

**ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH  
RAVENSWOOD AVENUE  
WEST WICKHAM, KENT BR4 0PW  
(CHARITY NO: 1134856)**

**ANNUAL REPORT &  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

**INCUMBENT:**

Rev. Hazel O'Sullivan, St Mary's Vicarage, The Avenue,  
West Wickham, Kent BR4 0DX

**BANK:**

CAF BANK LTD  
25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill  
West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:**

Mr Neil Tullis

## **St Francis of Assisi West Wickham**

### **Annual Report 2023**

#### **Background:**

St Francis is part of the United Benefice of St Mary of Nazareth and St Francis of Assisi, West Wickham, with each church having their own PCC. We are also in a Group Ministry with St John the Baptist, West Wickham. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure, and is a registered charity. It has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the church and hall buildings and grounds with the buildings being insured by Ecclesiastical Insurance. The PCC met 4 times in 2023 plus one joint meeting with St Mary's of Nazareth PCC with an average attendance of 70%.

#### **Membership:**

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio, co-opted or elected by the APCM in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Members are elected to serve for 3 years.

Vicar	Rev. Hazel O'Sullivan
Assistant Priest	Rev. Richard Ford
SPAs	Mrs Lesley East and Mrs Rowena Griffiths
Churchwardens	Dr Kate Dyer and Mrs Valerie Hamilton
Treasurer	Mr David Wada
Reader	Mr Brian Griffiths (died 26 August 2023)
Secretary	Mrs Nichola Nightingale
Deanery Synod Representatives:	Mrs Marion Barry and Mrs Sheila Hawkins

#### **Elected Members:**

Until APCM (2024):	Mr Roger Dyer, Mrs Kim Teare
Until APCM (2025):	Mrs Gillian Challenger, Mrs Joan Burford
Until APCM (2026):	Mrs Barbara Goodchild

#### **Co-Opted Members:**

Until APCM (2025):	Mr Matt Thompson (Youth Club)
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#### **Committees:**

The PCC operates through two Committees which meet between full meetings of the PCC:

- Standing Committee: this is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any direction by the Council.
- Hall Committee: has responsibility for the management and maintenance of the hall.

#### **Church Attendance:**

There are 87 on the Electoral Roll. The average weekly in-person attendance was 59 counted during October, with an additional average of 34 views for an on-line service shown jointly with St Mary's.

## **Ministry and Mission Report - 2023**

St Francis of Assisi Church in West Wickham is part of a united benefice, together with St Mary's church. We follow a pattern of three services on a Sunday morning, with the main service at St Francis' being at 10.45am. On one Sunday each month (normally the first Sunday) there is a joint service at 10am, which alternates where it is held, and on the second Sunday the service is normally non-eucharistic with a variety of themes, such as Christian Aid, Songs of Praise or Mothering Sunday. From Easter this year we began to distribute communion using the common cup, whilst also offering it by priestly intinction and we continue in this way.

In the summer our choir moved to be part of the congregation for most services. However, where we have a joint service, they join with St Mary's choir back in the chancel.

Our on-line presence, streamed from both church buildings continues, as does our paper-based communication for those not on-line. This, together with pastoral visiting in person and by telephone for those who are housebound, ensures that we keep in touch with the whole of our community. Our ministry to young families continues mostly through a monthly Messy Church with an average congregation of 25 made up of children, accompanying adults, and a supporting team.

Our ministry is founded on prayer, and a corporate Morning Prayer is held on Wednesdays and Thursdays, as well as on-line reflections being sent by email to many in the congregation on six days in the week. St Francis' Church is also open for private prayer on a Wednesday morning. Additionally, in September a group started to pray for growth in the Church on a weekly basis.

Our ministry team has been strengthened this year, with Debbie Adams from St Mary's being licensed as a Reader at a service in Southwark Cathedral on 8<sup>th</sup> October. On the following Sunday we held a joyful joint welcome service at St Mary's, followed by a celebratory brunch. Additionally, the Ven. Carol Coslett, who works in encouraging lay ministry at the Diocese of Southwark, has joined us as an Assistant Priest, being licensed to the united benefice.

Our Eco-Church agenda has been moved forwards with the establishment of a community garden for referrals from GP social prescribers, operated in conjunction with St John's Church, West Wickham, and creation-tide services for both the Sunday congregations and Messy Church.

We also continue with much of our community support, including facilitating regular donations for local Foodbanks, High Street collection dates in the year and the delivery of Christmas hampers, as well as telephone befriending, and a weekly warm space in the winter months. Following a women's event in July we began to support a project providing starter packs for those moving into a home with nothing.

Other regular activities include:

- Regular community lunches four times a year at St Francis' and monthly at St Mary's
- Three home groups met, mostly bi-weekly, throughout the year, with an additional group for Lent, looking at unanswered prayer
- Our youth group continues to thrive and meets weekly during term time
- A monthly Saturday coffee morning, which was used as a way of thanking all volunteers in August and to mark the opening of the community garden in September
- Monthly lunchtime recitals during May – September

This year there have been a significant number of deaths across the united benefice, notably our own Reader, Brian Griffiths, as well as stalwart members of the congregation who served in a variety of roles, including the choir and on the Parochial Church Council. In addition to holding a monthly bereavement support meeting, we have distributed gifts of supporting materials for those who are newly bereaved, and we invited those who became bereaved in the last year or so to our annual Memorial Service in November. Additionally, we remembered those from our congregations who had died during the year at the joint All Saints' service in November.

For the first time this year we held fundraising events around the time of key Christian festivals, including an Easter Egg Hunt on Holy Saturday, and a Christmas Tree Festival in mid-December, raising money for Welcare, where a number of community organisations provided a tree. We also had a concert in the church with West End singers to raise money for Christian Aid, a piano recital and afternoon tea in May, a concert by the London Concert Chorus in October and coffee mornings for the British Heart Foundation in February, following the installation of our defibrillator machine outside the church, and for the Childrens' Society in July.

The West Wickham Choir is supported by many in our congregation, and they held a concert in July, raising money for charity and they staged the Big Christmas Sing in December, which raised money for Christian Aid.

We supported Ukrainians affected by the war in that country through contributing items to a van which takes supplies to refugees in Poland.

Hazel, our vicar, spoke about living a contemplative life at a women's event in January and she held a prayer event with a similar focus in June.

The coronation of King Charles III was marked with a special joint service, followed by a lunch in St Mary's Hall.

Our connection with other local community groups has been strengthened this year through the following support:

- The 7<sup>th</sup> West Wickham Scout Group attended our Harvest and Remembrance services. They started a new group of Squirrels who meet on a Sunday morning in term time and join with many of our non-eucharistic services for a time at the end
- A visit by students from Glebe School, a special educational school, in February and from Hawes Down School in March. Oak Lodge School also held their Christmas Concert at St Francis' this year
- Contributing to the Churches Together presence at the West Wickham Village Day at Blake Park in May, as well as participating in a pulpit swap with Hope Church in January
- We hosted the West Wickham Christmas Lights event and opened the church on that occasion, with many from the community coming in to light a candle

More widely, we have connected with other churches in the Croydon Addington Deanery through participating in a Deanery Pilgrimage in September.

With many thanks to the ministry team and all the volunteers who have contributed to our worship, discipleship groups, and other social events throughout the year.

### **Financial Review/Report:**

We have small profit for the year for a change! We have finished with a profit of £1294, and this is after paying £2150 for the CCTV that gives the Church and us better security.

We received a legacy from Joyce Town which we have decided to spread over 3 years. From our Church activities for charities, Christian Aid received £1455 from the Big Christmas Sing, which was worth £1628 to them with Gift Aid. We raised £1713 cash for the Bromley & Shrublands Foodbanks in addition to all the food that we collected for them. The London Concert Chorus concert started off our fund for the new disabled toilet in the Hall with a profit of over £700 & with Our Gift Day monies we now have £1430 towards the cost of the project.

The Parish Giving Scheme is a great help to the Treasurer, saving administration and gift aid time. We would encourage others to join the scheme as once you have signed up it is simpler than a monthly standing order.

The cost of the new Church doors and the decoration & updating of the Vestry Toilet have been set against the Legacy for Church Repairs.

Most of the costs of the new Garden behind the Church have been met by the Crittall Trust.

## **Fabric Report:**

We are continuing to address the issues raised in our 2020 Quinquennial report. In addition, we have carried out a number of repairs to the Church building, including some plumbing repairs and repairs to the hot water boiler on the kitchen side and refurbishment of the toilet on the south side. Two new doors for the entrances on the north side of the church were installed.

Further work completed includes a replacement gate to the shed area, installation of CCTV and work to the East Window to reduce bird damage. With funding from Barbara Goodchild, in memory of Tony, we have refurbished the Choir Vestry.

Further planned work includes the replacement of the external Church Noticeboard. Work to the main path and fence is being considered.

## **Hall Report:**

Hall Income was up in the year despite no longer accommodating Hope Church and should prove resilient with additional regular bookings and the increased contributions from the Scout Group and The Matchbox Theatre.

Outgoings were also up and have risk of further increase due to maintenance and utilities.

Accordingly, we will need to address:

- Installing Low Energy lighting in the back hall (especially as this is used all week)
- Planning for replacement of the gas heaters

We also have an ongoing issue with the front hall lighting tripping out. This is currently under medium term investigation.

Sundry maintenance was slightly lower than last year, but we have failed to address:

- Lack of hot water in the toilets
- Failing window frames
- The now unusable ambulant disabled w/c
- The kitchen

From last year's 'wish list' we have completed (bar final decoration) the new storage cupboards and plans are out for prices for a new (fully) Disabled Toilet.

Additionally, we propose to complete the back hall kitchenette and single toilet to be rentalised in the Pre-School lease. (Subject to Agreement)

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI  
WEST WICKHAM  
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
Charity No: 1134856**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31ST. DECEMBER 2023**

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ST. FRANCIS WEST WICKHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

Accounts certificate for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup>. December 2023 which are set out on pages 1 to 8.

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

The charities' trustees consider that an audit is not required under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

1. Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
2. Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charities Commission section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
3. State whether particular matters have come to my attention

### **Basis of Independent Examiner's Report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions of 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 includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanation from the management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required under a full audit and consequently I do not present an audited opinion on the accounts.

### **Independent Examiner's Statement**

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust 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 on 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.

Neil Tullis ACA  
59 Greenways  
Beckenham  
Kent BR3 3NQ

March 6, 2024