

St Mark's Parish Church

Little Common, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex

Registered Charity No. 1135040



Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December, AD 2023

Rector:

The Reverend Jonathan Fraiss
St Mark's Rectory, 11 Coverdale Avenue,
Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN39 4TY

Independent Examiner:

Mr David Allen
5 Mulberry Close
Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex, TN39 4RX

Bankers:

The Co-operative Bank p.l.c.
PO Box 250, Delf House, Southway,
Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

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Parochial Church Council of St Mark's, Little Common
Registered Charity No. 1135040

Annual Report 2023

Administrative information

During the year the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Rector: The Reverend Jonathan Fraiss

Churchwardens: Mrs Carol Gent
 Mr Steve Whiting

Representatives on Deanery Synod:
 Mrs Carol Gent
 Mrs Doone Ellerton
 Mrs Ruth Fraiss (until May 2023)
 Mrs Sandra Frohnsdorff

Elected Members:
 Mr Mike Corke
 Mr Tony Gent
 Mrs Sheila Johnson
 Mr Tim Knibbs
 Mr John Philpot (Hon. Treasurer)
 Mrs Sue Rochefort

In 2023, the PCC met seven times. The PCC has complied with section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Purpose St Mark's exists to share the gospel of Christ which reveals the saving love of God. In being the parish church in Little Common, we serve the local population by providing a place of Christian assembly to the glory of God (for those in and outside the parish) where his word is heard.

Method We spread the gospel by welcoming everyone to our services shaped by varied Bible teaching throughout the Christian year. We maintain buildings as fit for use, offer pastoral care, and respond to the needs of other charities and people overseas.

Benefit We exist to change lives by presenting Jesus Christ who came "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10) and building faith, hope and love in believing hearts. We offer the community a modern hall with spacious car park both of which are well used. A defibrillator is installed outside the hall. We give hospitality to both Guide and Scout groups. We support local causes such as Bexhill Foodbank and overseas Missions too. We enjoy links with Little Common Primary School.

FABRIC REPORTS

Church: Minor repair works continue to become necessary in the church and are usually undertaken by church members. Routine maintenance also takes place. This includes twice yearly servicing of the intruder alarm by Holts Security and an annual service of the fire extinguishers by Coastline Fire Protection. Three times a year the valley gutters, drains, downpipes and hoppers are cleared, our current contractor being Harmer Builders. Battery and pads were renewed on the defibrillator mounted on the outside wall of the hall; it is now registered on the Heartstart Register run by the British Heart Foundation.

We are grateful to all who help in the small ways throughout the year, especially the Flower Guild and other helpers who decorate our church week by week, particularly at Festival times. David and Bronwyn Smith keep the church clean and tidy.

Grounds: Graham Austin continued to cut the Garden of Remembrance grass once a month during the summer. Chris Livings maintains the grounds around the hall. Simon Briggs looks after the rose bushes and small borders leading up to the church, and with his wife, Heather, keep the paths around the church clear of fallen leaves. Rother District Council cuts the graveyard grass.

Hall: Regular maintenance and servicing is undertaken: Tormax (front doors); Gartec (lift); Airtight Security (intruder and fire alarms); Coastline Fire Protection (fire extinguishers). Annual maintenance on the boilers and other plumbing issues, as they arise, are dealt with by Dale Saunders (a local heating engineer), and Harmer Builders clear the gutters and drains. Angela Lucas is currently employed to clean the hall.

Carol Gent & Steve Whiting

Review of the year

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

There are 151 on the Church Electoral Roll, of whom 113 are resident and 38 are not resident in the Parish. The average Sunday attendance (sampled in October) was a total of 90 adults and children across both services.

EVENTS

National: the General Synod of the Church of England voted in February to permit clergy to bless same-sex couples and published Prayers of Love and Faith in November for them to use. In response, the PCC voted to become a Partner Church of Church Society - a fellowship that aims to reform and renew the Church of England in the biblical faith (with particular reference to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion) - and to take steps to direct money from St Mark's towards other churches which maintain the biblical position that the God-appointed place for sexual intimacy is heterosexual marriage as a sign of the eternal love between Christ the bridegroom and the church, his bride.

Sundays: We continue to hold a Holy Communion Service at 8am every Sunday, followed at 10am by either Holy Communion, Morning Worship or All Age Worship services.

We were once again able to follow our usual custom of distributing daffodils on Mothering Sunday. Small crosses were distributed on Palm Sunday.

Junior Church meets for three Sunday mornings a month during term-time, led by Bronwyn Smith. The Rector leads Youth Table-Tennis (with Bible Study) on many Sundays at 4pm.

Canon James Clarke preached and led at several services.

In May we decorated the hall and church for the Coronation of King Charles III. Many enjoyed a special lunch, and a toast to our new King.

The church was decorated for *Harvest Festival* followed by lunch. On Remembrance Sunday an earlier service for the *Royal British Legion* was held with the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Simon Corello, JP in attendance; this was followed by the Act of Remembrance at 11am and the laying of wreaths at the War Memorial on Little Common roundabout.

In December, we held Carols by Candlelight and a Christingle Service, these were well supported. Christmas Eve & Christmas Day services also took place.

Great use is made of the screen at our 10am service, and people have continued to watch pre-recorded services on Youtube. Refreshments are served following the 10am service and after the Candles by Candlelight Service.

A collection basket is in regular use for Bexhill Food Bank in the hall foyer.

Midweek: The Ark Coffee Lounge continues to offer coffee and fellowship for both church members and visitors on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

In March the World Day of Prayer was hosted by Little Common Methodist Church. Meeting Point holds monthly meetings on a Friday afternoon for ladies. Focus, a study and fellowship for ladies, meets monthly in the Ark on a Thursday afternoon.

During the autumn, three classes of Year 1 children (aged 5-6) visited the church from Little Common School, and in December the school held four carol services for Years 3-6. A Toddler Group service also took place in December.

We produce over 400 magazines (ten editions each year). Many are delivered and others taken from church or the hall. An edited version is posted on the church website.

Books made available for £1 during the year were *Broken Works Best* (Catherine Campbell), *The Gift of Gratitude* (Paul Mallard), *Under the Bonnet* (Simon Allaby), *Things We All Have In Common* (Pete Jackson), *The Little Him Book* (Peter Mead), *Happiness* (JC Ryle), *Stand Firm and Fight On* (Lee Gatiss, ed.), *Greater Love* (Simon Allaby), *Incomparable* (Andrew Wilson), and *The Search for Christmas* (JD Greear)

During 2023, the Rector convened a Lent Course on Old Testament Foundations', a Summer course on 'The Supremacy of Christ' Colossians, and an autumn DVD-based series called 'The Genesis Academy'. Heart & Soul, a group for men, met periodically during the year.

Money continues to be raised for good causes such as at Remembrance (for the British Legion) and Christingle (for Chestnut Tree Hospice). In addition, £2,310.50 was raised for Turkish-Syrian Earthquake Relief, distributed through churches known to People International. Also, £809 was raised for the refurbishment of the fire-gutted flat of Alison Giblett, CMS mission partner in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Weekly prayer meetings for the people and churches of Ukraine continued to be held. We remain part of Three Churches of Little Common, Churches Together in Bexhill and the Sussex Gospel Partnership.

During the year, we welcomed visitors including Alison Giblett (CMS), Brigadier Ian Dobbie (SASRA), Al Simms (People International), Bishop Nicholas Reade, and Terry Jin (Minister of the United Reformed Church, speaking at a 70th anniversary service of the Korean ceasefire).

We also welcomed in Baptism Amina and Andrii Grynenko, later Confirmed by the Bishop of Lewes at Ninfield in July. But we said goodbye to Dave Wilkins, Hans Heetveld and Barbara Wells whom the Lord took to be with him in glory.

We thank God for His faithfulness to us during 2023 and pray that we will remain faithful to Him during 2024.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Our income, as shown on page 6 of the accounts, was a little down on the previous year. Our expenditure (page 7) was also down. The result was a net surplus of £18,000 which followed on from a surplus of £20,000 for 2022.

We had expected to spend some £30,000 on the church roof in 2023. In the event this was not incurred until early 2024 and we now expect the final sum to come to between £35,000 and £38,000. I see a certain symmetry with the figures in my first paragraph.

After paying for the roof repairs we shall have some £65,000 in our deposit account. It does help your treasurer to sleep at nights. Thank you to all who have given regularly and generously to the running of our church and its activities.

John Philpot

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARK, LITTLE COMMON

Registered Charity no. 1135040

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

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**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2023 £	TOTAL FUNDS 2022 £
Income					
Donations and legacies	2a	87,007	4,417	91,424	100,945
Charitable activities	2b	1,572	-	1,572	4,467
Other trading activities	2c	32,893	-	32,893	30,855
Investments	2d	3,875	-	3,875	964
Other receipts	2e	-	-	-	
Total income		125,347	4,417	129,764	137,231
Expenditure					
Raising funds		-	-	-	-
Charitable activities	3a	99,822	4,417	104,239	110,459
Other trading activities	3b	7,234		7,234	6,758
Total expenditure		107,056	4,417	111,473	117,217
Net income		18,291	-	18,291	20,014
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Other recognised gains / (losses)					
Gains / (losses) on revaluation of fixed assets		-	-	-	-
Other gains / (losses)		-	-	-	-
<i>Reconciliation of funds</i>					
Net movement in funds		18,291	-	18,291	20,014
Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2023		1,212,621	-	1,212,621	1,192,207
Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2023		1,230,912	-	1,230,912	1,212,221

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARK, LITTLE COMMON Registered Charity no. 1135040

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
		£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	5	1,115,370	1,115,370
Total fixed assets		<u>1,115,370</u>	<u>1,115,370</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	6	3,858	3,271
Short term deposits		96,666	80,791
Cash at bank and in hand		19,779	16,207
		<u>120,303</u>	<u>100,269</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7	<u>4,761</u>	<u>3,018</u>
Net current assets		115,542	97,251
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>1,230,912</u>	<u>1,212,621</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>1,230,912</u>	<u>1,212,621</u>
Funds	8		
Restricted funds		-	-
Unrestricted funds		1,230,912	1,212,621
		<u>1,230,912</u>	<u>1,212,621</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 20 March 2024 and signed on its behalf

Rev'd Jonathan Fraiss
Chairman

J D Philpot
Treasurer

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

1. Accounting policies

a Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the current (2015) SORP, Accounting and Reporting by Charities SORP (FRS 102).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the inclusion of investments at market value and the revaluation of fixed assets. The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their affiliation to another body, nor those which are informal gatherings of church members.

b Funds accounting

Funds held by the PCC are:

Unrestricted funds - general funds which can be used for PCC ordinary purposes.

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

c Income

All income is accounted for without deduction for any costs of receivability, is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement, receipt is probable, and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations

Planned giving receivable is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement, receipt is probable, and the amount accords with the Gift Aid declaration or other record of intent to donate.

Collections are recognised when received.

Income tax recoverable is recognised when the income to which it is attached is recognised.

Legacies are recognised when the formal offer in writing of the gift is received by the PCC.

Charitable activities

Fees are recognised when received.

Other trading activities

All such income is recognised when received.

Investments

Interest entitlements are accounted for as they accrue.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

d Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and accounted for gross.

Church Activities

The diocesan parish contribution is accounted for when paid. Any parish contribution unpaid at 31 December is provided for in these accounts as an operational (though not a legal) liability and is shown as a creditor in the balance sheet.

e Fixed Assets

Tangible fixed assets

Consecrated and beneficed property of any kind is excluded from the accounts by s.10(2) of the Charities Act 2011.

Movable church furnishings held by the Rector and Churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal, are accounted as inalienable property unless consecrated. They are listed in the church's inventory which can be inspected but are not included in the financial statements. For other property acquired prior to 2006 there is insufficient cost information available and therefore the cost of such assets is not shown in the financial statements.

All expenditure on consecrated or beneficed buildings and individual items costing under £1,000 is written off in the year it is incurred.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated to write down the cost of tangible fixed assets, excluding freehold properties, over their expected useful lives. The rates generally applicable are:

Fixtures and fittings	25% straight line
Computer equipment	30% straight line

No depreciation is provided on freehold property as it is the PCC's policy to maintain these assets in a continual state of sound repair. The useful economic life of these assets is so long and residual values so high that any depreciation would not be material. These assets will be subject to annual impairment reviews. Provision will be made if there has been any permanent diminution in value.

Investments

Investments are stated at market value at the balance sheet date.

f Current Assets

Amounts owing to the PCC at 31 December in respect of fees, rents or other income are shown as debtors less provision for amounts that might prove uncollectible.

Short-term deposits include cash held on deposit either with the CBF Church of England Funds or the bank.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

2 Income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2023 £	TOTAL FUNDS 2022 £
a Donations and legacies				
Planned giving	56,339		56,339	53,895
Collections at services	6,219	4,417	10,636	11,538
Sundry donations	6,475		6,475	18,119
Income tax recoverable	15,971		15,971	17,393
Legacies	2,003		2,003	
	87,007	4,417	91,424	100,945
b Charitable activities				
Fees for weddings and funerals	1,572		1,572	4,467
	1,572		1,572	4,467
c Other trading activities				
Church hall lettings	32,409		32,409	30,426
Car park rent				130
Parish magazine advertisements	484		484	299
	32,893		32,893	30,855
d Investments				
Interest	3,875		3,875	964
	3,875		3,875	964
e Other receipts				
Staff furlough grant				
	125,347	4,417	129,764	137,231

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

3 Expenditure

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2023 £	TOTAL FUNDS 2022 £
a Charitable activities				
Missionary and charitable giving				
Local	100	776	876	774
National	250	522	772	373
Overseas		3,119	3,119	5,613
	<u>350</u>	<u>4,417</u>	<u>4,767</u>	<u>6,760</u>
Ministry costs:				
Diocesan parish contribution	73,028		73,028	70,729
Wedding and funeral fees payable to the Diocese	772		772	1,990
Other clergy costs	4,325		4,325	4,726
Insurance	1,834		1,834	2,832
Church running expenses	5,314		5,314	4,862
Church maintenance	826		826	6,852
Upkeep of services	1,118		1,118	1,133
Upkeep of church and hall gardens	1,431		1,431	810
Parish magazine and other printing, telecoms.	3,591		3,591	3,008
Church hall running costs (part)	7,233		7,233	6,757
	<u>99,822</u>	<u>4,417</u>	<u>104,239</u>	<u>110,459</u>
b Other trading activities				
Church hall running costs (part)	7,234		7,234	6,758
	<u>7,234</u>		<u>7,234</u>	<u>6,758</u>
	<u>107,056</u>	<u>4,417</u>	<u>111,473</u>	<u>117,217</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

4 Staff costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	6,801	6,416

5 Fixed Assets

Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings	Church equipment	TOTAL
	£	£	£
Cost or valuation			
At 1 January 2023	1,115,370	57,159	1,172,529
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-
At 31 December 2023	1,115,370	57,159	1,172,529
Depreciation			
At 1 January 2023	-	57,159	57,159
Provided in the year	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 December 2023	-	57,159	57,159
Net book amounts			
At 31 December 2023	1,115,370	-	1,115,370
At 31 December 2022	1,115,370	-	1,115,370

The freehold land and buildings comprise the Church Hall situated in Green Lane. The balance sheet figure represents its value for insurance purposes at 1 January 2010, following a major redevelopment. The PCC considers this to be a fair estimate of the current value in use of the property.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

6 Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Income tax recoverable	3,858	3,271
Prepayments and accrued income	-	-
	3,858	3,271

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accruals	4,761	3,018
	4,761	3,018

8 Statement of funds

	Bal b/fwd 1 Jan 2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfers, other gains and losses	Bal c/fwd 31 Dec 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Fund					
General fund	1,212,621	125,347	(107,056)	-	1,230,912
	1,212,621	125,347	(107,056)	-	1,230,912
Restricted Funds					
Specific donations	-	4,417	(4,417)	-	-
	-	4,417	(4,417)	-	-
Total funds	1,212,621	129,764	(111,473)	-	1,230,912

**Independent examiner's report
To the PCC of St Mark's Church, Little Common
For the year ended 31 December 2023**

This is my report to the PCC of St Mark's, Little Common on the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023, set out on pages 1 to 9.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The PCC members are responsible for the preparation of financial statements and you consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

1. examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
2. follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
3. state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

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

Independent examiner's statement

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:
 - a. to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - b. to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Charities Acthave 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.

Signed.....

David Allen
5 Mulberry Close
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex TN39 4RX

Date 20 March 2024