

St Nicholas' Church, Godstone

St Stephen's Church, South Godstone

St John's Church, Blindley Heath

**ANNUAL REPORT
and
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
of the
UNITED BENEFICE
PAROCHIAL CHURCH
COUNCIL**

For the year ended 31st December 2024

**INCUMBENT
Revd Peter O'Connell
The Rectory, 17 Ivy Mill Lane,
Godstone, Surrey**

Registered Charity - 1143975

ANNUAL REPORT
THE BENEFICE AND PARISH OF GODSTONE & BLINDLEY HEATH
For the year ended 31st December 2024

The Parish Church of St Nicholas serving the community of Godstone.
St Stephen's Church serving the community of South Godstone as a Parish Centre of Worship
The Parish Church of St John serving the community of Blindley Heath

Parochial boundaries are compatible with the civic authority of Godstone Parish Council and within the Tandridge District Council responsible for East Surrey.

Correspondence addresses for the Benefice are:-

Incumbent	Revd Peter O'Connell The Rectory, 17 Ivy Mill Lane Godstone, Surrey RH9 8NH
PCC Secretary:	Karen Jackson
Benefice Office:	<u>Email - benefice@godstone.net</u> Telephone 07428 348651

Benefice Structure and Organisation

As set out in the Pastoral Measure signed by the Bishop of Southwark on the 3 May 1997, the Benefice structure is as follows: An overall PCC is the legal entity for the three churches. This PCC has devolved its powers, as appropriate, for the running of the individual churches to an elected body known as a District Church Council (DCC). These councils are, however, responsible to the overall PCC. Each DCC and the PCC to form such sub-committees, and a standing committee, as are required for the smooth running of the particular church. The PCC membership is elected by the DCC members, themselves elected at the Annual General Meeting of each church.

Ministerial Co-operation

The PCC and each DCC is required, as stated in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956, to co-operate with the Incumbent and the ministry team, in promoting in the Benefice and parish the whole ministry of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Members of the PCC and DCCs

These are as set out on page 7.

Church Electoral Rolls

Following the annual meetings in 2024 the Electoral Roll figures are as follows:

St Nicholas' Church	102
St Stephen's Church	15
St John's Church	16

Mission Aims and Objectives

The following summarises our Mission Statement and these are to be achieved through church services, the occasional children's, youth and general outreach and the community involvement of the ministerial team and congregation members. Each church belongs to and serves its respective village.

STATEMENT OF MISSION

We seek to fulfill Christ's challenging commandment that we love God and our fellow human beings as ourselves, through:

Commitment to the nurture of our spiritual life by:

- regular private prayer
- being receptive to the Word of God
- sharing in corporate worship
- using opportunities to learn from each other
- an openness in worship, embracing both the formal and informal.

Being a Christian presence and engaging with our local and wider communities by:

- being a welcoming church family serving all within our community
- accepting and valuing the diverse gifts and traditions of others
- valuing opportunities for outreach, including recognizing the significance of our church school and aiming to ensure that our buildings are welcoming environments for use by others
- widespread and effective communication
- witnessing and sharing our faith
- being aware of opportunities for prayerful and practical responses to challenges in the community, world and church
- valuing opportunities for growth and being willing to embrace change.

Activities in the Year

During the last year the three Churches of the Parish, St Nicholas' in Godstone, St Stephen's in South Godstone and St John's in Blindley Heath have continued with their primary function of providing a faith and worship centre in each community. This is in accordance with the traditional parochial and pastoral ministry of the Church of England.

Worship and other activities have taken place during the year as normal. The number of regular worshippers has remained stable over the last year but continues to be on the low side so we are doing everything we can to attract more people to attend our services and other events. Weddings and funerals, study groups, social functions and community events have all taken place but sadly none of the churches are able to sustain a junior church.

The churches celebrated major festivals and events such as Lent, Easter, Whitsun, Harvest, Remembrance Day, Christingle and Christmas with relatively good attendance. Collections from some of these events were given to various charities.

An on-line service continued to be streamed each week from St Stephen's church as people unable to attend a church in person benefit from this.

The involvement, as governors, of clergy and parishioners with St Stephen's Church School has continued and the school attended St Stephen's Church on several occasions.

