of our regular 11am congregation take the plunge and come on a Saturday instead once a month. This is our opportunity to engage in the friendship evangelism we speak about so often. I hope that opting out of coming for anything other than reasons of a practical nature are not in our minds. Our own personal preferences or comfort must surely be the very least we are prepared to sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel?

Our Sunday evening monthly intimate worship gatherings have continued and have become for many a delightful time of hearing from God and enjoying simply spending time with Jesus. Again, this does not appear to be a priority for very many of our number but I would encourage anyone who would draw closer to Jesus and knowing him better to come along and join in these special informal times of worship.

In the last year, with the opening of our prayer room in Ian and Lynda's back garden, we have begun monthly prayer weekends with the aim of filling a rota of daytime slots to capacity. Whilst we have made a start we have some way to go in order to see these hour long times filled. As a PCC leadership team we believe that God has called us to take prayer more seriously as a church so it is essential that we work harder to prioritise these prayer weekends and other opportunities to pray together as a church. If the time to pray is not when war dominates the headlines, climate change affects our lives, economic instability brings poverty and secularism pushes faith to the margins - then when is it? Jesus instructs us to become a people of prayer and we must take his command seriously if we wish to be obedient to him.

Thanks must be expressed to all who enable our worship. Our preachers, worship leaders, musicians, readers, leaders of prayer, servers at communion, sides people, and those who arrange hospitality. This also includes those who “maintain order and decency in the church and churchyard, especially during the time of divine service” - that’s the church Wardens in case you were wondering!

Our parade services have continued to be great fun as well as sometimes moving, such as our Remembrance Sunday community acts of Remembrance.

Our Christmas services for 2023 were all the best attended for many years which was very encouraging. Though I do have to warn you that, having dressed as a dinosaur for the Chaos Round the Crib service I am running out of ways to up my game when it comes to that particular event!

Home groups & pastoral care

Our home groups continue to be places of fellowship, learning and mutual support and ministry. These include groups led by Ian & Lynda, Lynda, Denise, Matt & Nicola, Hazel, Dave Brown and Jen and I. These home groups remain the primary channel through which pastoral care is delivered and we would encourage everyone to consider becoming part of a group if that is not already the case.

Children’s ministry

As I have already mentioned under the heading of worship I been delighted at the beginning we have made with our new Messy Saturday initiative so I shall not repeat the importance of that here.

The recent Easter holiday saw a successful Sporting Champions themed holiday club which was fully booked for each of the 3 days. Massive thanks go to Jenni, Hazel for their organisation along with the rest of the team for all their efforts and energy expended throughout the week.

I’ve continued to be the local vicar for the children of Woodham Ley hosting regular visits to the church building as well as have the privilege of attending assemblies at Christmas, Easter and Harvest time. I can only describe the pleasure at being greeted out in the street (or indeed in Aldi) by bubbly little ones excited to see me as they shout “Hello Reverend Hillman!”

I continue to serve as a Trustee of the Compass Multi Academy Trust which oversees Appleton, Billericay, Bromfords, and Woodlands schools and we were able to host a meeting of the Board recently here in the Hospitality Hub. A great way to practically demonstrate our support for the educational establishments in our local area.

As a family, and in part as representatives of the church family, our fostering continues with D our Ukrainian lad in placement with us and in connection to this I also serve as a Carers Rep for the foster agency with our owners Five Rivers. I also undertake in depth training and development in the area of Trauma informed care which is also very valuable in my work as the vicar!

Other stuff

Together with my colleague Jeremy Noles I host the local New Wine leaders network gatherings every few months and we of course hosted the Re:Fresh earlier this year, with another last year. These have proved great times of refreshing for like minded local Christians and we hope to have another event later this year with Bishop Adam speaking.

As you are also aware I serve as Hadleigh Area Dean and have spent the last couple of years building relationships with the other clergy in the Chapter. The Church of England is a strange and clunky old beast sometimes and it’s tempting to ignore the rest of it and just focus on what God is doing in our little corner of the world. However, it seems right to me that we remember that God’s church is a body and we need all the constituent parts, however alien and wobbly those bits may look to us!

In the same spirit I have met with the new minister of The Beacon (what was TCC), David Turner, for coffee and we have agreed that we should be meeting more regularly for prayer and mutual encouragement across the year. It is our intention to connect with all church leaders across Benfleet, Thundersley and Hadleigh in the months ahead.

Conclusion

If there is one thing that can be said of life it is that change is inevitable. The changing of the seasons, our own growing older. Change is a part of life. I know some people find change very hard but personally I have always struggled to understand that. To resist it has always felt as silly as king Canute standing in the sea and commanding the tide to turn back. So together we do well to embrace change, to shape it where we can, and to look for opportunities where we find the changes challenging or hard.

Change will inevitably come to us as a Parish during the next 12-18 months. This Christmas sees the long planned retirement of my colleague Andy Hudson as Rector of Thundersley so the sharing of ministry provision with Thundersley that has been on the horizon for so long will draw closer much more quickly. In addition my other colleague Ruth Cartwright who is Rector of St James the Less and Vicar of St Barnabas in Hadleigh has just announced her retirement at the end of September. Finally Fr Ben Drury who took up the role of Priest in Charge at St Mary's is also moving to a new post abroad. So this all throws yet another spanner (or in fact a whole toolbox) in the works of the Deanery!

All change, all challenge but equally all opportunities. Where will God lead us in the next 12 months? None of us knows. However, what we do know is that God promises "I know the plans I have for you, ... 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. '" Let us walk together into that future with faith and hope.

Thank you to all for being the family of St George's here in this place. However often you make it to services or meetings. Whatever you are able to contribute by your practical efforts, your time or your financial giving. Simply your presence, your participation, your prayers and your partnership are all of immeasurable value. Please know that you are appreciated for who you are, not simply because of what you do or bring. We love our family not because of what they give us or do for us, but simply because they are our family. We are the family of God here and we each of us belong. Please, never doubt that for a moment.

Independent examiner's report to the PCC of New Thundersley St George

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are attached.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an Independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

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

Basis of Independent Examiners Statement.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

Daniel Keech
38 Shepard Close
Leigh on Sea
SS9 5YR


11/14/24

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11/14/24

New Thundersley St George Charity No - 1134854
Statement of Financial Activities - summary
For the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Total income	84,019.92	—	—	—	84,019.92	85,805.52
Total expenditure	84,405.70	—	8,096.03	—	92,501.73	156,726.04
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(385.78)	—	(8,096.03)	—	(8,481.81)	(70,920.52)
Gross transfers between funds - in	—	—	—	—	—	3,000.00
Gross transfers between funds - out	—	—	—	—	—	(3,000.00)
Net movement in funds	(385.78)	—	(8,096.03)	—	(8,481.81)	(70,920.52)
Total funds brought forward	32,191.93	30,000.00	10,449.35	—	72,641.28	143,561.80
Total funds carried forward	31,806.15	30,000.00	2,353.32	—	64,159.47	72,641.28
Unrestricted						
General fund	31,806.15	—	—	—	31,806.15	32,191.93
Designated						
PCC Reserve Fund	—	30,000.00	—	—	30,000.00	30,000.00
Restricted						
Church building fund	—	—	1,360.97	—	1,360.97	1,360.97
New Hall fund	—	—	992.35	—	992.35	9,088.38

New Thundersley St George Charity No - 1134854

Statement of Assets and Liabilities (by fund)
As at: 31 December 2023

		Balance	Previous balance
Cash at bank and in hand			
6501: Santander 090155 34216706 Church - Asset			
General fund	Unrestricted		
New Hall fund	Restricted	31,806.15	32,191.93
Church building fund	Restricted	764.40	764.40
PCC Reserve Fund	Designated	1,360.97	1,360.97
		30,000.00	30,000.00
		63,931.52	64,317.30
6503: NatWest 600943 79638074 Hall Fund - Asset			
New Hall fund	Restricted	227.95	8,323.98
		227.95	8,323.98
Cash at bank and in hand		64,159.47	72,641.28
Grand Total		64,159.47	72,641.28

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New Thundersley St George Charity No - 1134854
Receipts and payments
Selected period: 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

<i>Note</i>	From To	01 January 2023 31 December 2023	01 January 2022 31 December 2022
General - General fund (Unrestricted) Fund			
Income and endowments			
Donations and legacies			
Gift Aid - Bank			
CAF		39,039.58	43,428.00
Charitable Giving		54.00	—
Gift Aid - Envelopes		693.00	—
Other planned giving		3,655.00	5,850.00
Loose plate collections (GASDS)		3,060.00	2,732.00
Loose plate collections (Non GASDS)		2,863.06	3,672.38
One-off Gift Aid gifts		430.00	849.00
Donations appeals etc		—	1,500.00
Donations - Sumup Gasds		510.00	90.00
Donations - Sumup Non Gasds		523.15	159.30
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid		540.00	—
Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS)		12,425.59	11,631.92
Non-recurring one-off grants		618.24	937.13
Other funds generated		2,521.15	—
		1,305.98	1,152.38
	Total Donations and legacies	68,238.75	72,002.11
Income from charitable activities			
tba		(20.00)	—
Fees for weddings and funerals		478.00	36.33
Bookstall sales to promote objectives		183.00	293.00
Hall hire		15,140.17	13,443.78
	Total Income from charitable activities	15,781.17	13,773.11
Total income and endowments		84,019.92	85,775.22
Expenditure			
Raising funds			
Costs of fetes & other events		1,688.39	1,549.05
Costs of Coffee Shop		62.75	—
	Total Raising funds	1,751.14	1,549.05
Expenditure on charitable activities			
Mission giving		6,342.00	6,718.00
Ministry parish share etc		42,775.90	33,239.46
Honorarium		200.00	—
Working expenses of incumbent		35.00	431.37
Vicarage expenses		—	61.23
Parish outreach		1,030.36	617.22
Church running - insurance		1,133.70	1,102.00
Church office - telephone		1,868.24	1,605.50
Church maintenance		3,190.13	5,307.38
Church running - cleaning		2,244.19	1,923.37
Upkeep of services		917.18	611.13
Upkeep of churchyard and gardens		1,546.98	—
Administration		1,795.45	2,064.33
Sumup charges		66.63	—
Church running - electric		4,355.57	4,310.17
Church running - water		228.84	123.30
Hall running - management		1,800.00	1,800.00

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11/4/24

Note

From
To

01 January 2023
31 December 2023

01 January 2022
31 December 2022

Hall running - electricity	1,913.21	1,245.49
Hall running - gas	3,804.42	1,922.20
Hall running - insurance	2,282.61	2,204.31
Hall running - cleaning	934.89	999.53
Hall running - refuse collection	3,489.10	2,697.52
Hall running - water	572.35	612.36
Governance costs examination/audit fee	77.81	107.18
New Hall works	50.00	50.00
	—	(3,000.00)
<i>Total Expenditure on charitable activities</i>	<i>82,654.56</i>	<i>66,753.05</i>
Total expenditure	84,405.70	68,302.10
Excess of Income and endowments over Expenditure	(385.78)	17,473.12
Brought forward balance	32,191.93	17,718.81
Transfers to/(from)	—	(3,000.00)
Total carried forward balance	31,806.15	32,191.93

NewHall - New Hall fund (Restricted) Fund

Income and endowments

Donations and legacies

Donations appeals etc

Other funds generated

Total Donations and legacies

Total income and endowments

Expenditure

Expenditure on charitable activities

Hall + major repairs - structure

New Hall works

Total Expenditure on charitable activities

Total expenditure

	—	24,879.31
	8,096.03	63,544.63
	<i>8,096.03</i>	<i>88,423.94</i>
Total expenditure	8,096.03	88,423.94
Excess of Income and endowments over Expenditure	(8,096.03)	(88,396.94)
Brought forward balance	9,088.38	94,485.32
Transfers to/(from)	—	3,000.00
Total carried forward balance	992.35	9,088.38

 11/4/24

Note

From
To

01 January 2023
31 December 2023

01 January 2022
31 December 2022

ChBuilding - Church building fund (Restricted) Fund

Income and endowments

Investments

Bank and building society interest

Total Investments

Total income and endowments

Excess of Income and endowments over Expenditure

Brought forward balance

Total carried forward balance

—	3.30
—	3.30
—	3.30
—	3.30
1,360.97	1,357.67
1,360.97	1,360.97

PCCReserve - PCC Reserve Fund (Designated) Fund

Brought forward balance

Total carried forward balance

30,000.00	30,000.00
30,000.00	30,000.00

[Signature] 11/4/24