



*(Photo by kind permission of Michael Wright)*

***Incumbent: The Reverend Jo Mulliner***

Church Lane, Old Basing, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 7DJ

***Large print copies available on request***

# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PCC, 2023

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. In 2010 this PCC became an independent charity number 1136606

### **Membership of the PCC during the 12 months January-December 2023 was**

*Incumbent* The Rev Jo Mulliner (Chair)

*Churchwardens & Vice Chairs* Mark Holley  
Robert Jackson

*Representatives  
on Deanery Synod* Joanna Jarrett-Kerr  
Paul Skinner  
Rebecca Aldridge

*Elected members* Jeanette Edwards  
Debbie Filer (Secretary)  
Janet Jackson  
Nicky Jackson (Treasurer)  
Alan Jones (*resigned April 2023*)  
Mike Leaming  
Andree McLean  
Penny Potter (*from March 2023*)  
Sue Smith  
David Stevens (*from March 2023*)  
Julia Wright

### **Bank:**

The National Westminster Bank plc, 3 London Street, Basingstoke, Hampshire

### **Independent Examiner:**

Mr Colin Bezant  
3 Up Fallow, Lychpit, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 8YW

# **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

## **The Governing Document**

The Parochial Church Council is a charity established under the Parochial Church Powers Measure (1956) as amended and the Church Representation Rules. Its activities are to provide a ministry of presence and engagement with God through sacramental worship, mission and hospitality.

### **a) Methods Adopted for Recruitment and Appointment of New Members**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The new regulations now apply, as stated in the Annual Report 2012.

All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the electoral roll and stand for election to the PCC.

### **b) Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of New Members**

The Churchwardens, Treasurer, PCC Secretary and Parish Administrator are offered formal training through the Diocese. Courses in general church governance are also held that are recommended to all PCC members and other in-house steps are taken to ensure PCC members understand fully their role and responsibilities on the Council.

### **c) Organisational Structure**

In 2023 the PCC met in February, March, May, July, September and November. These meetings were in person with some members joining via Zoom if unable to attend upon occasion.

### **d) Committees:**

The following report to the PCC:

*di) During 2023 the **Standing and Finance Committee** met in person in January, March, May, July, September and November and comprised:*

Vicar - 'The Rev'd Jo Mulliner, Churchwardens: Mark Holley, Robert Jackson, PCC Secretary: Debbie Filer, PCC Treasurer (*until March 2023: Julia Wright (from March 2023: Nicky Jackson*; PCC Elected Member: Andree McLean. Both Nicky Jackson & Julia Wright attended meetings throughout the year as either Treasurer or a PCC elected member.

### *dii) The **Building Group** (Fabric Group)*

The Vicar, Mark Holley, Robert Jackson, Mike Leaming and David Stevens comprise this group, which meets according to need to discuss matters concerning the Church Building and Fabric.

### **e) Risk Management**

The major risks to which the Church is exposed relate to financial instability, fraud, failure to comply with legal obligations and commitments in relation to the church building.

The reserves in our General Fund are £71,658 which is an increase of £6,949 across the year. Overall funds are £186,935, a reduction of £23,097 across the year (£19,184 of this was the old churchyard works).

The PCC is very conscious that the expenditure of the church continues to be greater than our income. We are fortunate to have additional reserves in designated and restricted funds that are available to help us in the short term. The objective of the PCC is still for all day to day expenses to be covered by the General Fund in the long term and the Generous July campaign in 2021 helped to increase our regular income. Income and expenditure is closely monitored and the use of the computerised accounting system assists in this.

The PCC ensures that any minor expenditure has to be approved by the Vicar and Churchwardens. Major expenditure has to be approved by the PCC. The Treasurer monitors payments requested and any payments made require the approval of two signatories authorised by the PCC. All expenditure is assigned to a cost code and budgets are set and agreed for each of these. These budgets are regularly monitored.

The PCC considers carefully its legal obligations and has policies in force to ensure they are met.

The Churchwardens and David Stevens, the PCC appointed Health and Safety Officer, monitor and manage fire and health and safety matters connected with the use of the church premises and report back to the PCC. A Health and Safety Policy, a Lone Workers' Policy, a Child Protection Policy and a Vulnerable Adult Policy are in place and updated annually.

The Parish is registered for the purposes of the Data Protection Act with the Administrator as the Data Controller. All information is held and used in a manner which complies with the General Data Protection Regulations. GDPR is a standing

agenda item and PCC members, staff and volunteers are encouraged to complete and review training.

We are fortunate in having such a beautiful church building but this does impose considerable obligations. The condition of the building is monitored regularly by the Churchwardens and the PCC appointed architect. Reports of concerns are made to the PCC who determine what action should be taken and how any expenditure should be financed.

## **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Objectives**

The chief role of the Parochial Church Council is, together with the Incumbent and clergy, to promote the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC represents parishioners and, on their behalf, considers and agrees appropriate action on matters relating to St Mary's Church, its fabric, finances, daily life and future direction. The Incumbent is the Chair of the PCC and Mark Holley and Robert Jackson (Churchwardens) are joint Vice Chairs. The business of the PCC is conducted through discussion, review and liaison with other interested groups and individuals, any of whom may, in this way, raise concerns or topics for consideration.

The members of the Parochial Church Council of Old Basing and Lychpit follow the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in "The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit" and have had regard to it in their work for and in the Parish. The Council Members believe that promoting the work of the Church of England in this Parish helps to promote the whole mission of the Church (pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical) more effectively in the Parish as a whole and so provides a benefit to the public by:

- providing facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for its members and for all who wish to benefit from what the Church offers;
- promoting Christian values, and by service by members of the Church in and to their communities and for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

### **Church Attendance**

In 2023 there were 4 weddings; 18 funerals (8 in the Church, 6 at the Crematorium and 4 at the Graveside) and 8 baptisms;  
There were 139 Christmas communicants.



## **ELECTORAL ROLL**

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 the Electoral Roll stood at 126 of whom 104 were resident in the Parish and 22 non-resident.

## **VICAR'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2023**

Much has happened in the world of St. Mary's over the last year so I'm going to get in early with a disclaimer – I am bound to have forgotten something! Please do not be offended by this – each moment is precious and valuable and wonderful, but trying to hold all things at all times and then present them in a coherent fashion is not an exact science. Indeed, life is not an exact science so there is indeed something real and living about this report!

April strode in with a generous offering of the Palm Sunday procession from the Infant School (sadly no donkey – but I still live in hope!) Holy Week itself saw a diversity of Stations of The Cross offering differing perspectives; Maundy Thursday foot washing and altar stripping with Watch; a Good Friday three hours before the cross with enough of a mix of reflection, quiet, readings, music and tradition to meet the needs of many. On Easter Eve we eventually managed to kindle the first light of Easter (an eternal wind tunnel issue!) and enjoy Oliver's singing of the Exsultet. Normal service timings followed on Easter day with a joyous preaching of us all being known personally by name (our own names, regardless of the strictures of a cruel and controlling world) – and in our own names recognising the calling of Christ.

Early summer saw the pattern of life in baptism and wedding prep, funerals and social visits/activities including the Phoenix Concert.

June began with Trinity Sunday used as a celebration of our planet to celebrate/give thanks for our commitment to Eco Church. It is intended that this be a regular marking/reminder of the importance of our stewardship and its integrity with our faith and witness.

Drawing towards the end of the Yr.6's time in Junior School was marked with a memorable trip for us to the Cathedral – marked amongst other things by a classic +David active preach, chocolate brownies and much liturgical drumming! A great day was had by all.

This was also the time when the Vicar braved a Yr2 outing to the Titanic Exhibition in Southampton. This was (in equal measures) both fun and exhausting!

And who could forget the joys of the summer festival – ‘All Things Bright & Beautiful, All Creatures Great & Small’? A bold combination of traditional stalls, loads of food courtesy of the Men’s Breakfast team, teddy bears risking life and limb on a zip wire staffed by amazing humans, the revival of ‘soak the vicar’...all wrapped up with a Pet Blessing service which was blessed with eight dogs, three cat photos (very wise!), a tortoise and a snake..... This was a joy-filled event which it is hoped to make a tradition of on Harvest weekend in future years.

July marked Junior Head Caroline Welch’s leaving service and pilgrimage and leavers’ days for the outgoing Yr.6s.

I also accepted an invitation to talk to the GCSE RE groups at Richard Aldworth School – the links from this are still growing.

August is traditionally a quieter month....although Debbie and I would contest this! Much to prepare and arrange for weddings and baptisms – as well as ongoing funeral ministry.

Helen Holley preached at the Patronal Festival – a richly creative imagining of Mary.

I further enhanced our linkage with our Methodist friends by sharing worship at St. Mary’s and my visiting Chapel to preach. The now not so new Reverend Claire Simpson (Methodist Minister) and I are working on more opportunities for sharing in future including the creation of an ‘Open Table’ here in Old Basing in the not too distant future. <https://opentable.lgbt>

Late summer and into October was a relatively quiet time – as both Debbie and myself took annual leave. We still managed to pack baptism prep, wedding prep, burial of ashes, school visits and planning for Remembrance into this time.

November began with the treat of a rather beautiful autumnal wedding. Remembrance Sunday brought about a strong rendition of “The Farmer’s Boy” as part of the musical offering from the men of the village and a nearly precisely timed Chinook flyover from RAF Odiham.

I am indebted to so many for the smooth running of the Christmas Festival (with elves!), most of Advent and the whole of Christmas as I was out of action thanks to the combination of a cold and Covid in one dose. We have an amazing community and this was felt and experienced even by those of us who were trapped inside by frailty or illness. Thank you.

The first quarter of the year has been marked by an inordinate number of funerals which have kept myself and a number of other clergy and laity fully occupied. Debbie has been stunning in the ongoing organisation of these – handling multiple burials/cremations at once.

Ash Wednesday arrived early, coinciding with Valentine's Day and Andree and Penny J. bedecked the church with love hearts which have been a beautiful blessing to many – including today as the Juniors were waved off in winning love for Easter.

Early Easter is a challenge that we have risen to and we look forward to journeying together to the point of resurrection where love always wins.

Throughout the year there has been a great deal of interaction with both the Junior and Infant Schools, Oakfields and Basingfield Court. This includes visits, worship, teaching, prayers and generally being present. I am indebted to all those who work so hard to make this possible – Helen Holley, Rosemary Kershaw and Patricia Stanley. I am also very grateful to the Infant School for a real open heart towards contact beyond assemblies; and to Gemma Lillywhite for her effortless weaving of church/school/fait h in a way which is open, inclusive and welcoming to those of all faiths and none.

This has been an exciting year for both Helen Holley and Colin Bezant as they finalise their training and begin to be more conscious of their developing roles and what might be possible in future.

I am indebted to a strong team which works tirelessly to keep all things flowing beautifully for us in church and community. This is a blessing and nothing short of a miracle.

NB We are always in need of more hands on deck – so please, do not be shy if you wish to volunteer!

### **Safeguarding at St Mary's 2023**

St Mary's PCC has adopted the Church of England's Safeguarding policy, Promoting a Safer Church. It is fully compliant with its duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). No Serious Incident occurred during the year that should have been reported to the Charity Commissioners. The PCC has appointed Jeanette Edwards as the Parish Safeguarding Officer with Safeguarding being a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting. Details



of how to contact the Parish and Diocese Safeguarding Officers and the Vicar, are on display in the church.

Risk Assessments have focussed on keeping people safe when visiting the church and the church buildings.

All staff and volunteers have role descriptions in place and are recruited according to the House of Bishops Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance and appropriate training is completed following Church of England guidance. Training is up to date. All Disclosure and Barring checks have been carried out online with those valid for 5 years now starting to be renewed after 3 years in line with latest requirements. References are being requested for volunteers already in post commencing with priority roles including Safeguarding and PCC.

The electronic Safeguarding Dashboard is completed to Level 3.

Jeanette Edwards  
Parish Safeguarding Officer

## **Eco Church**

**Eco Church:** A Rocha UK's award scheme for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth.

A free online survey and supporting resources designed to equip churches to express our care for God's world in our worship and teaching; in how we look after our church and land; in how we engage with our local community and in global campaigns, and in the personal lifestyles of our congregation. The vision is for churches of all denominations to care for creation as an integral part of loving their neighbours and following God faithfully. Eco Church works through 5 key areas of church life:

### St Mary's Key Area Leaders

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| • <u>Worship and teaching</u>            | Rev Jo                      |
| • Management of church <u>buildings</u>  | Robert Jackson              |
| • Management of church <u>land</u>       | Rebecca Aldridge & Tim Carr |
| • <u>Community and global engagement</u> | Mark Holley                 |
| • <u>Lifestyle</u>                       | Jeanette Edwards            |

St Mary's achieved both the Bronze and Silver Eco Church Award since joining in Dec22. This accomplishment is a significant milestone in our journey towards creating a more sustainable and eco-friendly community. Receiving the Silver Eco

Church Award is not just a recognition of our efforts but a reflection of our shared dedication to caring for God's creation. We have all worked hard to implement eco-friendly practices within our church, from conserving energy to reducing waste and promoting environmental education.

Some of the key initiatives that contributed to our Silver Eco Church Award include:

- **Energy Efficiency:** Continuing reduction of our energy consumption by education, moving to energy-efficient bulbs, and optimising our heating systems.
- **Waste Reduction:** Our recycling and composting programs have reduced landfill waste.
- **Conservation:** We are very fortunate to have the PIOCC Team and the continued hard work they put into the Conservation Area.
- **Community Engagement:** We have actively engaged with our community promoting eco-awareness including having the Green Team attending the Christmas Festival.
- **Eco-friendly Worship:** Our worship services increasingly incorporate themes of environmental stewardship, reminding us of our responsibility to care for God's creation.
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We are now setting our sights on the Gold Eco Church Award. This is not only an ambitious goal but also a reflection of our commitment to continuous improvement in environmental stewardship. As we embark on this journey towards the Gold Eco Church Award, we will focus on the following areas:

- **Renewable Energy:** Exploring opportunities to transition to renewable energy sources such as solar power.
- **Biodiversity:** Continue to enhance the natural environment around our church and involvement with the St Mary's CoE Jnr School and Basing Infant School.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Encouraging sustainable practices and exploring ways to reduce our carbon footprint further including the installation of bicycle racks.
- **Community Outreach:** Expanding our environmental outreach programmes and partnering with local organisations to make a broader impact.
- **Environmental Lifestyle Audit:** Repeat annually
- **Lifestyle:** Continue regular bulletin articles and monthly tips

Jeanette Edwards

## **Festivals**

During June 'All Things Bright and Beautiful, All Creatures Great and Small' were celebrated over the festival weekend which started with an enjoyable family evening at the Beetle Drive and ended with what will become an annual Pet Service. 12 displays surrounded St Mary's alongside a variety of stalls and Children's Activities. Highlights were definitely Soaking the Vicar, Teddies flights on the Zip-wire and an interactive Nature Trail of animal prints within the Conservation Area. Men's Breakfast provided a BBQ with refreshments and cream teas also available.

The very popular Church and Tower Tours returned in August with visitors able to learn the church history from the talented tour guides and those able to climb the tower to see wonderful views across the village,

In December we held 'The Holly and the Ivy' Eco friendly Christmas Tree Festival and an enjoyable Christmas Sing-A-Long played by Paul Wright and compared by Jo Jarrett-Kerr. 25 trees lit up St Mary's throughout Christmas until Epiphany with the Madame Le Houx Du Lierre by Aude Jarrett voted as the visitors favourite. Tim and Margaret Carr, on behalf of PIOCC chose Holly and Ivy by St Mary's CE Junior School as the most eco-friendly tree. A Fayre was also held over both days, Men's Breakfast supplied hot food which was warmly welcomed and the children enjoyed finding elves in the church and the 'Who's Poo' Trail in the Conservation area .

During both festivals the School Choirs and RBL Band of Corps entertained during the afternoon. Besides raising almost £5000 in funds these events were an opportunity for outreach and fellowship with the parish. The PCC is very grateful to parishioners for their support at both well attended events. It was lovely seeing the children and adults from the local community and beyond enjoying themselves in and around our church.

Preparations for future events are already underway including The Summer Flower Festival over the weekend of 21-23 June with the annual Christmas Tree Festival 6-8 December.

Jeanette Edwards

## **St. Mary's Choir**

Since last year, activity in the Choir has been quiet. As Director, I am most grateful to the faithful ten who are able to attend regularly and to our good friends able to come on special occasions amongst which we sang at 1 wedding and 3 funerals in 2023.

We have been very pleased to welcome Jeanette to our number and send love and best wishes to those who cannot come as often as they would like.

The Choir year follows that of the Church and we are currently looking forward to singing “The Cross of Christ” on Good Friday.

Jo Jarrett-Kerr  
Choir Director

### **Flower Arranging Team**

Our year began as usual in April 2023, with 16 volunteer arrangers.

Sadly 2 arrangers left in October and November and another stands down at the end of this years rota. There has been an article in the Parish magazine requesting more volunteers.

We continued to arrange 5 vases of flowers every two weeks, from April to February the following year.

This year we had 8 arrangements for the Easter services and Harvest Festival, but at Christmas, due to the Tree Festival, there were 4 arrangements and an Advent wreath. We also arrange two Christmas Trees in both the Lobby and on the Chancel steps.

We continue to have two Duty Organisers in place for approximately 3 month periods who can liaise with Debbie Filer, Church Administrator, who will advise on both wedding and funeral dates.

Arrangers may claim expenses up to £25 per arrangement but I believe few arrangers do this.

We strive to use as little floral foam as possible now, in keeping with sustainable practices as recommended by The Church of England.

Our A.G.M is held in November and this year the 2024 Flower Festival was discussed and all arrangers participate in this.

Lorna Guthrie

## **St Mary's House Groups**

The Pilgrim housegroup – formed some years ago and arising from our church's meetings that followed the study guides of that name by Stephen Cottrell - is still going strong. We are a group of eight at the moment and we meet on Friday evenings for about two hours ( 7-9 pm) in our homes, rotating the venue as suits us.

Our purpose is to read and discuss Bible passages – our last being 1 Thessalonians using the study guide by Tom Wright – and a variety of books with Christian themes. This year we greatly enjoyed the book “Lydia” by Paula Gooder. In this book the author has woven a fictional history concerning the life and times of Lydia, the dealer in purple cloth mentioned briefly in the Book of Acts. We felt we had learned a great deal about the early church in Philippi, about its troubles under Roman rule and its triumphs of inclusion and loving fellowship.

We continued in Advent with Paula Gooder, reading her book “Journey to the Manger”. This presented us with some challenges, but we had good discussions and felt we had gained some new insights.

This new year we are starting “How to be a Bad Christian“ by David Tomlinson which will, we feel, present a very different challenge and learning experience ! We shall break off this book in Lent and turn to “In God's Hands” by Desmond Tutu and then return to David Tomlinson.

Please speak to us if you are interested in joining us.

Penny Potter and Robert Jackson.

## **Men's Breakfast Club**

Our getting together as a group (we are now in our 17<sup>th</sup> year) was brought about at the request of the then churchwarden Myrna Lewis who thought it was about time we men had a chance to meet together as a group. She approached a couple of the congregation with the idea and the Men's Breakfast group was born. Whilst the group meets in the parish room on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month under the auspices of St Mary's Church, we are not a “church group” as such, any man or boy (yes, some have at times brought their children with them) is welcome to attend. There are no fees just a small charge to cover the cost of food. We have at times been able to make donations to the church from our fund, more particularly to the kitchen to replenish stocks etc., but in January 2024 the group were able to give £200 to St Mary's Church.

As a group we continue to flourish, we have a number of “regular” attendees, around 12/14, with a similar number of colleagues who turn up on an ad hoc basis. We had a maximum of 19 on one occasion last year with several servings to 18 men but typically servings of 14 or more are the norm. I know we are a “men’s group” but we did have a first last year, we entertained a lady, Rev’d Jo, to our breakfast group in the latter part of last year.

During the summer we organised a visit to the Hogs Back brewery for 12 of us (maximum party size allowed). One of our number arranged and drove a minibus and a great time was had by all!

As in past years we had a team running a BBQ for the church summer fayre as well as this year, a BBQ for the 2023 Christmas tree festival (for all of which the breakfast group bears the cost of the gas) as well as managing refreshments at the latter and a first (in 2023) we were asked to run the BBQ at the Old Basing Carnival. As in previous years we again supplied and made the posies for Mother’s Day and last but not least we have at times been able to supply some “muscle” when called upon, even helping Rev’d Jo in moving her furniture on a couple of occasions.

The invitation to come along for breakfast (we can also entertain vegetarians if notified beforehand) is open to all men and we try to serve breakfast by 9am (and most times we do!) so if you are at a loose end on the first Saturday of each month come along and join us and enjoy a full English breakfast, you would be most welcome.

Chris Beadle

### **Ploughman’s Lunch Club**

The Ploughman’s team, a group of 8 predominantly long standing volunteers, have continued to successfully run our lunch club during the past year. We are pleased to say that it remains well supported and welcomed by the parish.

The team offer a waitressed table service for a pre booked limited number of lunchers, who book from the 1st monthly for that month’s lunch.

For our Christmas lunch we also provide a free raffle, provided by the team, and offer wine or a non alcoholic alternative courtesy of a local firm of Chartered Accountants, LMW Ltd, who have their office in Old Basing. Any donations for the wine is given to St Mary’s for the advent appeal.



Our prices finally increased from September to £4.50 from £4.00 for three courses, our first increase since February 2017 despite the significant rise in food costs. Lunchers still only pay for the number of courses they have. We continue to make a profit, which remains ringed fenced in the church accounts for the upkeep of the kitchen and parish room. This year in the first 11 months I am delighted to say we added £655 to the balance.

Finally, sadly one of our long serving volunteers who was known by many in the village, Pam Loxton, passed away earlier this year. Her long term contribution to ploughman's lunches is testament to her community spirit and she continued to help us despite her illness. We still miss her.

Denise Lane

### **The Village Café**

The Village cafe has continued to operate successfully during 2023.

The cafe has amended its opening hours during the winter months to be the first Friday of the month, and we return to regular weekly openings in March. This has proved to be much more manageable for volunteers.

We have struggled a little throughout 2023 with a lack of volunteers, meaning we could not open in September but we have recruited a number of new members to our team who have made a great difference and should prevent this from happening again in future.

We have continued our fundraising through the year and made donations to local causes including St Michael's Hospice, the Village Hall nursery, and most recently, St Mary's Junior school, to find a sensory room for children who need space when they are feeling heightened or going through a bad time.

We were delighted to be asked by the Parish council to provide bakes for their first Carol evening in December, and we successfully manage almost 400 pieces which went down a storm. It was a very community based evening and could well become an annual event.

Our takings from January - December 2023 were -

Total taken £3428

Rent - £689, which equates to 20.1% of our takings

Profit - £2739.

Deb Thorne

## **Churchyard Conservation Group (PIOCC)**

2023 started with the Big Garden Birdwatch in January. We had a small turn out but still managed to count 11 different birds in our allotted hour. Our working parties continued as usual through the year although we lost several to bad weather, but when those lost fell on a Saturday, we met to enjoy coffee and a catch up in St Mary's Parish Room.

In February one cold morning Stephen Edwards came and gave a well attended bird ringing demonstration where 16 birds from a variety of species were caught and ringed. Stephen provided a fascinating and informative commentary. Following the Big Garden Birdwatch and this ringing we decided to feed the birds December to March. The Bluetits and Robins especially seem pleased.

Once again in June a team lead by Rebecca Aldridge created a wonderful Nature Trail round the Conservation Area for St Mary's Summer Festival. We hope you all saw her wonderful Giraffe. This year's trail was around animals and their relative size. The trail was left in place until the end of the school term for the children to enjoy. In December the Conservation Area was decorated for the Christmas Tree Festival on the theme of the "The holly and the ivy". Aude created some wonderful clay decorations that are still in place on the tree trunks. It was hoped that the trail's theme "Whose Poo" would especially appeal to the children. Again, it was popular with visitors of all ages.

In the autumn we lost an ivy-covered tree that was providing a route for ivy into the nearby Maritime Pine. It was brought down by one of the storms. Fortunately, it was already scheduled for removal as the tree, an old Cupressus, was dead.

The Rev Jo has been a great support and has joined us at our Saturday working parties and our committee meetings providing valuable input on the Church view on some of the issues we face. We have re-introduced our winter Thursday afternoon working parties to help Rev Jo tidy up some of the wilder areas in the vicarage garden and once again to encourage the wildflowers and help the wildlife. Thanks to all the volunteers who enthusiastically turn out at our working parties to help.

Tim Carr

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Independent Examiners Report to the PCC of St Mary's Parish Church, Old Basing & Lychpit**

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 which are set out hereafter, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations and the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

### **Respective Responsibilities of Trustee and Examiner**

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirements of the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) do not apply.

### **Basis of the independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. That examination includes a review of the accounting record kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those accounting records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion of the view given by the accounts.

### **Independent Examiner's statement**

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

1. Which give 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.



Mr Colin Bezant  
March 2024

## **PCC HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2023**

This is my first year in the role, with Julia gradually loosening her hold on the leading rein. It has been a challenge; at times frustrating, but ultimately rewarding. I am hugely grateful to Julia for all of her help, and always being at the end of a text or email with words of calm and encouragement. I am flying solo next year, so Julia can finally enjoy a well-earned 'retirement', although I am hoping that she will remain at the end of a text or email in a consultancy role.

So, what about the 2023 accounts?

If you look at the headline figures, we have made a large 'loss' this year. However, the picture is not that bleak. This was the year that we finally realised our dream to re-open the old churchyard (to the South of Church Lane) as a cremated remains area, thus providing an additional 417 plots for the interment of ashes of parishioners and members of the church. The works for this cost just under £20,000, which made a large dent in our finances for 2023. However, we will receive income from the interment of ashes in this area which in time will more than cover these costs. Perhaps more importantly, we are able to meet the needs of those who want their ashes interred in consecrated ground.

Our overall income for the year was £131,692, an increase of £14,020 compared to last year. Regular giving was up, and investment income was significantly increased due to the comparatively high interest rates. We also held a number of successful fund-raising activities including the very popular church & tower tours, and the most successful Christmas Tree festival to date. So, a big thank-you to everyone who has donated over the year and/or supported out events in various ways.

Expenditure for the year was £154,912, an increase of £27,819 compared to last year. Much of this was one-off cost, but we are still seeing very high utility bills and this looks set to continue for some time.

So overall we made a loss of £23,220, compared to £9421 last year. Looking just at the General Fund (the one that is used for all day-to-day expenses except the administrator's salary), this grew by £6948 through 2023.

We are very fortunate to have a few funds at our disposal that can be used to meet specific expenses, and the Friends of St Mary's who kindly help us cover the cost of work to the fabric of the church. However, the simple fact remains that we are spending more than we are being given or raising through fundraising activities and this cannot go on indefinitely. We need to encourage our friends and neighbours to attend events and donate to our funds in whatever ways they can. The whole parish loves our church building, and we need to encourage them to help us to secure its long term future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicky Jackson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nicky Jackson  
February 2024

**PCC of St Mary's Old Basing & Lychpit**

**Statement of Financial Activities**

**For the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023**

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Incoming resources					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income	95,222.92		-	95,222.92	87,261.09
Activities for generating funds	7,102.84	-	-	7,102.84	9,843.88
Investment income	899.58	4,430.81		5,330.39	1,644.46
Incoming resources from charitable activities	19,586.91	-		19,586.91	18,304.48
Other incoming resources	4,448.86	-		4,448.86	618.12
<b>Total income</b>	<b>127,261.11</b>	<b>4,430.81</b>		<b>131,691.92</b>	<b>117,672.03</b>
Resources used					
Cost of generating funds:					
Cost of generating voluntary income	30.00			30.00	
Fundraising trading cost of goods sold & other costs	1,901.98			1,901.98	3,009.63
Investment management costs	-				
Charitable activities	113,562.43	36,133.38		149,695.81	120,799.77
Governance costs	-		-	-	-
Other resources used	3,283.92	-	-	3,283.92	3,283.92
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>118,778.33</b>	<b>36,133.38</b>		<b>154,911.71</b>	<b>127,093.32</b>
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	8,482.78	(31,702.57)		(23,219.79)	(9,421.29)
Transfers:					
Gross transfers between funds – in	21.56	893.23	-	914.79	351.81
Gross transfers between funds - out	(893.23)	(21.56)		(914.79)	(351.81)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains/losses on investment assets	-	122.46		122.46	(173.67)
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	7,611.11	(30,708.44)	-	(23,097.33)	(9,594.96)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	74,078.16	135,954.09		210,032.25	219,627.21
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>81,689.27</b>	<b>105,245.65</b>		<b>186,934.92</b>	<b>210,032.25</b>



# PCC of St Mary's Old Basing & Lychpit

## Balance Sheet As at 31 December 2023

		As at 31/12/2023 £	As at 31/12/2022 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
	6425: Kemp Legacy Investment Fund	1,424.13	1,301.67
	6450: Church Heating System	-	3,283.92
		<b><u>1,424.13</u></b>	<b><u>4,585.59</u></b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
	6501: Nat West current account	14,486.84	12,944.31
	6505: Nat West Business Reserve Account	8,198.06	27,933.63
	6510: CCLA General PCC V Account	-	10,800.00
	6511: CCLA Hoare Gift Account	1,000.00	1,000.00
	6512: CCLA Bequests Account	32,838.74	31,397.90
	6530: Virgin Charity Deposit Account	64,694.89	64,331.61
	6550: CCLA RBL Bond Proceeds	64,626.05	61,790.50
	Z05 Accounts Receivable	2,964.71	2,005.38
		<b><u>188,809.29</u></b>	<b><u>212,203.33</u></b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
	6602: Wedding Deposits for this year's weddings	-	-
	6603: Wedding Deposits for future year's weddings	100.00	200.00
	6610: Accruals	125.00	165.04
	6611: Accruals over 1 year	-	-
	6699: Agency Collections	1,841.63	1,629.06
	Z04 Accounts Payable	1,231.87	4,762.57
		<b><u>3,298.50</u></b>	<b><u>6,756.67</u></b>
<b>Total assets</b>			
<b>Less current liabilities</b>		<b>186,934.92</b>	<b>210,032.25</b>
<b>Represented by Funds</b>			
<b>Unrestricted</b>	General Fund	71,658.23	64,709.52
<b>Designated</b>	Children's Corner	18.99	18.99
	Noticeboard Fund	58.00	-
	Ploughmen's Lunch	9,438.34	8,629.85
	Special Projects 3	250.00	250.00
	Surplices for Choir	206.68	197.80
	Tesco Technology	59.03	272.00
<b>Restricted</b>	Agency Collection	627.05	627.05
	Dorothy Iris Silver	33,461.22	48,363.43
	Dunbar Fund for Restoration & Preservation	28,480.43	22,827.99
	Hoare Gift Account	1,090.31	1,043.45
	Investment Bond – Warden & Vicar Discretion	45,162.51	61,790.50
	Kemp Legacy Fund	1,424.13	1,301.67
<b>Funds of the Church</b>		<b>186,934.92</b>	<b>210,032.25</b>

*There may be minor discrepancies in the totals if the pence are not being shown.*

The accounts are a summary of the Financial Statements which have been reviewed by the Independent Examiner. A copy of the full financial statements, including relevant notes to the accounts, is available from the Administrator, Debbie Filer.

## **Churchwardens' Report on The Fabric of St. Mary's Church 2023**

In 2023, the biggest undertaking was the replacement of the soakaway to the northeast corner of the church. The blockage of the downpipe had been identified in the 2022 Quinquennial Report, but the cause was unknown. Working with the Appointed Architect, the Chancellor of the Diocese and the Diocesan Advisory Committee we were allowed to undertake investigatory works.

Having discovered that the issue was a failed soakaway, we then applied for a "List B" approval. The failed soakaway this was then replaced in the summer and the ground reinstated.

We are grateful to the Friends of St Mary's who provided a grant for these works.

The rest of the Fabric remains in generally good repair, although there will always be matters to ensure that remains the situation. We are also looking at ways to reduce our energy footprint, in line with our Eco Church credentials and the Church of England's aim to meet Net Zero by 2030.

Mark Holley & Robert Jackson  
February 2024

## **Terrier & Inventory Report**

Towards the end of 2023 we installed WIFI within the church and Parish Room. This is provided with a wireless router up the church tower, with the signal sent by a Powerline adaptor to a sub-router by the north door. The signal is then taken by a series of extenders in the lobby and Parish Room. This was paid for by the remainder of a grant from Tesco Stores we received a couple of years; the main part had been used for the system used for 'broadcasting' of services.

A new Sum Up machine with the St. Mary's Logo was provided by the diocese and has been placed by the North door to facilitate easier donations.

A Home Communion Set was kindly donated by Rev. Heather which will assist in home visits.

Mark Holley- Churchwarden  
February 2024

## Report on the Churchyard

During early 2023 we received grants from both Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council which allowed us to replace the two wooden noticeboards at the northeast and southwest corners of the churchyard with new metal ones. These allow notices to be protected from the weather and should be robust.

As announced at last year's APCM the PCC applied for a Faculty to allow us to use part of the 'closed' churchyard to the south of Church Lane for the interment of cremated remains. Following discussions with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, who looked after the area, works to provide paths were installed in the autumn of 2023 and the first internments took place before the end of the year. This was paid for by a restricted fund held for religious purposes.

At the end of the year, permission was granted for a new bench to be installed on the area to the west of the church. This is dedicated to the two Joyces – Hill and Neville – who lived in the Parish for their whole lives. The bench has been installed at the beginning of 2024.

We remain indebted to the work of both the PIOCC group and the lawn mower team for maintaining the majority of the main churchyard. The lawn mower team have kindly agreed to keep the new cremated remains area under maintenance when this is required.

The rest of the main churchyard area has been maintained professionally, by Dickinson's Garden and Tree Maintenance, although this contract has now completed as Mr Dickinson has moved on to other ventures, and we are now looking to find a new contractor.

Robert Jackson - Churchwarden  
February 2024

## **REPORT FROM THE BASINGTOKE DEANERY SYNOD, 2023**

A new triennium (three-year term) of the Deanery Synod began in July, following APCMs in the parishes. However, all three lay representatives from St. Mary's were re-elected at our APCM. The main posts in the Synod also continued with the same holders, namely Area Dean, Revd. Dr. Ben Kautzer; Assistant Area Dean, Revd. Nicola Such; Lay Chair, Dr. Philip Hiorns.

The first Deanery Synod meeting of 2023 was held in February at St. Mary's Church, Eastrop. The focus for the evening was community engagement. We welcomed Kate Seagrave, Church Planting Missioner for the Winchester School of Mission, who led an interactive discussion on the approach to welcoming new people to our churches. She advised us to think about the gifts already present within our church communities and how new initiatives could spring out of these.

Our second visitor was Martin Graham, representing 'As One' in Hampshire. This is an alliance of community organisations, faith organisations, local authorities, businesses, schools and residents, united in the belief that community spirit and supportive community are vital. The aim is to encourage and facilitate the creation of vibrant communities street-by-street. In the deanery, Christ Church Chineham, St. Andrew's Church Sherborne St. John and many churches in Tadley have joined this initiative, alongside the borough council, Chineham Scouts, Great Binfields Primary School and Basingstoke Voluntary Action.

The second meeting was held at St Michael's Church Basingstoke in May. The focus at this meeting was mission and ministry in our local schools. We welcomed Julia Jones and Fiona Monger from REinspired, representing 25 years of experience of church and school working together. They explained the interactive ways in which Bible truths can be taught, avoiding the use of jargon. 'Non-faith' schools particularly welcome this support towards achieving their RE Ofsted targets. Potentially, each child may have a spiritual encounter and grow in Biblical and spiritual literacy.

In small groups the children are equipped with the tools to be open, and given the opportunity to be heard. Often complex emotions and circumstances (for example, relationship breakdown, death, loss) are shared. Visual, audio and kinaesthetic (tactile learning involving physical activity) methods of interaction may all be involved. The children are not learning about relationship but learning through relationship.

Synod Members then attended workshops of their choice from REinspired, Mental Health & Wellbeing (Sochi Ezeanowai), Open the Book + Beyond (Kim Robins), PrayerSpace (Helen Miller).

The third and final meeting of 2023 took place at Christ Church Chineham in October. The main agenda item was how we can equip our congregations to bear witness to the love of Christ in their lives and workplaces outside church, where we spend the majority of our time. Speakers from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC), Sam Brown and Jules Gadsby, had been invited. We considered how our attitudes to work and to our colleagues might differ because we were Christians. Jules related how his attitude changed when he considered his time (within and outside the workplace) as an opportunity to learn about people and evangelise where and when possible. Viewing any activity as important to God, it becomes time to be used well, do a good job and bless others.

Rebecca Aldridge, Jo Jarrett-Kerr, Paul Skinner

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**Approved by the PCC on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

Signed by the Chair, The Reverend Jo Mulliner

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jo Mulliner', is written over a light blue grid background. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first part being more stylized and overlapping.