Maintenance of our ancient but beautiful buildings is an important part of ministry and our ability for the church to be visible in each community is very relevant to people who live here. Use of the buildings by parishioners and the wider community is key to our visibility and many people continued to play their part in the looking after of each church, notably in the cleaning and decoration. A sense of loving care is evident which is complemented by the welcome and friendly atmospheres which prevails in all three churches.

St Nicholas and St Stephen's were subject to a Quinquennial Inspection during 2021 and St John's in 2022. The reports confirmed that the churches remain in generally good condition. Any urgent matters have already been dealt with and some minor items requiring attention will be acted upon in due course.

Some progress on the building projects at St Nicholas, where a project leader has now been appointed, and St John's has been made and it is hoped that these can now be moved forward subject to sufficient funds. At St John's a grant was received from Surrey County Council for £27,000 towards installing a soil pipe for the proposed toilets in the church but a faculty is still awaited. The St Nicholas' Hospitality Project continues to be hampered by the lamentably slow response from the diocesan DAC, the body that scrutinises all historic building projects. Some £60,000 has been saved mainly within the Friends of St Nicholas. The real value of this decreases every month because of rising projected costs.

We also continued to share our witness with Godstone Baptist Church, with a number of joint activities in Godstone.

The link that was set up in 2016 with the parish of St John's in Rutendo in Zimbabwe continued throughout the year but was severed in 2025.

The Youth Centre in Godstone, St Stephen's Jubilee Rooms and St John's Church Hall are available for church and non-church organisations in each village. They are much appreciated meeting places and it is hoped that the level of activities they are used for can continue and be increased.

Socially we try to be an active Benefice. There is a monthly Café Connect in Godstone at which money is raised for various charities and a weekly coffee morning in South Godstone. St Nicholas held a Christmas chocolate tombola and there was a summer fayre at St Stephen's. There were various activities at St John's including an Easter egg hunt, cream teas, quizzes, a barn dance and skittles.

St Nicholas is grateful for the support of the Friends of St Nicholas which funds many of the fabric projects either directly or via donations and is holding money towards the hospitality project.

We are grateful for the ministry and support provided by Revd Peter O'Connell and the assistance of our Assistant Priest, Revd Evelyn Randall, reader Liz Windridge, Wendy Hewitt from Hurst Green and Nick Smith from Lingfield during this year. We also extend our thanks to the Churchwardens, officers and members of the DCC's and PCC who continued to work hard over the last year to ensure that we continued to promote God's Kingdom in this place.

We remain optimistic about the coming year. It is hoped that some of the big projects to upgrade the facilities within St Nicholas and St John's churches will come to fruition. We are hopeful of a good and progressive year and thank everyone for their faithful support.

We ask for God's blessing on us, and our work undertaken in his name.

Finance Report

Net funds of the whole Benefice increased overall by £9,729 prior to the revaluation of investments. The value of the investment portfolio at St Stephen's increased by £2,540. This has resulted in an overall increase in reserves of £12,269 for the Benefice as a whole. The level of donations, which included £6,038 from the Friends of St Nicholas (registered charity no. 278948), showed an overall increase which is mainly due to a significant grant of £27,000 to St John's towards replacing a soil pipe. St John's also received a grant of £5,000 to replace the floor in the hall. Numbers in the congregations at both St Nicholas and St Stephen's in particular, have remained low which continues to have an impact on income.

Overall, the Benefice increased its pledge to the Diocesan Parish Support Fund for 2024 resulting in an increase of 1.3%. All the churches continue to seek savings on their day-to-day running expenses, even so these still increased during the year, particularly utility costs. In addition, St John's spent £19,000 on replacing the floor in the hall. Although income at St John's, excluding the grants, exceeded its normal costs by a small amount both St Nicholas and St Stephen's churches ran at a deficit which is causing concern about generating sufficient income in both cases. External giving, which includes donations to both secular and non-secular charities, has continued. These mainly come from the monthly Café Connect at St Nicholas.

The planned internal refurbishment at both St John's and St Nicholas has not yet commenced but funds are continuing to be set aside.

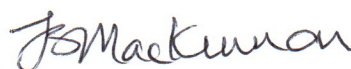
Quinquennial inspections at St Nicholas and St Stephen were carried out in 2021 and in 2022 at St John's resulting in expenditure on the fabric at all three churches. These will be due again in 2026 and 2027.

