

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC) & some reflections on church life in 2023

Objectives

The PCC has responsibility to co-operate with the Priest in Charge to promote, in the parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC also owns, lets and maintains the church hall, church hall bungalow, plus the car park.

Administrative information

- The church is situated in St. Thomas Street, Wells, and serves East Wells, South, East and West Horrington. The correspondence address is The Parish Office, St. Thomas Street, Wells, BA5 2UZ.
- The parish is part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells, within the Church of England.
- The Parochial Church Council is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules (CRR). The length of service, capacity and the number of elected members (subject to the maximum allowed under the CRR) is as agreed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The PCC met on 8 occasions during 2023, with a move towards more sub-team working. Sub-Teams of the PCC are Standing Committee, Finance Team, Eco/Sustainability Team and Community Team. Standing Committee met monthly to deal with urgent or routine business.

At each of its meetings the PCC received a financial report from the Treasurer, together with occasional reports from other committees, namely the Worship Committee.

The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Membership of the PCC

During 2023 the following members have served on the PCC:

Elected:

Hamish Redman	Elected 2023
Megan Hewson	Elected 2023
Mike Tolley	Elected 2023
Iona Baker	Elected 2022
Debbie Cochrane	Elected 2022
Linda Lappington	Elected 2022
Barbara Calverley	Elected 2022 (2-year casual vacancy)
Charlie Sutton	Elected 2022 (2-year casual vacancy)
Joanna Birkett	Elected 2021

Ex-officio:

Revd. Claire Towns	(Priest in Charge, Chair of PCC)
Revd. Edward Day	(Curate, from July)
Judith Penhaligon	(Churchwarden and Deanery Synod)
Chris Jenkins	(Reader and Churchwarden)
Christina Baron	(General Synod)
Sally Beazley	(Reader)
Gill Tucker	(Deanery Synod)

Fiona Rorbye
Ian Ames-White

(Co-opted as PCC appointed Treasurer)
(Co-opted to be on Finance Team)

In between full meetings of the Council, the PCC operates through the following committees:

Standing Committee sets the agenda for PCC meetings and has the authority to transact any urgent business of the PCC as required between meetings. The members are:

The Revd. Claire Towns (Priest in Charge and Chair)
Chris Jenkins & Judy Penhaligon (Churchwardens)
Fiona Rorbye (Treasurer)
Debbie Cochrane (Minutes Secretary)

Church Teams:

Other groups/activities that contribute invaluable work and input to the life of the church and parish, include: ABC2; Coffee Stop; Crafty Church Team; Flowers; Healing Prayers; Home Groups; Lay Worship Assistants; Mothers' Union; Musicians and Singers; Pastoral Care Team; Sacristans and Servers; Safeguarding; Snack and Chat; Sidespeople, Stewards and Welcomers; and Thursday Meditation Group. Huge thanks to the many volunteers who work so hard to contribute to the work of all these teams.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding at St Thomas' is believed to be an essential part of the church's loving pastoral care of each other and the PCC takes it very seriously. It is with that in mind that everyone who volunteers in a role that is 'facing outwards', helping with people from outside the church, is asked at least to sign a Confidential Declaration Form. They may be encouraged to attend some Safeguarding training as appropriate for their role.

I am very grateful for the positive attitude of the church towards safeguarding and the willingness with which people attend and participate in the necessary training. It makes it much easier for the above to be achieved.

I, Joanna Birkett, am the current Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and am a member of the PCC. A Safeguarding report is given at each PCC meeting.

Safeguarding issues overseen this year include

- Feb 23. Mike Tolley was recruited as PSO administrator to maintain the safeguarding records and assist DBS applications.
- PCC affirmed Safeguarding Policy, Rev Claire Towns signed it to be displayed in a public place
- Ongoing provision of safeguarding training.
- Ongoing DBS application guidance for those who work with vulnerable children and adults.
- Parish support with a "Keep Yourself Safe" coffee morning.
- Introduction of the Parish Dashboards. This scheme is being introduced for all churches throughout the CofE. It identifies all the Safeguarding activities required by St Thomas primarily DBS applications, safeguarding training and record keeping. The scheme has three levels. St Thomas has fulfilled most of level one and is now moving to level 2. We hope to have completed level three before the next APCM.
- We are learning to work with a new, church-oriented DBS provider. They ensure the applicant's role is appropriate for the requested certificate.

[Post 2023 update – at the February '24 PCC it was agreed that as Joanna is now training as a Lay Reader, as part of succession planning, Michaela Cross should become part of the safeguarding team.]

Joanna Birkett, Parish Safeguarding Officer

Life at St Thomas' in 2023

A varied pattern of regular and special services continued to be offered throughout 2023. The new Crafty Church congregation has grown since its inauguration in October 2022, and has now been firmly rooted into the life of St Thomas. Many new families have joined and attend Crafty Church regularly, allowing pastoral relationships to grow and develop.

There is a real sense of good teamworking from the volunteers involved in Crafty Church. The end of school year party in July and the Light Party on October 31st were both well attended by local families.

In terms of occasional offices, in 2023, there were 3 weddings, 9 children were baptised, and 2 candidates were prepared for Confirmation/Admission into the Church of England. The ministry team conducted 26 funerals, including those of The Revd. Richard Legg, Helen Muspratt, Marion Burton, The Revd. Nick Fridd, Colin Gillespie, Tim Taylor, Jean Lewis, Amy Edwards, Anne Minns, Ann Thomas, Pamela Pye, Alan Bourne and Jean Cottrell, all St Thomas' church members and all of whom died in 2023.

Usual Sunday attendance remains robust and ranges from around 75-85 adults. New people have joined and attend regularly and there is a slow change in the age profile, with some families having joined. There are also more adults attending in their 40s, 50s and 60s.

In the March PCC it was agreed that Sally Beazley, Keith Webster and Joanna Birkett should start a youth group for the young people who came to church regularly with their parents, in the summer term. They would meet once a month in the Community room during the Sunday morning service and the young people would be consulted on whether they wanted to come back into the service in time for the Preparation for Communion or to have a full hour session.

Sunday Youth had the first session on Sunday 23rd April 2023. Five young people came on that first occasion, enjoying games, discussion, and drinks and biscuits. It has continued generally on the second Sunday of each month in term time. Although numbers haven't grown there is a strong relationship between all members of the group, we have a lot of fun and some very interesting discussions around matters of faith in our everyday lives.

Sadly, part way through the Autumn term it was no longer possible for Sally to help with the leadership of the group, but Mandy Russell very kindly agreed to step up as an extra adult on the occasion that one of Keith and Joanna could not attend. We are very grateful to Sally for all that she gave to the group and for helping to establish it.

We would be very glad to hear if anyone is interested in being part of the leadership team.

ABC2 has grown from strength to strength and runs at capacity most weeks. Huge thanks to the team of volunteers involved in this important outreach ministry.

The Revd. Edward Day was ordained Deacon at Petertide and joined St Thomas as Assistant Curate. Joanna Birkett was accepted to begin training as a Licensed Lay Minister (Reader) and she began this in September. It was hugely sad for the church family when The Revd. Nick Fridd, our Associate Priest, died in May. He has been greatly missed since then. Many thanks to his wife, Fiona, for donating a bench for the churchyard in honour of Nick's memory.

The PCC formalized and embedded the 5 Values adopted at the end of 2022/beginning of 2023. PCC meetings were fewer in 2023 so as to enable time for more sub-team working. The Finance sub-team worked hard to give us a better understanding of our financial situation. From this, it was decided to opt in to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), with the aim of increasing planned giving and reducing the immense workload of the PCC Treasurer, especially re. Gift Aid.

The PGS was launched in the Autumn of 2023, with a re-launch in February of 2024. The Eco/Sustainability Team worked to gain us the bronze Eco Reward, with plans to now work in order to gain the silver award.

The Community team carried out the parish survey to gain views on how our wider community might wish to see our legacy spent. Over 200 responses were received. Very few were in favour of offering community housing, whilst the majority supported redeveloping the hall into some kind of community hub.

The Shepton Mallet Deanery, revised its Deanery Plan in 2023, as indeed did all deaneries. Following several months of discussions, the outcome of this for St Thomas' was that I resigned from being Priest in Charge of the Benefice of Chewton Mendip with Emborough, Ston Easton and Litton, effective from December 31st. St Thomas' parish was never formally linked to the Benefice, but more that myself, along with my predecessors, were Priest in Charge of both.

The latest Deanery Plan sees St Thomas' joining with Dinder parish as a United Benefice. This will be from April 1st 2024, although the legal necessities will take longer to administer.

The Revd. Claire Towns, Priest-in-Charge

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF
ST THOMAS WELLS WITH THE HORRINGTONS**

Charity registration number 1137161

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					
Voluntary Income	131	0	0	131	49
Tax efficient planned giving (net of tax recovered from HMRC)	51,001	0	0	51,001	55,350
Other planned giving	2,309	0	0	2,309	3,949
Collections of loose cash at services	9,809	0	0	9,809	6,492
All tax recovered through Gift Aid	13,214	0	0	13,214	12,407
Legacies received	102,000	0	0	102,000	52,640
Activities for Generating Funds	3,671	0	0	3,671	3,916
Fund raising (gross amount)	250	0	47	297	102
Income from Investments	0	0	0	0	0
Dividends, interest, income from property etc	7,410	4,650	0	12,060	10,075
Church Activities	0	0	0	0	0
Statutory fees retained by the PCC	10,922	0	0	10,922	5,869
Bookstall, hall lettings, magazine advertising & sales etc)	2,753	21,710	0	24,464	23,442
Other incoming resources	10,794	0	0	10,794	18
Total income	214,268	26,360	47	240,676	174,314
Resources used					
Costs of Generating Funds (fundraising costs, etc)	1,351	0	0	1,351	7,641
All Mission Giving and Charitable Grants & Donations	1,504	0	0	1,504	3,541
Church Activities	0	0	0	0	0
Parish Share paid to Diocese	92,826	0	0	92,826	90,543
Salaries/honoraria (organist, administrator, caretaker)	21,730	4,001	0	25,732	24,034
Expenses (of clergy, pastoral staff, youth workers, etc)	1,464	0	0	1,464	1,992
Regular church running expenses (insurance, cleaning, admin, routine maintenance,etc)	16,938	784	0	17,722	24,886
Church utilities (gas, electricity, water)	11,103	5,176	0	16,279	12,851
Costs of Trading (magazine, bookstall, Fairtrade etc)	0	0	0	0	134
Major repairs to church building, inc. redcoration	23,745	0	0	23,745	2,297
Major repairs to church hall or other PCC property, inc. redecoration	0	2,711	0	2,711	0
Total expenditure	170,664	12,673	0	183,337	167,923
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfers	43,604	13,686	47	57,338	6,391

Transfers:					
Gross transfers between funds - in	47,642	125,000	0	172,642	6,384
Gross transfers between funds - out	-125,000	-37,643	-10,000	-172,643	-6,384
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains/losses on investment assets	107	0	0	107	-237
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	0	0	0	0	0
Net movement in funds	-33,646	101,043	-9,953	57,445	6,154
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	40,746	62,417	12,964	116,127	109,972
Total funds carried forward	7,100	163,461	3,011	173,573	116,127
Represented by					
Unrestricted					
General fund	7,100	0	0	7,100	40,746
Designated					
Church Bungalow Fund	0	5,003	0	5,003	15,393
Church Hall Fund	0	9,912	0	9,912	12,615
Fabric Fund	0	0	0	0	4,726
K and P Pye Church Building Fund	0	19,083	0	19,083	25,000
Legacy Fund	0	125,000	0	125,000	0
Music Fund	0	48	0	48	48
Organ Fund	0	4,264	0	4,264	4,484
Revaluation reserves	0	149	0	149	149
Restricted					
Agency collection	0	0	243	243	243
Brice & Blisset Fund	0	0	2,639	2,639	2,639
Development	0	0	15	15	9,968
Livingstone east parish	0	0	108	108	108
Zambia Link	0	0	5	5	5
Total Funds	7,100	163,459	3,010	173,569	116,124

Analysis of Receipts and Payments
Selected period: 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	General	Designated	Restricted	This year	Total Last year
Receipts					
Voluntary Income					
01201 - Planned Giving	45,022	0.00	0.00	45,022	48,064
01202 - Gift Aided Envelopes	4,811	0.00	0.00	4,811	4,729
01218 - Charity Donations to be paid on	1,167	0.00	0.00	1,167	2,556
02201A- Planned giving (non-tax efficient)	2,309	0.00	0.00	2,309	3,949
03203 - Collections and Donations	9,809	0.00	0.00	9,809	6,492
06204 - Tax recovered	13,214	0.00	0.00	13,214	12,407
07206 - Legacies	102,000	0.00	0.00	102,000	52,640
12218 - Flowers Donation	131	0.00	0.00	131	49
Voluntary Income Totals	178,466	0.00	0.00	178,466	130,889
Activities for Generating Funds					
13221 - Fund Raising Income	250	0.00	47	297	102
13220 - Other income	3,671	0.00	0.00	3,671	3,916
Activities for Generating Funds Totals	3,921	0.00	47	3,969	4,018
Income from Investments					
10208 - Interest Received	2,459	0.00	0.00	2,459	587
10210 - Bungalow Rent	4,650	4,650	0.00	9,300	9,340
10221 - Dividends received	300	0.00	0.00	300	147
Income from Investments Totals	7,410	4,650	0.00	12,060	10,075
Church Activities					
11207 - Fees	10,922	0.00	0.00	10,922	5,869
12209 - Hall Rents	2,239	21,710	0.00	23,949	22,654
12211 - Magazine income	13	0.00	0.00	13	39
12212 - Votive candle income	143	0.00	0.00	143	143
12213 - Photocopying income	102	0.00	0.00	102	73
12216 - BRF income	29	0.00	0.00	29	72
12217 - Concert Fees	225	0.00	0.00	225	460
Church Activities Totals	13,675	21,710	0.00	35,386	29,311
Other incoming resources					
12219 - candle Stand	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18
12220 - Insurance Claim : Spire Project	10,794	0.00	0.00	10,794	0.00
Other incoming resources Totals	10,794	0.00	0.00	10,794	18
Receipts Grand Totals	214,268	26,360	47	240,676	174,314

Costs of Generating Funds (fundraising costs, etc)

13223 - Diocesan Loan Interest	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	467
23340 - Other expenditure	1,351	0.00	0.00	1,351	6,668
24333 - Bungalow Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	504
Costs of Generating Funds (fundraising costs, etc) Totals	1,351	0.00	0.00	1,351	7,641

All Mission Giving and Charitable Grants & Donations

18337 - Charitable Donations from PCC Funds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500
18339 - Charitable Donations thro Special Colls.	1,167	0.00	0.00	1,167	2,556
18341 - Outreach	337	0.00	0.00	337	484
All Mission Giving and Charitable Grants & Donations Totals	1,504	0.00	0.00	1,504	3,541

Church Activities

19301 - Parish Share	92,826	0.00	0.00	92,826	90,543
20303 - Salaries - organists	3,645	0.00	0.00	3,645	3,390
20306 - Salaries - Office Administrator	15,795	0.00	0.00	15,795	15,544
20325 - Caretaker's salary	0.00	4,001	0.00	4,001	3,959
20342 - Funeral and Wedding Fees	670	0.00	0.00	670	210
20343 - Organists' fees - funerals and weddings	1,620	0.00	0.00	1,620	930
21302 - Clergy expenses	1,464	0.00	0.00	1,464	1,992
23304 - Music	569	0.00	0.00	569	988
23305 - Worship	1,419	0.00	0.00	1,419	963
23307 - Office - photocopier rental	641	0.00	0.00	641	1,386
23308 - Office - supplies, etc.	982	0.00	0.00	982	1,129
23309 - Telephone	6,667	0.00	0.00	6,667	4,351
23313 - Flowers	262	0.00	0.00	262	248
23314 - Events & hospitality	1,433	43	0.00	1,477	978
23315 - Routine maintenance	1,415	411	0.00	1,826	3,877
23322 - East Horrington Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,580
23323 - Insurance - church	2,123	329	0.00	2,453	1,765
23324 - Insurance - hall	1,074	0.00	0.00	1,074	1,428
23333 - Subscriptions	339	0.00	0.00	339	187
23334 - Gifts	8	0.00	0.00	8	0.00
24327 - Gas - church	7,588	0.00	0.00	7,588	7,155
24328 - Gas - hall	0.00	3,584	0.00	3,584	1,761
24329 - Electricity - church	3,046	0.00	0.00	3,046	2,095
24330 - Electricity - hall	0.00	1,152	0.00	1,152	1,324
24331 - Water & sewerage - church	468	0.00	0.00	468	281
24332 - Water & sewerage - hall	0.00	439	0.00	439	233
25336 - BRF Sales	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	134
Church Activities Totals	144,061	9,962	0.00	154,024	154,442

Major repairs to church building, inc. redecoration

27316 - Major repairs to church	23,745	0.00	0.00	23,745	2,297
Major repairs to church building, inc. redecoration Totals	23,745	0.00	0.00	23,745	2,297

Major repairs to church hall or other PCC property, inc. redecoration

28318 - Major repairs to bungalow	0.00	2,711	0.00	2,711	0.00
Major repairs to church hall or other PCC property, inc. redecoration Totals	0.00	2,711	0.00	2,711	0.00

Payments Grand Totals	170,664	12,673		183,337	167,923
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St. Thomas Church
Balance Sheet detailed

		As at 31/12/2023	As at 31/12/2022
Fixed assets			
	A105: 63 Charifund Income Units (M&G)	904	925
	A106: COIF Income Shares	1,510	1,381
	A115: Fixed Assets - Furniture	39,551	39,551
	A116: Fixed Assets : Grand Piano	1,656	1,656
	A117: Fixed Assets - Equipment	599	599
	Total Fixed assets	44,222	44,114
Current assets			
	A101: NatWest Current Account	55,705	48,896
	A102: NatWest Fees Account	0.00	0.00
	A103: CBOF Deposit Account	76,424	24,880
	A104: Inland Revenue Tax Claim	7,751	6,592
	A110: Secure Trust Bank 120 day Account	0.00	0.00
	A999: Cash	178	423
	Z05: Accounts Receivable	1,012	392
	Total Current assets	141,072	81,184
Liabilities			
	6699: Agency collections	3,301	3,121
	Z04: Accounts Payable	8,419	6,050
	Total Liabilities	11,721	9,171
	Net Asset surplus	173,573	116,127
Reserves			
	Excess/(deficit) to date	57,338	37,714
	Z01: Starting balances	116,127	78,649
	Z02: Other gains/(losses)	107	(237)
	Z03: Gains and losses own use	0.00	0.00
	Total Reserves	173,573	116,127
	General (Unrestricted)	7,100	40,746
	Designated	163,461	62,417
	Restricted	3,011	12,964
	Total	173,573	116,127

Notes to the Accounts

The first two-page report is the Statement of Affairs (SOFA) which is the report required by the Charities Commission

The next two-page report is a 'friendlier' version : Receipts and Payments showing the Income and Outgoings for the church, the hall and the bungalow, split into General and Designated Fund activities.

While the General Fund shows an overall Surplus of £43,604, once the £100,000 Hannam legacy received in the year is taken out, results in an overall deficit of £56,396.

In 2023 the deficit was financed by various transfers from other funds :

- From the Development Fund £10,000
- From The Hall Fund £15,000
- From the Bungalow Fund £12,000
- From the Fabric Fund £4,726

From the General Fund £125,000 representing the Hannam legacy was transferred to the designated Legacy Fund, and as such cannot be used for the normal operational running costs.

From K and P Pye Fund £5,917 was transferred to the General Fund to cover the expenditure on the North Porch project.

Total Income

Includes £100,000 received during the year from the Hannam legacy and Ecclesiastical Insurance pay out for the spire of £10,794.

Total Expenditure

We received an Insurance payout for the Photocopier replacement of £5,597 offset against the Photocopier costs.

Spire – we paid out £17,829, but we received an insurance payout of £10,794 included in Income.

North Porch Project – we have spent £5,917 so far which is covered by the K & P Pye Fund.

Bungalow – external work needed has cost £2,580

Realistically, we are facing a shortfall of close to £4,000 a month, after contributing to the Parish Share and urgently need to encourage our parishioners to dig a little deeper, wherever they can. Our weekly takings on coffee are often more generous than the giving!

Independent Examiner's Report for the PCC Accounts

Report to the trustees of St Thomas Wells with Horringtons Parochial Church Council

On accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 Charity Number 1137161

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees 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:

- Examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

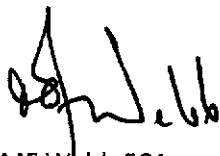
My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures 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 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect

- Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- The accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached



MF Webb FCA

One New Street, Wells, BA5 2LA

6th March 2024