Our net assets of £239,148 at the end of the year include investments of £107,023 which are funds restricted for use at St. Stephen's Church. The investments are currently held under the custody of the Diocese of Southwark but the responsibility for the management of all investments rest with the PCC as Trustees. Although there are cumulative cash balances of £138,446 across the Benefice, cash flow continues to be a key concern with each church endeavouring to increase income from both donations and fund raising and to keep costs under control, both of which continue to present difficulties.

Approved by the PCC on 14 April 2026 and signed on its behalf by



Revd Peter O'Connell (PCC Chairman)



Janet MacKinnon (PCC Treasurer)

UNITED BENEFICE PCC and DCC STRUCTURE at 31 December 2024

Chair: Peter O'Connell

Vice Chair: Trevor Nightingale

Co-opted Members

Revd Evelyn Randall

Liz Windridge

Church Wardens

St Nicholas

Graham Millar

Vacant

St Stephens

Karen Jackson

Vacant

St Johns

Trevor Nightingale

Helen McRobert

Treasurer: Janet MacKinnon **Secretary:** Karen Jackson

ST NICHOLAS

ST STEPHENS

ST JOHNS

Deanery Synod Members: also Ex-Officio DCC's

Louise Case

Vacant

Vacant

Karen Jackson

Vacant

Elected Members from DCCs

Margaret Shelley

Vacant

Vacant

Carol Cryer

Janet MacKinnon

Vacant

Vacant

DISTRICT CHURCH COUNCILS

Rector

Churchwardens

Vice Chair

Lay: Graham Millar

Financial Administrator

Louise Case

Secretary

Alison McCormick

Rector

Churchwardens

Vice Chair

Lay: Karen Jackson

Treasurer

Janet MacKinnon

Secretary

Karen Jackson

Rector

Churchwardens

Vice Chair

Lay: Trevor Nightingale

Treasurer

Trevor Nightingale

Secretary

Kristie Mumbi Ndung'u

Jenny Benham

Jenefer Bull

Di Grose

Diane Hoy

Lyn Jones

Revd Evelyn Randall

Margaret Shelley

Joyce Brown

Carol Carey

Elaine Childs

Carol Cryer

Janet MacKinnon

Cathy Snell

Annabell Askew

Ann Bell

Pauline Ginner

Joan Wall

Electoral Roll Officers

Di Grose

Janet MacKinnon

Helen McRobert

Gift Aid Recorders

Vacant

Janet MacKinnon

Vacant

United Benefice of Godstone and Blindley Heath

Full

BALANCE SHEET

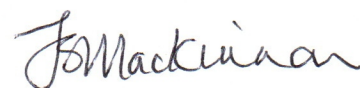
as at 31 December 2024

<u>2023</u>		<u>2024</u>
102,924	Investments	107,023
	Current Assets	
455	Debtors	3,621
133,515	Cash At Bank and In Hand	138,446
<u>133,970</u>		<u>142,067</u>
	Current Liabilities	
10,015	Creditors Due Within One Year	9,942
123,955	Net Current Assets	132,125
226,879	Total Assets less Current Liabilities	239,148
<u>226,879</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>239,148</u>
	Represented by Funds	
	Unrestricted Funds	
68,384	St Nicholas' funds	59,353
12,950	St Stephen's funds	13,922
37,788	St John's funds	54,084
4,833	United Benefice funds	4,766
<u>123,955</u>	Total Unrestricted funds	<u>132,125</u>
	Restricted Funds	
102,924	St Stephens investment account	107,023
<u>102,924</u>	Total restricted funds	<u>107,023</u>
<u>226,879</u>	TOTAL FUNDS	<u>239,148</u>

Approved by the PCC on 15 April 2026 and signed on its behalf by

Revd Peter O'Connell (PCC Chairman)

Janet MacKinnon (PCC Treasurer)

United Benefice of Godstone and Blindley Heath
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 December 2024

2023		2024		
		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
Total Funds				
Incoming resources				
64,182	Donated income	57,296		57,296
0	Recurring grants	0		0
5,705	Investment income	3,207	4,210	7,417
23,386	Activities for generating funds	20,622		20,622
0	Non-Recurring Income	32,000		32,000
93,273	Total incoming resources	113,125	4,210	117,335
Resources expended				
40,389	Diocesan pledge	40,914		40,914
582	Clergy expenses	578		578
4,816	Assignment of fees	5,464		5,464
28,553	Church running expenses	43,967		43,967
0	Costs Related to Trading	0		0
5,120	Salaries and support costs	6,285		6,285
3,215	Management and administration	3,680		3,680
0	Major capital expenditure	0		0
7,611	Donations to charities	6,718		6,718
90,286	Total resources used	107,606	0	107,606
2,987	NET RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS	5,519	4,210	9,729
0	Transfers between funds	0	0	0
2,987	NET INCOMING/OUTGOING RESOURCES	5,519	4,210	9,729
0	Gains and losses on sale of fixed assets	0	0	0
4,333	Revaluation of investments	0	2,540	2,540
7,320	NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	5,519	6,750	12,269
219,559	Fund balances at 1 January 2024	123,955	102,924	226,879
226,879	FUND BALANCES at 31 DECEMBER 2024	129,474	109,674	239,148

United Benefice of Godstone and Blindley Heath
Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024
Notes to the Accounts

1. Accounting Policies

The PCC is a public benefit entity within the meaning of FRS102. The financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 governing the individual accounts of PCCs, and with the Regulations' "true and fair view" provisions, together with FRS102 (2016) as the applicable accounting standards and the 2016 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP(FRS102)).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets, which are shown at market value. The financial statement includes 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 main affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

Funds

Restricted Funds represent (a) income from trusts or endowments which may be expended only on those restricted objects provided in the terms of the trust or bequest, and (b) 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 each year must be carried forward as a balance on the fund.

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

There is one trust fund held for the churches which relates to St Stephen's. The capital of St Stephen's trust fund is restricted and can be applied for the maintenance of the church building. The dividends and interest from the fund are accumulated in a separate fund and is unrestricted.

Resources and Expenditure

Planned giving, interest, collections, legacies and donations are recognized when received. Tax refunds submitted as annual claims are recognized in the year in which the claim is made.

The diocesan parish share is accounted for when due. All other expenditure is generally recognized when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

Fixed Assets

Moveable church furnishings held by the rector and churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal are inalienable property, listed in the church's inventory, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time).

Any furnishing or equipment used within the church premises of less than £5,000 is written off when acquired. The PCC has not acquired any asset in excess of £5,000 since moving from a receipts and payments basis.

Investments are valued at market value as at 31 December 2024.

2. Investments

	2024	2023
	£	£
St Stephen – Trust fund (income)	14,149	12,590
St Stephen – Trust fund (capital)	<u>92,874</u>	<u>90,334</u>
	<u>107,023</u>	<u>102,924</u>

These are invested as follows:

M&G Charifund Accumulation Units	42,858	39,316
CBF Investment Fund Income shares	59,176	57,852
CBF Deposit Account	<u>4,898</u>	<u>5,756</u>
	<u>107,023</u>	<u>102,924</u>

3. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Sundry debtors	<u>3,621</u>	<u>445</u>
	<u>3,621</u>	<u>445</u>

4. Current Liabilities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Assignment of fees	3,714	3,481
Accruals	4,968	5,464
Prepaid wedding and funeral fees	1,235	900
Other prepayments	<u>25</u>	<u>170</u>
	<u>10,015</u>	<u>10,015</u>

5. Unrestricted funds

St Nicholas' funds include £9,413 set aside towards new hospitality facilities.

St John's funds represent £53,272 in respect of the church, which includes funds for toilet facilities, the organ and the car park totalling £42,065, and £813 in respect of the church hall.

The United Benefice funds include £16 carried forward in respect of monies received to assist the needy in the parish.

6. Staff Costs

The Benefice has one employee who is the parish administrator. Payments to individuals were made at two churches for organists.

**Independent Examiner's Report
To the United Benefice of Godstone and Blindley Heath PCC**

I report on the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2024 as set out on pages 1 to 12.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The members of the PCC are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. They consider that an audit is not required for this year, under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- examine the financial statements under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC, covering St Nicholas' church, St Stephen's Church and St John's church, and a comparison of those accounts with the records. It also included considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to the matters set out on the next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

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

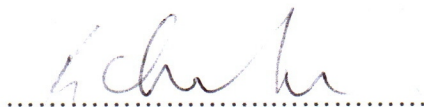
(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Signed:



Name: K Christmas
Qualification: ACA
Address: White Cottage
The Enterdent
Godstone
Surrey RH9 8EG

Date: