



Cowley Team Ministry

St James and St Francis
Churches

Report 2023 – 2024

Presented to the
Annual Parish Meeting and
the Annual Parochial
Church Meeting
21 April 2024



ANNUAL REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PARISH GENERALLY

Cowley Team Ministry

Background

The Cowley PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector in promoting the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It is responsible for the Church of St James the Apostle, Beauchamp Lane, the Church of St Francis of Assisi, Hollow Way and St James Church Centre, Beauchamp Lane.

Our Vision

"To live out God's purposes for us, make Christ known in Cowley and to raise up a new generation to love and serve the Lord."

Our Core values

Prayer: Prayer is conversation with God in which we speak from our hearts and listen to God's by the power of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is a central element of life in the parish of Cowley. Nothing will happen without prayer

Bible: God has spoken to his people and to the world through the Bible. It contains basic instructions for life and is an essential element in knowing God and learning to live a life worth living.

Community: We are called to live in community. We are called to serve one another, to be an encouragement to those who are having a hard time, to sing and laugh and cry together in the journey of life. We are called to be brothers and sisters in our lives together.

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. During the year the following served as members of the PCC

Team Rector: The Revd Canon Dr Geoffrey Bayliss

Curate: The Revd Liam Cartwright
The Revd Joshua Hordern

Anglican Asian Living Church: Zeenath (Sunita) Masih

Church Wardens: Maureen Stone
Christine Woodman

Deanery Synod Representatives (2023)

Maureen Stone
Christine Woodman
Vacancy

Elected Parochial Church Council members:

Sally Hemsworth (PCC Secretary)
Marie Paterson
Sue Philcox
Norah Shallow
Emily Sommerlade (Treasurer)
Lesley Williams (Electoral Roll Officer and
Safeguarding Officer)

Additional Active Ministers

Revd Mark Oxbrow
Revd Max Diaz Butron

Church Committees

The PCC operates through a number of committees, which meet between full meetings of the PCC.

Finance Committee: Oversees the general financial dimensions of the work of the Parish by monitoring income and expenditure.

Standing Committee: Membership consists of Team Rector, Vice-Chairman of PCC, Church Wardens, Treasurer, and the PCC Secretary. It makes decisions if required between PCC Meetings.

St James Church Committee

St Francis Church Committee

These committees attend to all matters relating to the ministry, mission and maintenance of their churches. In addition, St James Church Committee deals with matters relating to St James Church Centre.

Annual Congregational Meetings will not be held, and the committee memberships are due to be reviewed shortly.

The current membership of St James Church Committee is:

Val Goodall
Sally Hemsworth
Josie Rignall
John Vivian
Lesley Williams

The current membership of St Francis Church Committee is:

Gloria Benjamin
Shirley Costar
Gwen Denny
Lyn Lord
Norah Shallow

Church Statistics 2023

2022 figures in []

The average Sunday attendance in 2023 was 74 [71] – 25 [21] at St Francis and 49 [50] at St James.

There were 1 marriage (1 at St James, 0 at St Francis), 17 baptisms (17 at St James, 0 at St Francis), 16 funerals held in church (13 at St James, 3 at St Francis) and 20 services conducted by members of the Parish Ministry team at the Oxford Crematorium.

The total number attending worship in the Parish on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day 2023 was 103 [124] (86 at St James, 17 at St Francis), with 95 [99] communicants (81 at St James, 14 at St Francis).

The number attending worship on Easter Day 2023 was 98 [99] (64 at St James, 34 at St Francis), with 74 communicants (46 at St James, 28 at St Francis).

PCC Review of the Year

There were five PCC meetings since the last APCM Meeting – May, August, September and December 2023 and February 2024. A meeting was planned for 18 March 2024 to discuss the draft accounts, but the accounts were not ready for discussion.

Ministry Team/Service Times:

The PCC continually reviewed the work of the Ministry Team, and were delighted with the way the Rector, with Mark Oxbrow, Max Diaz Bruton and the two curates, Liam Cartwright and Joshua Hordern and the lay members, Lesley Williams, Jo Duckles and Elwira Lubos provided services. It was extremely sorry to lose the services of Alison Lockhart.

The PCC continued to support the training of Jo Duckles, Elwira Lubos, Sunita Masih, Salina Chand, and Krishna Singh, and their progress is reported at each meeting.

Service Times were continually reviewed, and the PCC was happy with the way things were working. The PCC was pleased to see that the ordination of the curates had made a great deal of difference to the time pressures on the Rector. Joint services with AALC

It was appreciated that once the curates had been ordained this released time pressures on the Rector. There were some joint services with AALC, and thought was being given to how this number could be extended. All joint services were appreciated.

Low attendance figures were still of concern, although numbers were increasing. Again, members had been saddened by the loss of members of the congregation, people who had played a large part in the running of the churches over many years.

At every meeting concern was expressed about the budgetary position of the Parish. For some time it was appreciated that there had been a considerable reduction in the

General Fund mainly due to the reduction in the number of contributors through death or people leaving the Cowley churches mainly through the Love and Faith discussions. This had resulted in a loss of about £1,200 a month. The PCC were pleased that when the position was mentioned to the congregations, the way regular giving helped the Parish to budget its finances being stressed, some additional contributions were made. However, the reduction in the General Fund was still of great concern to the PCC and continually under discussion at Church Committees and the PCC.

The legal status of the designations given to Funds (in addition to the General Fund, there was funds for the Church Centre, St James, and St Francis Fabric Funds, etc) to ensure the Parish had the “right” to transfer money from these Funds to the General Fund. It was appreciated that the reason Funds were given designations (Designated/ Restricted/ Unrestricted/ Endowment must be understood and clearly stated.

On the Finance side:

- Card Readers were now available in both churches, and there was discussion on whether one should be provided for the Church Centre
- Letting Charges for the use of the church premises were reviewed, and charges increased
- Some organists were being given tuition and playing free in the churches on a Sunday.

In relation to the church buildings:

- LED lighting had been installed in church buildings
- Under-sink heaters had been provided at St Francis Church
- Control over heating at St Francis and St James was being done by HIVE. Viability of HIVE at the Church Centre was being considered.
- A cycle rack had been provided at St Francis, and discussions are taking place on how one can be provided at St James Church – a slightly more difficult procedure because the church was situated in a Conservation Area.
- Decoration of the Main Hall at the Church Centre had been agreed. This would be followed by a planned schedule of decoration of the building would

The PCC agreed the following list for sidespersons and for Communion Assistants – it was hoped that both lists could be extended.

Sidespersons:

St Francis Church:

Shirley Costar
Jane Coutache
Gwen Denny
Esme Forbes
Lyn Lord
Elwira Lubos
Norah Shallow
Maureen Stone

St James Church:

Rosanne Butler
Pat Chambers
Valerie Goodall
Sally Hemsworth
Christine Knevet
John Simmons
June Smith
Lesley Williams

Communion Assistants:

Alex Aris
Pat Chambers
Shirley Costar

Jo Duckles
Gwen Denny
Elwira Lubos
Sue Philcox
Elaine Ulett
June Smith
Elsie Tshabalala
Lesley Williams
Chris Woodman

Policies:

The following policies continue to be reviewed annually:

Data Protection – Cowley Parish Audit Data
Health and Safety
Safeguarding
Parish Mission Prayer and Giving

**Sally Hemsworth
Secretary to the PCC**

Team Rector's Annual Report

It hardly seems possible that another year has passed. Mary and I have now been with you 8½ years! In some ways it seems a seriously long period of time. In others, a click of the fingers! This last year has seen us moving into clear water following the challenging season of Covid. Yes, those hard months have changed us, but we are again seeing the normal cycle of comings, goings, staying and growing. Baptisms, weddings, and funerals are returning to more normal pre-Covid levels, and it is always a joy to see new people coming to faith and grow. There have been highs, including the priesting of Revd Liam and Revd Josh alongside confirmations and courses for 'Christian Basics'.

As the year passed, we have said farewell to some of our long-standing members. Since the beginning of 2023 we have lost: Margaret Martin, Marion Webster, Lydia Barker, Michael Regan, Beverly Hughes, Christine Rumble, Una Dean, Delphine Loveridge, Kathy Newman, Frank Goodall, Patricia Michael and Brian Tidy. All individuals who have been much loved and are sorely missed. We look forward to being reunited at the Lord's banqueting table in years to come.

For many, the season of Covid changed expectations. Across the country the volunteer base of the nation has reduced. We have not been immune to this, and a smaller team is now responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of our community and all its resources. There is a deep sense of respect and thanks for those who work so hard to enable our life together to flourish.

We have found our committee structure challenged. Often, church committees have had very low attendance. This increases the difficulty in ensuring the activities we prioritise truly reflect the aspirations of the family of St James and St Francis. Our congregation is so much more than a 'meet on Sunday' group.

Schools work continues to thrive. Our ministry team, of clergy and committed volunteers, have ensured that the Christian story and faith is a vibrant part of our local primary schools. Our 'Open the Book (OTB)' and 'Prayer Space (PS)' teams are the

envy of other parishes. We have committed and gifted School governors that not only work to enable our school to maintain their Christian distinctiveness, but also provide an ever-improving rounded education. There is great thanks for all the wisdom and effort that is applied. We are blessed in having head teachers that work hard to ensure the aspiration to bring 'life in all its fulness' is high on the agenda at all times.

Our team of lay worship leaders continues to grow in experience and gifting. It is always our intention to spot the gift people have. Once spotted, we work to grow and commission them. Thank you to everybody who has a ministry and exercises it. Some of these are almost hidden. Whilst some are highly visible, all are essential in our life together.

Our children's, young people's and family's work is vital to our future. We have some areas of real excellence. In the coming years we need to further develop both the work we are involved with on Sunday mornings and supporting faith development and discipleship in our schools. The excellent foundation work being completed by our OTB and PS teams is leaving a solid platform ready for the next stage.

Finance continues to be tight. We struggle to get income and expenditure to balance. Yes, we are required to be self-financing. Even though we are subsidised by the diocese, it cost us in excess of a £1000 a week to run. We are totally reliant on the congregation to raise most of this in weekly giving. As small congregations it is an ongoing challenge! We are thankful for everybody's generosity, but the PCC and I must ask if you can continue to pray about and review your giving. I have included two pages from the Diocesan's 'On the Money' which helps explain a little about how the money collected is used. There will be some full copies of the booklet available in church.

Whilst 2023 and then first part of 2024 has continued to present challenges, we move forward in good heart. We both see God's hand active in what we are doing and continue to experience the bounty of God's blessing. Prayer is answered. Lives are changed. God's kingdom continues to grow.

Both Mary and I continue to take great joy in our life in Cowley. It is such a beautiful place. May God's blessing be upon each of us, each and every day! Amen

Revd Canon Dr Geoff Bayliss

How we spend it

We're committed to making sure our income is used efficiently, effectively and responsibly so that we make every pound count. The next few pages explain annual expenditure in some detail, so it's worth having a copy of the current year budget to hand. You'll find this at oxford.anglican.org/finance

Resourcing ministry and mission

Parochial stipends

£ 13.85m

Parochial clergy, including all our curates, are paid a stipend for their ministry. It's by far the biggest area of our expenditure and accounted for 52% of budgeted expenditure, some £13.9 million before the credit from statutory fees and other contributions to stipends. That gross figure is set to reduce slightly in 2022 thanks to wise stewardship of the pension fund, which has led to a reduction in the deficit contribution rate until at least 2025.

Ministerial oversight and grants¹

4.26 FTE | £ 0.273m

While the Church Commissioners pay for our diocesan and area bishops directly, the cost of the four archdeacons and area office teams that support our 810 churches is met by the diocese. Our area teams have a variety of grants and discretionary funds available to help where there are situations of particular hardship. Did you know that our area offices, supported by the HR and Property teams at Church House Oxford, handle around 62 clergy moves each year?

1. See also 'Bishops' and archdeacons' offices', page 10.

Ministry training costs²

11.98 FTE | £ 2.294m

Church and society are changing rapidly, and not always in the same direction. We support those who are discerning a call to ordained or lay ministry and equip them to respond well to the challenges of ministry today: community outreach, ministering to more than one church, and handling conflict. It's vital to the future of the Church that we select and prepare great people for ministry, whatever form that takes. That's why we commit around £2.5m each year to the task. Read more about ministry training costs overleaf.

2. 3.23 FTE + 8.75 FTE. See next page.

Buildings and accommodation

9.47 FTE | £ 4m

Our Property team oversees the repair and maintenance of over 470 vicarages and other properties. Together with rental costs, housing allowances, council tax, buildings insurance and other bills, gross costs in this area are around £4m each year. Staffing and administration costs account for 9.5% of expenditure. This area generates income of over £70k per annum from school surveys and has improved rental income from vicarages during vacancy, up from £507k in 2016 to c. £1m in 2021.

Did you know?...

We currently have 706 licensed clergy, 491 clergy with Permission to Officiate (PTO), 280 Licensed Lay Ministers, and 1,480 church wardens. Around 30 people begin their curacy in the Diocese of Oxford each year.

Expenditure and head count (full-time equivalent) figures shown on these pages align to the 2021 audited accounts. The figures provided in this document will be updated to 2022 figures in June 2023.

It all adds up to:

Resourcing ministry and mission

	£000's	FTE
Parochial stipends	£13,850	0
Ministerial oversight and grants	£273	4.26
Ministry training costs ¹	£2,294	11.98
Buildings and accommodation	£4,000	9.47
Other ministry costs	£781	0

Support for parish ministry

Bishops' and Archdeacons' offices	£273	4.26
Mission	£2,039	16.90 ²
Safeguarding	£331	4.54
Communications	£253	3.57
Diocesan Advisory Committee	£211	5.50
ODBF Admin	£138	0
DTOL	£56	1.18
National Church Costs (votes 2-5)	£1,100	0
	£2,411	
		19.16

Grants

Support (FTE only)

1. Includes vote 1 national fund/diocesan contribution of £924k.
2. 8.76 of posts listed are funded by common vision.
Categories shown above and throughout this document differ to those shown in the 2021 accounts. This is an activity-based document that reflects a more meaningful split of income and expenditure. This approach will be reflected in 2022 accounts, to be published in June 2023.

Curates' Annual Report

Having been in post for almost two years now I am happily feeling both at home and at ease in this friendly, vibrant Parish where I am fortunate to serve.

Last Summer was particularly special, with my ordination to the priesthood taking place at the University Church. It was a wonderful, moving occasion, and I was thrilled and touched to be able to share it with the many people who came to support me from St. James, St. Francis, and the Anglican Asian Living Church.

I was a great joy to celebrate my first Mass the following weekend at St. Francis, and to welcome Bishop Bev as our preacher. I would like to thank everybody who went to such effort to support me and to ensure it all ran smoothly. It was such an uplifting act of worship!

I was privileged to preside at the Patronal Festival Eucharist for St. James, and it was wonderful to involve so many children in the liturgy on that occasion.

I have greatly enjoyed my new sacramental ministry across the three congregations as well as out in the community. Being a priest is the greatest honour. Celebrating the Eucharist, both in our churches, as well as in Care Homes, Community Venues and so forth remains the utmost privilege. I find I am approached increasingly by members of the public who are seeking priestly ministry. I have been humbled to be able to offer more prayer ministry and anointing across our parishes and to witness the fruit this has born. I hope to develop this work over the coming year, involving more people and building on the training day in which we took part in January.

I have enjoyed the freedom the parishes have afforded for flexibility in worship, for restoring past traditions and for trying out new initiatives too. I believe we have seen a deepening of the richness of our worship this past year, which has led to numerical and spiritual growth, especially at St Francis and in our joint team services with the Anglican Asian Living Church. Some of the best acts of worship have been when the three congregations have joined together for Festivals or other Holy Days.

I have relished walking with others on their vocational journey, encouraging them and helping them to prepare for various vocational assessments and providing opportunities for others to serve within the liturgy – as deacon, intercessor, communion assistants and so on. I hope we can build on this going forwards.

I have also been pleased to reinstate some aspects of parish life which had fallen away in recent years – a Mass for All Souls Day; A Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit in the Autumn, in collaboration with *Oxford inSpired*, and an Advent Quiet Day, led by Revd Lyndon Webb from Merton College. I believe these things have enriched and will continue to enrich our collective life. It was great to be involved in delivering this year's Lent Course again and to witness the relationships which develop and deepen through intentional times of fellowship and catechesis.

The emphasis on Children and Family work in the Parish continues to be something which I learn a great amount from. Relationships are key to mission and evangelism, and our outreach through our highly successful Toddler Groups and Messy Church is widespread. This has led to many conversations about faith and to further enquiry, as well as to a considerable amount of pastoral care and pastoral offices, including Baptisms and Funerals.

Schools work continues to thrive in Cowley, and I have greatly enjoyed leading Collective Worship and Prayer Spaces for our three schools, providing space and opportunity for our local children to encounter and contemplate God amongst the busyness of modern life. I have continued to help with *Open the Book* when time permits. I am pleased that we as a Parish are leading the way in this aspect of ministry at a time when Bishop Steven has called for a Diocesan-wide amplification of Children, Family and School work.

Christmas and Easter were particularly rich periods, and it was really affirming and encouraging to see a marked increase in worshippers since the previous few years. Pastoral offices remain hugely important to me, and it has been a privilege to conduct various baptisms and funerals for our church and wider community, as well as to offer pastoral visits, and the provision of ministry at the time of death.

I have been grateful for the space the Parish, and Geoff, have afforded for me to enrich my training and pursue opportunities outside of the Parish over the past year. I have enjoyed covering various aspects of the ministry with our friends in the Parish of Cowley St John as they have journeyed through their current vacancy, including Sunday and weekday Masses, Funerals, Holy Week, and their schools work with St. Frideswide CofE Primary. I have been pleased to accept invitations from Queens College, Lincoln College, Christ Church Cathedral and the Hambleden Valley Churches as guest preacher, president and officiant over the past year.

Within the Diocese I have continued to serve as a founder member of *Sacred*; a safe, inclusive, evangelical worshipping community and network based at Christ Church Cathedral which aims to provide a space especially for LGBTIQ people. I was once again part of the team which planned and delivered the Chrism Mass, and I was deeply honoured to be asked by Bishop Steven to be part of the small group responsible for planning and delivering Bishop Alan's memorial service. I look forward to being part of the steering team planning the 2025 Diocesan Clergy Conference, and I continue to be committed to the Cowley Deanery, attending chapter and synod as regularly as possible.

In the context of the national church, I continue to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of *On Fire Mission*, a renewal network dedicated to promoting the riches of Catholic spirituality blended with Charismatic renewal. One of the many joys of OFM has been witnessing the renewal of the local church through our regional work, and I was delighted to preach at the launch event of *Flame*, a local expression inspired by OFM seeking to serve Gloucester and Bristol Dioceses.

I count myself as very fortunate to serve as curate of the Cowley Team Ministry, and continuing to journey alongside the people of St. James, St Francis and the Anglican Asian Living Church is a joy and a privilege. I am very lucky to serve alongside Geoff as my training incumbent. He is unfailingly generous with his time, in sharing his wisdom and experience, and in sharing his altar and the cure of souls with me. Equally I am most grateful to all my ministerial colleagues, and to our wardens, Christine and Maureen, for their continued help and support.

There is a phrase which says 'it takes a whole parish to train a curate' – I firmly believe this to be the case – and so I would like to thank each and every one of you for the part you continue to play in my training, my ministry, and my faith journey. You are all a great blessing to me.

May God bless Cowley richly as we journey together into this coming year.

The Revd Liam Cartwright

I am so thankful for the continued opportunity to train as a self-supporting curate in Cowley! Thank you especially for your support and encouragement as I was ordained priest last summer - what a great crowd of witnesses were there on that *very* hot day. It was particularly meaningful for me to preside at communion for the first time at St James, celebrating Christ together with friends we've known since Claire and I first arrived in Oxford in 2012. It was a joyful occasion, including even a surprise visit from Howard and Carol Thornton!

I'm very grateful to Geoff and all the team for their encouragement and guidance as I've continued my training. Since then, it's been a lovely mix of things - including a really wonderful afternoon spent with the Mother's Union, an unusual but fun Advent acting opportunity overseen by Director Geoff as part of our Christmas programme and a memorable Candlemas service at St Francis (thanks, Liam, for a wonderful liturgy!).

St James, St Francis and Grace Church continue to provide many other opportunities for preaching, service leading and pastoral care. A recent highlight was some door-knocking near Grace Church to meet our neighbours during which we bumped into many friends from St James including Rosanne! This was followed with opportunities to preach on Good Friday and preside at the Easter Day eucharist at Grace Church.

Occasions which have brought together Grace Church with the wider parish have been a particular joy. The wedding of Grace Church members Sheppard and Meghan Li at St James' - my first opportunity to officiate - was one such occasion. Most recently, it was excellent to be part of all the churches coming together for the Passion performance in Templar Square.

Thanks so much for your patience with me as I continue to learn how to serve as a minister and combine responsibilities as a curate with family life. As you will know, this all goes on alongside my full-time work as Professor of Christian Ethics in the University of Oxford which remains fascinating and demanding. Your prayers are welcome. Thank you again for your kindness and love!

The Revd Joshua Hordern

Anglican Asian Living Church

In the year 2023, we commenced with our customary services and programmes, marking the beginning of a promising journey for AALC. We organized a joyous New Year celebration, aiming to advance our organization's structure and foster growth, both in terms of spirituality and numerical strength. Additionally, we dedicated our efforts towards the application for BMO (Bishop's Mission Orders), which we accomplished triumphantly this year.

The AALC currently has four Trustees, which includes the current Rector of Cowley Parish.

In the year 2023, Tiara and Richard were baptized by the AALC. The confirmation ceremony was held for Ethan, Ashu, Matthew, Paree, Leah, and Henna. Additionally, a new family has recently made a commitment and joined the Church. This family had their baptism in 2022, and it includes Callum, Yuvraj, Simran, Moses, and Emanuel, along with their parents.

The AALC charity is overseen by the Trustees who handle decision-making, while a Church committee manages day-to-day operations. The organization boasts a robust choir and music team, along with an active Sunday School and Youth group. Currently, there are four trained Worship Leaders and a Secretary within the AALC. Additionally, several other teams within the AALC carry out important responsibilities.

The Parish of Cowley Team Ministry has been instrumental in offering essential ordained spiritual, pastoral, and sacramental assistance to the AALC. Both the Parish and the Archdeacon of Oxford were pleased to assist the AALC in achieving BMO status within the Parish of Cowley this year. In early 2023, the worship leaders and trustees convened with the Archdeacon to deliberate on the present state of the church and its future growth.

The church operations at AALC are efficiently managed by the Trustees, who hold quarterly meetings. Our services are regularly livestreamed on Facebook, thanks to Dylan, our Digital Coordinator. Jasmine Masih, an AALC trustee, coordinates the rota to ensure all Worship Leaders have the opportunity to lead on Sundays and preach during our Wednesday meetings. Sunita and Salina, two of our Worship leaders, are currently undergoing a discernment process.

The AALC maintains its monthly youth services, providing an opportunity for young individuals to collaborate and take charge, fostering their potential as future church leaders. It is truly inspiring to witness their remarkable growth in confidence and skills, as they embrace various responsibilities within the service.

The Cowley Team Parish ministers have been instrumental in assisting us following Richard Chand's departure, leading worship services, delivering sermons, and conducting holy communion. The congregation is truly grateful for their dedication, and as a token of appreciation, we donate £50 to them every Sunday from the AALC contributions collected during the service.

Safeguarding courses have been completed by all church members, with Lesley Williams playing a supportive role in ensuring the training is kept up to date. Jasmine Masih has been appointed as the Assistant Safeguarding Officer for the AALC and provides support to Lesley Williams in this role.

Moving ahead, our collaboration as a unified congregation with the Cowley team parish ministers will persist. The AALC has experienced spiritual growth, and our members are encouraged to further develop within the church. Additionally, we have reintroduced refreshments at the St James Church Centre, providing an opportunity for networking and sharing our faith with everyone.

Zeenaath (Sunita) Masih

The Cowley Parish Link

Our weekly pew news sheet covers both churches and includes an insert with the collects and Bible readings for the day.

We still weekly deliver a copy to 20 parishioners; thanks are again expressed to Chris Booty, who has continued to walk many a mile, delivering the majority of those, with others also taking a few.

Link is posted on the Parish website and e-mailed to those who have requested that service.

When there is a lot to announce, a Link Extra supplements the main publication and event/information flyers are inserted regularly, in the hope they may be passed on to neighbours and friends.

Content for inclusion should generally reach the Editor by a Wednesday evening but in fact, the typing and copying are more often a Friday/Saturday task, unless otherwise indicated. link@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

As the leaflet contains significant dates and information about the life of the Parish, as well as topical issue prayers, it is offered as an integral part of our worship, for use at home; it is disappointing when it is discarded in church.

Spare copies are always available in both churches and in St James Centre to take for absent members, interested neighbours and friends. Do ask if you need more!

Lesley Williams, Editor

Cowley Chronicle

The Chronicle is the parish magazine of Cowley and is published ten times a year. It is printed monthly (except for double issues in July/August and December/January) and is in the churches on the first Sunday of each month. Help is still given by Lesley Williams and Chris Booty with deliveries to those not attending church, and this help is very much appreciated.

Nicki Stevens and Sally Hemsworth have been the editorial team for eight years – both are surprised that it has been this long! The work includes looking for suitable articles, encouraging people to write or suggest articles, setting up the Chronicle in “Publisher”, photocopying and distributing. It would be lovely to enlarge the team so that there is additional help in sourcing articles and learning how to set the publication up. In addition, it would be good to widen the type of articles available, but we need your help to achieve this. What would you like to see in the magazine? Let the Editors know – we would be delighted to hear from you.

The Chronicle aims to keep its readers informed of all the different activities throughout the parish reinforcing the information given in The Link. In addition, we include reports from the PCC, from the Church Wardens, social activities, and dates of activities.

Advertisements would help towards the cost of producing the magazine – would anyone like to take on the task of finding businesses who would like to advertise? Do you have any recommendations of firms we could approach?

The editorial team would like to thank all those who have contributed regularly over the last twelve months. Their contributions have been much appreciated.

If you feel you would like to get involved with the collection of articles or would like to contribute, please let the Chronicle Team know. Articles can be delivered to the Chronicle Team at the Parish Office or submitted by email to office@cowleyteamministry.co.uk.

Sally Hemsworth and Nicki Stevens

Children's Church, St James

This year we have continued with our aim: “to have space at the back for the children to meet with a leader, to tell a bible story and have a related craft activity,” and it has continued to work well. We have been able to welcome regulars and visitors to join us. A particular highlight of the Sunday service for me is the way the children all join in sharing the peace. They stop what they are doing and love turning to the people around them and enjoy saying, ‘Peace be with you’. Over the year, we have read many bible stories and created many different crafts. Some of the children know the stories well and for others it appears it is the first time they have heard them. The children love showing members of the congregation what they have made and chatting about the stories they have heard. Do ask them about it. Please pray for these families and the children's Christian journeys.

The creche area is always welcoming with many different toys. It is so lovely that it is used each week and by young visitors to the church whenever the church is open. We have different people who keep an eye on it so that toys are sorted in various boxes but no-one on a regular basis. Do consider offering to check on it so the boxes are kept in a tidy way. Do pray for our families and for those thinking of joining us.

Mary Bayliss

Home and Study Groups

The following Home Groups have been meeting:

- Home group hosted by Mark Oxbrow @ 13 Annesley Road alternate Wednesday evenings. *Contact Mark 07985 631 816 markoxbrow@aol.com*
- Home group hosted by Rosanne Butler @ 18 St Omer Road alternate Thursday mornings, 10:00-11:30 am. *Contact Rosanne 01865 453 257*
- Power House: Praying for God's Kingdom to come to Cowley and Headington. Hosted by Geoff Bayliss @ The Ranklin Room, St James Church Centre every Thursday 19.15 – 20.45.

ReFresh

This year, we have enjoyed meeting on Wednesday mornings from 9.30am – 11am in St James Church Centre, in the Ranklin Room to watch a talk/sermon and have some conversations about it. We have a short time to pray together. It is good to also talk about some of the challenges we face in a confidential, safe space. The group is such that individuals attend as and when they are available. The topics have been varied this year using videos, from sermons from St Aldate's, interviews by Nicky Gumbel, talks by Joni Eareckson, the Discipleship Explored course, and bible study for Book-by-Book videos. This last term, we have joined in with the Bishop's 'Come and See' course. So please do consider joining us. Just turn up!

Mary Bayliss

Messy Church

It has been such a blessing this year to continue running Messy Church. Our numbers fluctuate: when we meet on the same day as Seashells or Little Stars in the holidays we may get more people, but it is a joy to celebrate Christmas on a December Saturday and Easter on Good Friday.

In May we look at the story of Daniel in the bible: Dare to be Daniel, with lots of Lion crafts, superhero badges, making good choices about healthy eating, praying through the day, and writing on the wall.

In August we looked at God's Creation and made crafts including: ourselves, our family trees, butterflies, parrots, the solar system and constellations, sea and sand, frogs and monkeys.

In October the theme was Psalm 23. There were lots of sheep and shepherds and trust activities.

At Christmas we had a Messy Church Christingle which we all made a Christingle and made crafts mostly themed on the Christmas story. It was lovely to meet in St James Church amongst the many beautifully decorated Christmas trees.

In February, we met in St Francis Church for one of our busiest times ever with 130 people in the building. The theme was Pancake Day. It was good to explain about Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Over 100 pancakes were made by Sonica and Geoff, alongside, Lent challenge cups, pancake tossing, desert pictures, thankful chains and making tall towers.

At our recent Easter Messy Church, we made hot cross buns, Easter baskets and cards, the Easter story pin wheel, Easter painted chick, hand bunnies, stained glass crosses, hanging easter decorations, agomographs and of course freestyle painting.

Each Messy Church has crafts and toys for the younger ones to play. A leader to a table with a craft/activity on, helps those who join them. The most creative table is the painting table!! This is usually manned by the ever-patient John. During this time, drinks are served alongside croissants and pain au chocolate: Simple brunch type food as our hospitality. Just after 11am, everyone joins together in a simple act

of worship with action songs, the theme's bible story and prayers. All the leaders join in to model us being church, with clearing up left to the end.

For many people, Messy Church is now their church, and they look forward to coming and joining us. We are so grateful to all those who assist in its running in anyway: including praying for it and those who attend. Being there to chat, welcome, assist, serve, is all part of it. It needs a team of people, and we are blessed that people are willing to do that. But as always sometimes they can't always be there. So please do consider offering to help in some way. In addition, it is great to see activities led by young people choosing the one they feel most comfortable with. As the diocese is challenging us to be an inter-generational church with people of all ages joining together, hopefully Messy Church provides an environment where all are welcome. If you haven't been I suggest you join us sometime to see church 'done' in a different way to a Sunday morning.

Mary Bayliss

Open the Book

Open the Book is a fantastic resource that we use as a parish; encouraging the link and strengthening the connection between the church and our three schools. Each child hears key stories of the Bible, as told in the Storyteller Bible and supplementary storybooks, written by Bob Hartman, over the three-year programme. There's also the chance to help act them out with our teams. It is a pleasure to be part of it and a blessing that each of our three schools welcomes us in. Open the Book supports the schools in their self-evaluation for SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) which encourages Parish and community involvement and the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Lesley Williams, Jill Ling and Mary Bayliss plan and coordinate the schedule for the fortnightly visit; the scripted story is therefore repeated three times by three different teams. Only Lesley is now involved in all three. Jill is our Props master, producing new costumes (basic tunics with add-ons), puppets and much else besides and sorting what we need for each story.

The teams have shrunk! They are now:

St Francis School: Thursday morning, rehearsing at 10.00 for a 10.30 assembly
Lesley Williams, Val Goodall, Liam Cartwright, Sheppard Li (from Grace Church)

St Christopher's School: Monday morning, 8.20 arrival for an 8.45 assembly so very little time to rehearse!
Lesley Williams, Jill Ling, Mary Bayliss

Church Cowley St James: Tuesday afternoon at 2.15 for a 2.45 assembly
Lesley Williams, David Cook, Geoff Bayliss, Tishy Bruce

Please speak to Geoff, Lesley, Jill or Mary if you are interested in coming to observe and/or just talk about signing up. We do need more team members to cover holidays, sickness etc.

On Thursday 27 April 2023, we had a Bible Society led training, at which we learned about a new required registration scheme and new materials, a revised Storytelling Bible from Bob Hartman, new handbook, an Open the Book song and more. The

Parish will pay the annual registration fee for team members. We will be trialling the new stories from summer 2024.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/>

Lesley Williams, Jill Ling & Mary Bayliss

Pastoral Network, St James

During 2023 Jill Ling stepped down as Pastoral Network Co-ordinator, and I took over this role. The way of dealing with things has not changed - we seek to look after everyone by allocating each member of the congregation to a named 'Linker' who 'links' with the people on their list. Each Linker has a 'Buddy' to assist with this. The Linkers are encouraged to pray and bless those people on their list and to look out for them at Church.

We continue to welcome Chris Booty to our Network reviews, as she continues to co-ordinate the delivery of The Links and DVD recordings of the Sunday services to folk who have not yet been able to re-join us at Church.

Pastoral Care is a very important part of St James. We meet every four months to discuss the needs of any of our church friends. Perhaps a telephone call to someone who is housebound and feeling cut off from the outside world and needs some shopping. If help is needed or a private conversation, Pastoral Care is just a phone call away.

For anyone wanting a word about who to contact please speak to me and I will be able to help.

Chris Woodman

St Francis Pastoral Network - St Francis

At St Francis an informal system is in place. Each person has identified five people that they will keep an eye on. This has had different challenges over the last twelve months.

Geoff Bayliss

Cowley Parish Mothers' Union

No longer a branch, the Cowley Mothers' Union is a group of members of the diocesan prayer group. Meetings are still held on a monthly basis at the Church Centre.

It is a great pleasure to report that new members are joining, and one former member has returned. However, we were sad to say goodbye to one of our long-standing members and a group of us attended her funeral towards the end of the year.

Meetings always begin in prayer and worship. Frequently we are pleased to welcome a speaker, and we always end the afternoon with tea, biscuits and social chats. The

summer tea party was held in the parish church when members brought pictures with personal memories and spoke movingly about them. The Christmas party was held in the Ranklin Room at the Church Centre, as the weather was too cold to heat the church for such an occasion.

We enjoyed two most successful trips during the year. Early in the spring we returned to St. Mary's Church in Littlemore, where we were made very welcome and explored with our hosts the work of the world-wide Mothers' Union. Later in the year we visited the beautiful little parish church at Sandford-on-Thames and learnt about its history. These visits have given us confidence to plan further church visits in the future.

Following the diocesan annual meeting at Benson, members were able to speak about the MU association with Ronald McDonald House in Headington. They learnt from one of its administrators that the centre supports parents whose children are patients at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

Our two main fundraising events during the year were a tea party and quiz, the profits from which went to the MU initiative AFIA, which supplies holiday experiences for families in need – and a wine, cheese and poetry evening, when we raised funds for the parish.

Rosanne Butler

St James, Cowley Bell Ringers

Looking back over the last year, it is great to know that the bells have been rung a lot more. We have rung the bells most Sunday mornings and we are very grateful to the Iffley ringers who have joined us to make that a more joyful noise, when all 6 bells are ringing.

We now have regular monthly bellringing practice on the 3rd Monday evening from 7.30pm to 9pm and the occasional special practice to learn a new skill e.g. ringing a bell up and down and doing so with other bells. We are very grateful to ringers from the local area who come and support us and are excellent at challenging us to ring new methods.

The bells have been used for quarter peals, the Radley course and other practice sessions.

We are looking forward to ringing the bells for some weddings this year.

We are very grateful to our local band of ringers and also to Christine Woodman and the other coffee makers who welcome us with a cup of coffee each Sunday morning before we ring.

Mary Bayliss



Singing at St James Church

Tuesday lunchtime singing continues at St James Church and is much enjoyed by those who attend from both churches and from non-members of the churches. We encourage people to come along to gain from the benefits of singing.

Geoff Bayliss

Seashells and Little Stars

Seashells and Little Stars continue to provide a welcoming place on Monday and Tuesday mornings for children who are not at school or preschool and their carers. Our numbers fluctuate from week to week, but we never seem to feel too busy. Having said that, although some come regularly, it seems that nearly every week we have a new face. Hopefully we provide a safe space for conversations, support and just being there for one another. For some, conversation in English is a challenge so we can help by having natural conversations rather than constructed ones like in a language course. Some parents ask about child care/schools, and we can introduce them to childminders, nannies and other parents who use various nurseries/schools so they can make informed choices.

Interestingly, there is a 3-way split of the adults coming to the groups: parent, childminder, grandparent. Each has their own different challenges and needs. It is lovely to have people of all ages meeting together offering friendship to one another. Snacks and drinks are provided by kind volunteers, who also help put out and put away all the toys!! There is definitely a skill to remembering in which box each toy goes and where that box goes! It is wonderful to see a nervous child on their first visit blossom into one who comes running in wanting to play with their friends. Some adults model set routines during the session with sitting down to eat a snack, helping tidy up and joining in the singing; some show ways of speaking kindly to their children when the child hasn't behaved appropriately.

At 11am the 'tidy up' music is played, and everyone is encouraged to help put the toys in boxes and help carry them to the 'tidy up' table. We even have little ones who come and wait doing the silent actions to head, shoulders knees and toes- just like Geoff. Singing can then begin. We now have a mixture of recorded, unaccompanied singing and accompanied singing by Revd Liam on the piano. It is lovely to have the musical instruments out and to do the actions to the songs. The animal puppets join in too! A bible story is told each week, which is preceded by the Wiggle song, and followed by "Our God is a great big God." We finish with sleeping bunnies and sleeping elephants. When we sing the goodbye song now, the children come and give us a high or low 5!! Timid ones develop into those who come forward unprompted by their adult!

We have a wonderful team of volunteers who set up and pack up the halls each week, and prepare the drinks and snacks which we are so grateful for. So many thanks to them. Do consider joining us if you are free on a Monday or Tuesday morning as we always need more volunteers, as we can't all make it every week.

Mary Bayliss and the team

Safeguarding in Cowley Parish

Safeguarding is high profile in all settings which serve children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is required that we annually review our Parish Child Protection policy and practice, including procedures for checking and training all officers and volunteers who have regular contact with our youngsters, even when parents are present; and/or with vulnerable adults, in situations where trusting relationships may be developed. The PCC policy, based on a Church of England template, is reviewed annually, and is due for review in September 2024; a safeguarding report is made to each PCC meeting.

The national system for vetting staff and volunteers is with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). The system is on line, quick and efficient; our current volunteers for children's in church activities, Seashells/Little Stars, Open the Book and the AALC Young people's group are all checked. Renewal is required every 3 years.

Volunteers also complete a form, outlining their experience and the role(s) they are undertaking, along with a confidential declaration. For new staff and volunteers, we also follow safer recruitment procedures, requiring a reference from a previous or present employer or independent referee.

The national structured training programme for all church officers and volunteers includes: Basic Awareness for the majority of our volunteers which is an on-line course; it can be taken individually or as a group.

Those with more responsibility and having direct contact with children and young people are required to take that *and* the Foundations course which can either be followed on line individually or at a face-to-face group session delivered by a Diocesan trainer, which is preferred.

The Leadership course is currently delivered live on-line using Zoom, over two sessions, with work to complete between, as is Safer Recruitment and Raising awareness of domestic violence and abuse. Only the Parish Safeguarding Officer and clergy are now required to take the latter three.

Training is required to be refreshed every 3 years and we are now behind schedule on updating everyone. For those unable to follow on-line courses at home, we would prefer to use a Diocesan trainer for a face-to-face Foundations session but there is a shortage of trainers, and we may have to run it ourselves.

The extensive roles requiring training are: vergers, sidesperson/welcomer, flower arranger, bell ringer, office volunteer, chalice administrator, coffee server, church committee member, PCC member, Children's Church/Sunday Club, Little Stars/Seashells worker, Open the Book team member, church warden, choir leader, pastoral link team member, prayer space leader, volunteer driver, prayer ministry team member, home group leader. Clergy & LLMs are trained directly through the Diocese.

There is an online RAG rated 'Safeguarding dashboard' which generates the necessary actions for the Parish 'Promoting a safer church action plan'.

As a development of the dashboard, the Diocese has now bought in to a new on-line 'Safeguarding Hub' which will make the record keeping of volunteer registration, DBS and training MUCH easier – once all the baseline information is entered, which will be a long, time-consuming task but very worthwhile.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. So, anyone not included in the role list above who would like to undertake the basic awareness course is very welcome to access it. Contact Lesley Williams. safeguarding@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

We are also responsible for insisting that all users of our premises comply with the regulations and therefore monitoring that they do so.

Lesley Williams, Approved Parish Representative

Recycling in Cowley Parish (Co-Creators of the Earth)

We maintain our responsibility for caring for our environment and therefore getting our use of resources and recycling right. Oxford is an excellent local authority for its recycling services and makes things very clear in their leaflets to all households and on-line: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/directory/1/recycling_a_to_z

There is also an Oxfordshire County Council waste wizard website/app to guide you. <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/waste-and-recycling/household-waste/repair-reuse-or-recycle>

The latest excellent development has been that many of those packaging materials which formerly were a definite 'NO' for recycling can now be taken to some of our supermarkets, including Tesco and the Co-op. The rule is that only if you can *stretch the material* and/or if you can *scrunch it and stays scrunched* should it go in the recycling bin

So, all the *crinkly style, non-scrunchy paper which covers packets of biscuits, bread rolls, packs of fruit and vegetables, bags and tubs of salad plus peel off tops plus ALL sweet and crisp packets* can be delivered to your chosen collection point.

And remember that low grade paper like *kitchen roll and napkins* can now be put in the compost bin/food waste bin – NOT recycling.

BUT it's *still absolutely always NO to polystyrene, hard plastic and broken glass – they MUST go to landfill.*

The aim is that eventually methods are developed for virtually all household materials to be recyclable. We have a role in praying for the campaign to ban single use plastics and for the scientists, engineers and designers working to mitigate mankind's impact on God's creation

Lesley Williams

Fairtrade Parish



Our Parish churches and St James Centre are now registered as 'Fairtrade Places of Worship'; we thus declare we are living by the Kingdom principles of caring for those who produce, process and transport our food and other goods. But we (*and 'we' means all of us*) must work harder to recognise our responsibility to understand more about and respond to trading issues; the impact of climate change on essential crops and therefore livelihoods around the world and the role we can all play in lobbying for fairer practice

The PCC maintains its commitment to

- always use fairtrade tea and coffee and sugar before/after services and in all meetings for which the church has responsibility
- move forward on using other fairtrade products such as biscuits, fruit, wine
- integrate Fairtrade into the life of the parish, during Fairtrade Fortnight and regularly during the year at events, with stalls and in worship

For Fairtrade Fortnight in February 2023, we sourced products from Headington Fairtrade and from the Littlemore Road Coop store to stock stalls in both churches, on a sale or return basis. There was also a super soup lunch, fundraising for Transform Trade

Fairtrade Fortnight 2024 is to be held in September, to allow more build up time during the year in order to celebrate the 30th birthday of the Fairtrade Foundation.

By supporting Fairtrade, we become part of the Fairtrade movement. We aim to be creative with our promotion of Fairtrade!

Any non-fairtrade donations for our hospitality stock will be graciously received but, when fairtrade options - tea, coffee, chocolate, sugar – are readily available in the shops, the items will be passed on to the CEF.

We ask the generous donors either to source fairtrade items themselves or donate the cash for the catering team to do so. *Thank you!*

Lesley Williams

Parish Mission and Social (M&S) Planner

An ad hoc group of us from the two churches meets every two/three months - still virtually on Zoom because it's such an efficient use of time - to coordinate and plan the services and events across the Parish which aim both to bring the Parish together and to reach out to the community.

In BC (before Covid) times, some of those events were regular ones – for example monthly Sunday lunches – while others were annual or occasional. We are now back

to 'normality' although aware that some people are still concerned about busy indoor events. But we have again enjoyed several bring and share meals after special services, Christian Aid Big Brekkies/Brunches, Crumpets and games, Cream tea or puddings with a quiz

Everyone is invited to come to the M&S meetings – the date and time are announced in Link - &/or suggest ideas for events. The planner is displayed on church and St James Church Centre noticeboards and inserted in Link

Lesley Williams

St James Church Centre

St James Church Centre continues to be a very popular venue for many church activities and, in addition, has a number of regular bookings from outside organisations and lots of one-off bookings for parties.

When people hire the Church Centre a comment at the end of their visit is how pleasant the hall is, what wonderful facilities we have and how well looked after the property is. We all appreciate what we have and are proud that it is used by a great many people.

The Lunch Club is very much part of the church community and the way it is run now on a two weekly basis is working very well. We have had sad times during the year with the passing of Patricia Michael who enjoyed coming for lunch and we are so pleased that her husband, Stephen, comes regularly on a Tuesday. Sadly, Chris Rumble lost his wife, Christine, and he enjoys meeting up for lunch and catching up with friends. We support one another in all aspects of day-to-day life and the warmth and feeling of belonging is very apparent.

It is expensive to keep the centre looking well cared for and we are grateful to Stacey and Carole who work very hard making sure this happens. Doug Loveridge continues to look after the lawns, and our Gardening Team, which meets monthly, continue to carry out bigger gardening projects. Some decorating of the main hall will be taking place shortly, and we will then schedule decorating of other areas over the next year.

Thank you to all the support you give us and we look forward to another year of getting together for many different activities.

Chris Woodman

Film Club at the Centre

Launched in 2012 the film club continues to flourish. Adhering strictly to the original guidelines we continue as a private club, thus keeping within the rules of 'performing rights.' With a membership of less than fifty, no admission fee or advertising, the club is as popular as ever, with new members joining month-by-month.

The films shown in 2023 were, as is the policy, wide-ranging in genre – from modern productions to early classics, from humour to tragedy, from pathos to musical genius – our members were very appreciative of the varied programme on offer.

Film night is held on the second Friday of the month in the Church Centre, where a small team of volunteers provide light refreshments, set up the seating in the hall, and manage the technology.

All profits from members' donations go straight into parish funds and we are pleased to report that the amount for 2023 was £713.

Rosanne Butler

Art and Faith

All our members have thoroughly enjoyed our creative work, done on Saturday mornings. Three new members have been coming regularly this year, Alex and Mary, and Warren. Also, as in past years, we have enjoyed hot drinks, and delicious cakes, while working.

Our members have contributed some outstanding work to two displays this year, one at Christmas, and the other at Easter. Both were staged in St. James Church.

On a more personal note, I have been particularly encouraged and inspired by a book entitled "Seeing God in Art", written by Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford from 1987 to 2006. Its subtitle is "The Christian Faith in 30 Images". The pictures are hugely varied in style and span many centuries; it was brought to my attention by Vince and is well worth seeking out.

As ever, if anyone reading this would like to see what we do, you would be very welcome to drop in to one of our sessions; they are held on the first Saturday of every month from 10.00am to 12 noon in St. James Church Centre (but not in July and August).

John Booty

Cowley Festival of Christmas Trees with the theme '#LoveCowley' Friday 8 - Sunday 17 Decembe Convenor : Lesley Williams

Christmas tree festival charities : SeeSaw & ROSY



Respite nursing for
Oxfordshire's
Sick
Youngsters



Our twelfth festival brought the usual Christmas joy to those participating and visiting and happily £500 each for the SeeSaw and ROSY charities

There were trees from 42 groups/individuals/businesses: 16 Parish groups – 6 schools – 12 community groups – 3 businesses – 1 other church – 4 individuals plus of course all the regular extras – the 4 ‘knit one, purl one’ board trees and multiple small creations.

Favourites were:

St Christopher’s School paper chains, with a link decorated by every child in the school;

St Francis Church with photos taken around Cowley; and

#LoveCowleyHistory – the Knights Templar and the car factory – from Kay Chambers and John Bains

A successful introduction was the ‘**find 10 love hearts**’ search in the trees around the church, enjoyed by young and older alike.



All three musical events were much enjoyed : Singing together workshop *with Emily Marshall*; Seasonal songs and readings *Rising Voices Community choir* ; *#LoveGospelJazz the Gospel Jazz Project* We thank them all for their enthusiastic involvement

The five travelling trees, happily sponsored by the Central England Co-op Funeral Care, began their journeys as ‘**travelling trees of love**’ on Advent Sunday and visited

(1) 4 schools, (2) 14 church, homes and community settings, (3) 6 community spaces and (4), (5) 11 Little Stars/Seashells families – and were received back at the Carol service. We were especially glad to welcome Elmthorpe Convent, Rose Hill Methodist Church, Singletree and Oxfordshire History Centre @ St Lukes to receive a tree for the first time.

Some quotes from the travel log books:

at Emily Marshall’s harmony singing workshop

“the tree sparkles joy and I loved singing”

at Rising Voices community choir concert

“love comes in many forms – there will always be a way to love others”

in a Parish home

“this dear little tree bringing with it love and hope in our troubled world – a moment of peace and calm at this busy time”

St Francis school – Falcon class – Y6

L living life to the fullest
O often sharing special gifts
V very special someone
E everyone should be loved

At least 50 (we lost count!) 10cm knitted Christmas trees with our Christmas tree festival and Parish festive services cards and one from Grace Church Cowley attached, were tied to fences, bushes, railings, park benches, trees around the area as **community gifts of love**. We hope they shared that love in many homes. **Thank you to the knitters, stickers and distributors!**

We were also pleased to be able to stock **olivewood decorations** made by **craftspeople in Bethlehem**, who are unable to sell them this year as there are no tourists or pilgrims in the city. They reached us, to be sold at cost price, **from Christian Concern for One World**. **£120** was raised.

The future: Lesley Williams, CTF Coordinator for 12 years, has declined to organise the festival for another year, in order to reclaim her life and personal Christmas! The ‘committee’ is therefore planning a scaled down, alternative event for 2024. It will still involve the community, Christmas trees and singing but will be built around just one day – **Saturday 14 December**, albeit still leaving trees in the Church for Christmas. We also expect to retain the notion of travelling trees – of hope or joy or light, to be decided.

If readers of this report think they could be **involved in any way.....please contact Lesley or Geoff**. **The first planning meeting will be on Thursday 23 May, 9:00; we would love for more people to join our very small group.**

Thank you again to all who decorated a tree, stewarded, visited, donated.

contact : ctf@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

Lesley Williams – Convenor

Christian Aid

Christian Aid Week 2023 celebrated the Christian Aid partners in Malawi who are helping farmers transform their livelihoods using the humble but mighty pigeon pea: a drought-resistant, soil-revitalising, high-protein, low-cost, delicious crop. It’s an essential part of the diet of millions of people around the world and for thousands of farming families in Malawi, pigeon peas are a route out of poverty. We tracked them down in an international mini market on the Cowley Road and some of us tried the pigeon pea recipes, and a drinking straw related challenge!

We again used ‘delivery only’ CAW envelopes, each labelled to tell the recipient where it could be returned – St James Centre and St Francis Church for the local roads and two parishioners’ home addresses. The system doesn’t raise a huge amount, but we will continue with it in 2024 in order to raise awareness.

Templars Square allocated the charity stand to us for the whole week, which we used as an information point. There were sadly no volunteers available to person it with games and a tombola.

Christian Aid Week total from envelopes returned through the 'delivery only' system and from worshippers in our churches plus the Big Brunch concert with The Gospel Jazz Project, raised £810 with added gift aid.

January's Epiphany Big Brekkie contributed £160; and June's Quiz Aid £190.

So, the 2023 Parish Christian Aid total was £1,160. Thank you!

2024 opened with a Big Brunch on 27 January, with £213 donated; eggs, coffee, bacon, sausages and fruit were again provided by the three local Co-operative stores who all receive profuse thank you letters!

For Christian Aid Week 12-18 May 2024, we will continue our delivery only envelope coverage; repeat the Saturday morning Big Brunch with live music from The Gospel Jazz Project (who also again entertained us during the Cowley festival of Christmas trees) on Saturday 18 May, 10.30-12.00; and may have a tombola and games stall in Templars Square on a date to be confirmed, if volunteers are available. Please contact Lesley Williams if you could be!

Lesley Williams

Community Emergency Foodbank (CEF)

Another busy year at our three Foodbank Cafes at St Francis Church, Barton Community Church and Littlemore Baptist Church. Numbers coming through our doors have remained reasonably steady over the last 2 years, which I believe has enabled us to provide a good reliable service, where, on most days, our volunteers are able to provide quality time, chat to those who welcome it and perhaps help them identify where they might receive more help. Of course, it is the food parcels they have come for and we have managed to keep our warehouse, at St Francis Church, well replenished, so no one is sent away hungry. We were concerned last April that our food donations were down, and we were having to purchase more food than previously. However, stocks are good at the moment, as people have been giving extremely generously and providing the food items we are most in need of. This is mainly due to the excellent relationship our warehouse team have built up with people bringing their weekly donations. They have responded to their requests for items we are short of at the time, and this has been tremendously encouraging.

This Spring we are overhauling our Data Base system to make it more accessible and easier to use for our volunteers. Part of this system was set up 15 years ago and although Geoff Bayliss kindly created an electronic referral system during COVID the two systems were not compatible. We are excited about this change which will make the gathering of information more streamline.

Each Foodbank cafes have a great volunteer team who are very dedicated to their work with CEF and are enthusiastic about what they do. We thoroughly enjoy our yearly summer party where everyone is able to get together and swap stories etc.

Tom and Jane continue to do their yearly sponsored walk to raise funds for CEF. They search for areas to walk that are reasonably flat as Tom in his eighties and Jane getting that way, so they are not too keen on too many hills. They thoroughly enjoyed their walk around the coast of Norfolk last September. "Very Flat Norfolk!"

CEF continues to be grateful to the support so many of you give to CEF. Keep up the good work where you can.

Jane Benyon

Friends of St James Old School

The stylish family home has now been created by Eddie and Ana Johnson and their children from St James Old School next to the church. Several years on, there's *still* some landscaping and cosmetic work to complete.

The 'Friends of St James Old School' technically still exists, albeit not actively; we will wind up once we have installed the long-promised plaque on the outside of the refurbished building, celebrating its heritage and the Lord Nuffield connection. The design of that remains stalled but we are in contact with the Johnsons – and still seeking inspiration for a suitable quotation to include.

We'd still love eventually to publish a booklet illustrating the school's history. There's lots of available evidence which Rosanne Butler and Les Hemsworth have in their hands. We just need to put it all together – and would welcome help from anyone with such skills.

Lesley Williams, Chair

Parish Schools - Governors

We are privileged to have three of our 'own' Parish Schools – but therefore have the responsibility to provide Foundation Governors for each Governing Body. At Church Cowley St James, Bartholomew Road, Geoff Bayliss and Eleanor Thompson – a member of St Mary the Virgin church, Oxford - fulfil that role. The school is moving towards becoming an Academy under the River Learning Trust.

St Christopher's, Temple Road, is already an Academy, part of the ODST, Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, and therefore has 3 Foundation Governors, appointed by the Trust, currently Mary Bayliss, Geoff Bayliss and Jean Holderness, who is also Chair of the Board

Lesley Williams and June Smith serve as Foundation Governors at St Francis; Geoff Bayliss is a Co-opted Governor and Chair. The School became an Academy in the ODST on 1 April 2024, so the school governance and responsibilities changed as the Governor role is slightly different – but not noticeable to parents or children!

Anyone interested in exploring the possibility of filling future Governor vacancies should talk to Geoff,

It is not an easy role: we are accountable and answerable for the governance, budget and attainment in the school, which requires quite a time commitment for meetings and school monitoring visits; and also for the distinctive Church of England Christian nature of the schools - but it is rewarding and an excellent way of fulfilling our Christian responsibility to the families and young people of Cowley.

Lesley Williams

Church Cowley St James CE Primary School

No report was received from the school. We appreciate the pressure they are under and look forward to a report in the future.

St Francis CE Primary School

The past year has been a very positive and exciting year for our school. The most significant change has been our decision to become part of the ODS Trust. We are pleased to announce that the process of academisation is now nearing completion and we became part of the trust from 1 April 2024.

The Open the Book assemblies continue to be a fortnightly feature of our collective worship and are always extremely popular with children across the school who enjoy seeing bible stories being brought to life through the imaginative storytelling of the Open the Book volunteers. We would like to thank them wholeheartedly for their valued contribution to school life. Termly Prayer Spaces also continues to be a very enjoyable and enriching event for our children. They appreciate the wonderful activities arranged for them and are also grateful for the time they are given to reflect on what they are thankful for.

We have a particularly dedicated team of teachers and support staff who continue to guide and nurture our children fantastically in every respect. This year we welcomed some new teaching staff, including Mrs Turner, our new PE teacher, who has been doing particularly valuable work with our children ensuring they are taking part in as much physical activity as possible during school time. Children have taken part in a huge variety of different sporting events outside of school and are now given the opportunity to compete against children from other schools.

In service to our parish meta narrative of 'Living Life to the Fullest', children across the school have taken part in lots of exciting school trips and events over the past year. Examples of some of the trips they have taken part in include a Year 5 trip to Magdalen College Oxford, our Year 6 Junior Citizens trip, a maths and science event at Oxford High, and a Year 5 trip to the Ashmolean Museum. Children also continue to enjoy their regular trips to Shotover, which we are very fortunate to have right on our doorstep.

We have also introduced some exciting new initiatives to enhance the children's learning this year. Our new **Enrichment Programme** gives children from Reception to Year 6 the opportunity to take part in a variety of different activities after school including cricket, dance, board games, art and Lego. We have already received excellent feedback from parents who report their children have really benefited from taking part in these activities. Another new initiative set up by our Assistant Headteacher is our **Maths Resource Library** allowing families to borrow a variety of maths resources from school (as well as attend workshops) to assist their child's learning at home. Our **main school library** has also undergone a recent transformation with the help of Oxford Academic (Oxford University Press) who recently donated 500 books and came into school to help us re-organise the space. This is a fantastic resource for our children who are already making excellent use of it. Finally, we have also made improvements to our **music provision** through the introduction of peripatetic music lessons via Totally Rad Music. Provided on site,

within school hours and at a highly competitive rate, children will receive tuition in whatever instrument they choose – guitar, drums, piano, violin, trumpet and ukelele being just a few of the options.

Fleur Belcher & Lorraine Wood
Co-Headteachers

St Christopher's CE Primary School

As a governor of St Christopher's I said I would write a report:

At St Christopher's Primary School our vision is to 'have the courage to live life in all its fullness, to belong within our community, respect and love those around us.' We do this through nurture, learning and growing together. 'I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness.' John 10:10.

To include everything that happens at St Christopher's would be impossible so I have decided to choose something from some of the classes, which has recently been shared on social media:

Alongside making good progress in phonics, reading, comprehension, maths, science and all the curriculum, here are a few glimpses into what else is offered in the last months:

Cakes sales, School discos, Year 5/6 girls football, Year 5/6 boys played in a tournament, creating a school recipe book, celebrating 100% attendance by various classes, visiting Grace Church for Easter services, cooking classes, listening to stories by mystery guests, celebrating World Book Day, Daffodil breakfast where parents were invited in share breakfast with their children and show what they had been making, after school club, English as an Additional Language club, National Skipping Day and Red Nose Day.

Blossom class have made mini beasts and Easter/Spring displays, Year 6s have been taught fencing, they have been researching about the importance of the parts of Oxford University, particularly the historical importance of the different buildings, they have been recapping their knowledge about evolution, Charles Darwin and adaption, Year 3s have visited the library, Willow class went to the Ashmolean and Christ Church college and cathedral, Oak class measured in metres and which unit of measure to use for different lengths, Reception in Godly Play heard the story of creation and the 10 commandments and have been exploring life cycles focussing on frogs, and Year 5s have been learning to play volleyball and visited the Mathematical Institute for a talk on bird watching,

From this snapshot, you can see lots happened at St Christopher's.

Mary Bayliss, Governor

2nd Cowley Rainbows and 2nd Cowley Brownies

2nd Cowley Rainbows and Brownies continue to grow. We have been working on several challenges including the OXTRAIL Challenge which is linked to the upcoming trail of oxen around the city. We have been doing activities around six

areas including kindness, compassion and family. We have also completed a science challenge linked to Physics. This month one of the Brownies completed the interest badge needed in order to be awarded her Bronze Award as she has completed two theme awards.

Abi Reynolds

5th Cowley Guides

During this year we have been getting the Guides to look at completing skills builders and ensuring they have a try at organising which ones each patrol want or need to do. These have included, cooking, crafts, inventing new games, taste tests, exercise skills, personal safety skills and many more. This has been encouraging and engaging with them, and hopefully we can complete many more in the coming year. We have also incorporated some celebrations into the year, with Shrove Tuesday and some pancake making, and at Christmas the Guides decorated a tree set up in the church.

The guides had a few trips out from the meetings, with the Oxygen 2023 activity day at Jubilee House, against a lot of other guiding units in the region, 2 trips to the cinema to see “Matilda” and “The Little Mermaid” and a bowling trip to the Kassam stadium.

5th Cowley have welcomed several new Guides which is brilliant for the unit. One has already been enrolled with the rest being completed in the next few weeks. Always good to welcome new faces to 5th Cowley Guides. We have introduced new patrol names to the unit which are Bees, Lions and Dragons. These come with lovely pin badges the guides can wear and show which patrol they are in.

One of the leaders, Sam Moss, will be starting to complete the leadership package due to being away from guiding for about 20 years, refreshing her memory, and learning all of the new things guiding have introduced.

And lastly a massive celebration happened this year with our leader Becky Ford hitting her 20 years in Guiding, which is a fantastic achievement. She received a lovely 20-year pin and certificate. Hopefully she will complete another 20 years!

Becky Wiggins

3rd Cowley Brownies

- We've a full unit of 24 girls aged 7-10yrs from all the local schools. Still 3 leaders and currently 1 Duke of Edinburgh volunteer (an ex-brownie.)
- At the start of one multilingual activity, we asked what languages our girls spoke at home - English, Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Yoruba, French, Mandarin, Hindi and Persian. 🧡 We love our rich, diverse cultures.
- Extended Sleepover at Jubilee House, Beckley. Hard work for Guiders but girls absolutely loved it.
- Activities have included:
 - Fire Station visit

- Joint campfire with cubs in car park
- "Skills for my future" included cooking with a yummy tomato sauce
- "We Love Cowley" hearts for Christmas Tree Festival
- Lots of crafts, games, badges.
- Local walks, usually ending at the playground
- Ideas and lots of designs for the new Guiding uniforms, planned for 2026.
- Decorating ideas for Oxfordshire Guiding's cow; watch out for the fundraising Sobell House herds across Oxford in July/August.

Mandy, Hilary and Izzy

5th Cowley Rainbows

We currently have 8 girls on our record. We have worked on several badges, including the Innovate Skills Builder. We spent some time at Christmas making Christmas crafts as well as Easter crafts, such as baskets and "3D" paper eggs. We've even had a few girls turn 7 and move up to Brownies.

Imogen and Sarah

37th Oxford Scout Group and Felix Explorers

No report received

Finance

Currently we have been unable to complete the 2023 Accounts. Despite efforts to achieve this the process of nature overtook us. We will present the accounts as soon as we are able to. Sincere apologies. If you would like a verbal update please do speak to the Rector.

The following team undertake finance work:

- Treasurer: Emily Sommerlade (currently on maternity leave) is responsible for reconciling statements and reporting
- Donations/gift aid coordinator: Sue Philcox
- Banking at St Francis: Shirley Costar/Lyn Lord
- Banking at St James: Chris Woodman/Sally Hemsworth/Lesley Williams
- Contracts for energy and other facilities: June Smith
- Authorised to set by BAC payments for bills: Emily Sommerlade/Sally Hemsworth/Lesley Williams
- Payments by cheque: Emily Sommerlade/Sally Hemsworth/Lesley Williams/Chris Woodman

Mission Giving

The 2021 Mission Giving allocation of £2,020 approved by the PCC was not paid over to the eight nominated charities until 2023 so it will appear in the 2023 accounts.

The donations represent 5% of the 2021 Planned Giving income. The recipient charities were:

£300 to each of the following;	Agnes Smith Advice Centre East Oxford Soup Kitchen Archway OX4FoodCrew BeSpace Delhi Open Aid School
£120 to:	Kids Matter
£100 to:	Siloam's Ministry of Giving

£750 was given to each of the children's charities ROSY and SeeSaw resulting from donations to The Christmas Tree Festival at the end of 2022. Other donations were made and these will be set out in detail in the 2023 Accounts.

The amount for 2022 Mission Giving is £1,600. A meeting to decide the 2022 Mission Giving allocation will be held on Monday, 20 May 2024, at 7.30 pm in the Ranklin Room at St James Church Centre. If you cannot attend but wish to put forward suggestions for grants, please give information to Sally Hemsworth. Lesley Williams or the Rector.

Parish Mission Prayer and Giving Policy

The PCC has reviewed and maintained this policy, first accepted in January 2021.

Our declared Parish mission statement

- to live out God's purposes for us
- to make Christ known in Cowley
- to raise up a new generation to love and serve the Lord

only directly references our Parish life in Cowley, ignoring our responsibilities to creation and to our worldwide brothers and sisters.

When the time is right, the PCC may consult, review and add to that declared vision to include a wider view of our mission stance in relation to: creation, the environment, humanitarian issues – to develop our knowledge and understanding of our role in and impact on God's creation and people.

The Parish has established a deeper mission relationship with a limited number of charities through the year. We demonstrate our Christian Love through action, prayer and giving; also responding as individuals and as a Parish to major natural and humanitarian disaster appeals.

Christian Aid is a year-round commitment with a special focus on Christian Aid Week in May. We no longer undertake a door-to-door envelope collection but for two years have used 'delivery only' envelopes, labelled with a return point – the two churches, St James Centre, a few homes - but we also aim to find creative ways of gathering donations both from Parish members and the public during CAW and through other events – two or three Big Brekkie/ Brunches, Quiz Aid and sometimes sponsored activities

Harvest thanksgiving : we commit to giving food items to CEF and cash to Water Aid every year, so seek to share more information about their work from speakers and leaflets/websites/ media. We will engage with them by praying for them regularly, not just on one autumn Sunday a year. We maintain all year collection points in both churches for donated goods to CEF, which is based at St Francis church.

Christmas: our Cowley Christmas tree festival relationship with SeeSaw and ROSY demonstrates our recognition of the instruction to 'suffer these little children to come to me'. Following annual PCC approval, all Christmas service open plate collections are added to the CTF donations, shared equally between the two charities.

We also value our Parish relationship with/involvement in: BeSpace (prayer spaces in schools) and Open the Book (Bible Society) and support them with personnel, prayer and donations.

The Parish Mothers' Union prayer group also fundraises for the national MU AFIA (Away From It All).

A small number of parishioners participate in the sponsored September Ride and Stride, with the proceeds shared 50:50 between Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust and the Parish.

The Parish maintains the donation to parishioner nominated Christian causes of 5% of annual planned giving, ensuring that everyone learns about the recipient causes' work and that we pray for them. It is another great, exciting statement of thanksgiving for all that we receive from our Father.

Of course, we maintain our own regular Parish fundraising to cover the costs of worship, fellowship, outreach and buildings through stewardship, planned giving and annual events : the Spring sale with plants sale, Christmas gift and craft fair, film club and marmalade proceeds - and other small-scale social occasions.

Lesley Williams

Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of the Parish

The following work undertaken in the last twelve months has been:

- LED lighting installed in both churches
- Under-sink heaters at St Francis
- Five-yearly electrical checks at St Francis, St James and St James Church Centre
- PAT testing
- Tuning of pianos (the organs serviced once the weather gets warmer)

A new fridge/freezer has been purchased for St Francis, and St James Church Centre has had a new freezer.

St Francis guttering has been undertaken, and this has solved the problem with the leaking pipe in the corridor. We are waiting for work to be undertaken at St James Church and St James Church Centre.

The snagging work on the toilet project at St James Church is now being done so that project will be completed in the next couple of weeks. The digital projection system is working well, although there are still queries about the sound system.

No work has been done on the inventories and the terriers over the last year, but this is on the list for action during 2024/2025.

Deanery Synod

There have been three meetings since the last APCM.

The work of the Synod has been dominated by issues relating to the Parish Share. The new scheme adopted by the Diocese has meant an added increase to the funds needing to be raised by the Deanery. This has increased the pressure on Parishes. In general, an increased number of Parishes have found finance a challenge. This is particularly true of those Parish paying the biggest shares. There have been some difficult discussions which have eventually lead to agreed share levels across the Deanery. For Cowley Parish there has been a reduced level of share requested. This reflects both our local finances and change in status of one of our assisting ministers.

There have been significant conversations about how we as Deanery parishes can best work together to grow the kingdom of god. We have been looking at how we might develop closer relationships with other Parishes. In the last months this has had a particular focus on families, youth people and children's work. This is an on-going project. For us there have been very productive conversations with Iffley, Blackbird Leys, Littlemore and Sandford-on-Thames. Watch this space.

Within the Deanery there is an agreed reduction in the stipendiary posts. All Saints, Headington, has moved towards its next appointment being for a 0.5 full time equivalent post. That is currently being advertised.

The Rector has been given a further three-year licence to act as Area Dean.

OTHER MATTERS OF PAROCHIAL OR GENERAL CHURCH INTEREST



Serving God,
Cowley and Headington

Cowley Team Ministry

St. James and St Francis Churches

Financial Report

2023

**TOWARDS A
COMMON VISION**

Welcome!

Cowley folks have been worshipping at St James Church for nearly a millennium, and at St Francis Church for almost a century.

The work in our church community and our beautiful buildings constantly needs funds.

Donations can be made by:

- Cash or cheque
- Weekly envelopes
- Standing order at a bank
- Direct debit using the "Parish Giving Scheme" #270627190, or single donations using their website
- Payments into our bank account
[Name: Cowley (Oxford) PCC, Sort code: 30-12-51,
Account number: 01000840]
- By card using the QR code on our website
- By leaving a legacy

Please contact the Parish Office if you would like further information.

Financial Summary 2023

During 2023, the communities of the two churches have come together to overcome many of the challenges of the cost-of-living increases.

Across all funds and activities, the largest expenditure cost increase this year continues to be the utilities. Gas, electricity, and water have all increased in total by £2.9k (38%). The cost of living and increased activity have impacted on the general expenses. In total, costs have increased £13.5k (15%) (after excluding costs relating to major works and repairs).

Overall donations were down by 7% to £47.8k this year, from £51.7k in 2022. Overall income from all sources is down by 4% to £97k from £101.4k, after one-off grants and legacies are excluded. The largest reductions were in the donations by bank standing orders, envelope giving, and one-off donations, however donations through parish giving DD, and cash giving at services have increased as people give in alternative ways.

General [Unrestricted] Fund

All donations to the Parish, not specified for a particular purpose, go into the General Fund used to pay our contribution to the cost of ministry and to support services in our two churches. Donations for the general fund were down by 4% to £47,549, from £49,442 in 2022.

The fund held £10,709 at the end of the year, mainly due to cost pressures.

The income from donors continues to cover our Parish Share which was £49,491 (no increase from last year). Parish Share is paid to the diocese to cover clergy stipends, housing, training, pensions, and administration.

Gift Aid is claimed from HMRC by the parish on donations from individuals who have made a Gift Aid declaration and from anonymous small cash donations. This is a 25% uplift on money given. Due to more donations falling into this category, the tax recoverable increased by £654 (9%) this year.

Lettings in St Francis Church have generated £6,289, a decrease of £1,337 (18%) on the previous year and a contributor to the General fund. Parochial fees from weddings, funerals etc. are down £311 (10%). These are mostly offset with some increased fundraising activity, up £695 (45%). Bank interest received has also risen £791 (83%) due to interest rate rises.

Apart from the Parish Share, the General Fund is used for all the expenses relating to our two churches from gas and electricity to such other essentials as fire and electrical safety, insurance, office costs, communion wafers, light bulbs, and hand sanitisers, amongst many. The St James Church Centre gas, electricity and water comes from the St James Church Centre (Trading) Fund. Utilities expensed to the General fund rose £2,374 (41%). Church maintenance and cleaning have also increased. In total, costs against the General fund have increased £9,140 (13%).

Other Funds

St James Church Centre (Trading) Fund (Designated)

Total income for the year was £23,065 (£19,195 in 2022). Letting income has continued to grow, up 22% since the previous year.

Utility bills and cleaning are up from last year because of increased use of the building and high inflation. Expenditure was £19,017 (£17,146 in 2022), an increase of 11%.

The fund increased to £35,203 at the end of the year.

St Francis Church Fabric Fund (Restricted)

This fund received half the interest from the St James Church Centre investment account. The fund is used for the maintenance of St Francis. Expenditure of £502 in the year was for a new fridge freezer and some electrical work.

At the end of the year this fund held £ 14,371.

St James Church Fabric Fund (Restricted)

This fund received half the interest from the St James Church Centre investment account. There was no expenditure in the year

At the end of the year this fund held £18,182.

Feed- In tariff payments (Designated)

The 39 solar panels, on the roof of St James Centre building, additional funds were generated in 2023 although British Gas has not yet provided a figure. It is expected to be at a similar level to 2022 (£587). The balance held is £7,306.

St James Legacy Fund (Designated)

A final amount from the Audrey Smith legacy was received of additional £2,173, increasing this fund to £46,257. No restrictions have been placed on this gift. The PCC is considering designated purposes to make the best use of the legacy fund.

The Flush Fund for St James Church (Restricted)

This fund held £19,100 at the end of the year.

Donations added £119 to the fund, and major works and repairs under the terms of the restrictions were £8,253 in total, including a new laptop (£698), digital projection equipment (£4,308) from AVI limited, and other electrical works (£3,247).

St James Church Centre Endowment Fund

The capital in this fund is to be used only on the St James Church Centre building. £50,000 was placed in the CCLA CBF Church of England Investment Fund in 2010. On 31st December 2023, the shares held in the fund were valued at £104,092 (2022 - £95,070).

Interest from this investment is paid quarterly and can be used for other purposes. It is placed equally in the Fabric Funds of St James and St Francis Churches. The total for 2023 was £2,845.

Funds under £5-10k

Bell Tower Restoration Fund (Restricted)	£722
Outreach - Outreach (Designated) Fund	£42
Youth Work Fund (Restricted)	£200
Music (Designated) Fund (<i>see note i</i>)	£3,800
Organ - Organ Restoration (Restricted) Fund	£2,990
St Francis Activities (Designated) Fund	£1,053
Friends Of St James Old School (Restricted) Fund (<i>see note ii</i>)	£4,011

Notes:

- i. Music (Designated) Fund* - to be used for organist payments.
- ii. Friends of St James Old School (Restricted) Fund* - £4,011 was received in October restricted to payment for the group's commitment to install a plaque on the Old School building, acknowledging its educational heritage, and to produce a history of the school booklet. In accordance with the Friends' constitution, any remaining funds must be transferred to Church Cowley St James School.

Mission and Charity Giving in 2023

The 2022 Mission Giving allocation of £1,600 was approved by the PCC. The donations represent 5% of the 2022 Planned Giving income. This will be paid in 2024. The PCC is being asked to make donations to the following seven charities/support groups, with each receiving £228.60, being an equal share of the allocation:

Agnes Smith Advice Centre	Archway
Asylum Welcome	BeSpace
Kids Matter	Oxford Community Soup Kitchen
Waste2Taste	

In April 2023, £750 was given to each of the children's charities ROSY and SeeSaw resulting from donations to The Christmas Tree Festival at the end of 2022. £1,295 was collected at the 2023 Christmas Tree Festival in December.

Services and fund-raising events held at the church raised £115 for Mothers Union for AFIA, £260 for WaterAid, and £530 for Christian Aid Big Brekkies in January and May, Christian Aid Week in May, and a Quiz Aid in June.

Reserves Policy

The trustees have a policy of maintaining a minimum of three months of charitable expenditure. £20,000 would be needed using the Jan-Oct 2023 costs. The total Unrestricted funds of £104,369 cover 15.7 months of charitable expenditure.

These are the sums freely available for general use to further the purposes of the churches, and to keep the churches running. They are held at a level to withstand any short-term financial risks, particularly the inflation risk and ongoing economic pressures for everyone supporting the church, and to ensure the church can continue running day to day.

The trustees will review these levels annually to keep pace with rising costs. Other restricted funds are available to meet emergency situations and repairs.

Cowley Team Ministry
Receipts and payments
Selected period: 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

Note	From To	01 January 2023 31 December 2023	01 January 2022 31 December 2022
General - General fund (Unrestricted) Fund			
Incoming resources			
Incoming resources from donors			
Bank SO Gift-aided St J		10,178	14,333
Bank SO Gift-aided -St F		740	660
Parish Giving DD St J		9,215	8,212
Parish Giving DD St F		938	1,446
Env. Gift-aided St J		2,969	2,926
Env. Gift-aided -St F		1,175	1,744
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid St J		7,581	5,876
Tax Recoverable on Gift Aid St F		131	1,182
Standing Orders - non Gift-Aid St J		1,685	1,120
Env Non Gift-aided - St J		798	1,244
Env Non Gift-aided - St F		375	387
Loose plate-St James		3,336	1,767
Loose plate-St Francis		682	300
Loose plate-wedding/funerals St J		354	792
Loose plate - weddings/funerals St F		10	-
Non-Gift Aid donations St J		3,938	5,233
Non-Gift Aid donations St F		398	80
GiveaLittleStJ		1,009	304
GiveaLittleStF		3	13
Giving through Church boxes St F		-	23
One-off Gift Aid gifts - St J		2,035	800
One off Gift Aid Gifts St F		-	1,000
Total Incoming resources from donors		47,549	49,442
Other voluntary incoming resources			
Legacies St J		-	-
Little Stars St F		9	-
Chronicle suscriptions + ads		313	360
Coffee monies St J		246	203
Total Other voluntary incoming resources		569	563
Activities in furtherance of the councils objects			
From lunches		-	197
St F- lettings		6,289	7,626
Fees-weddings/funerals St J		2,913	3,224
Total Activities in furtherance of the councils objects		9,202	11,047
Activities for generating funds			
Fund Raising St J		1,630	1,404
Fund raising St F		613	60
Centre lettings		-	-
SeaShells		-	82
Total Activities for generating funds		2,243	1,546
Income from investments			
Bank & building soc interest		2,418	953
Total Income from investments		2,418	953
Other incoming resources			
One off Grants St J		-	1,538
Msc Income St J		4,721	4,079
Msc Income St F		430	620
Total Other incoming resources		5,151	6,237
Total Incoming resources		67,131	69,788
Resources used			
Costs of generating funds			
SeaShells expenses		-	18
Total Costs of generating funds		-	18
Activities relating to the work of the Church			
Ministry parish share		49,491	47,975
Flowers		54	-
Deanery Charges St J		200	170
Deanery Charges St F		200	170
Gas-St Francis		4,050	1,739
Electric-St James Church		2,472	2,472

Cowley Team Ministry

Balance Sheet detailed

	As at 31/12/2023	As at 31/12/2022
Current assets		
A1501: Lloyds Bank Current Account	88,866	105,557
A1505: CCLA CoE Deposit Fund Account	79,677	74,414
A1506: Lloyds TSB Investment Account	0	0
A1510: CCLA CoE Investment Fund Account	50,000	50,000
A1550: Cash in hand	150	150
Z05: Accounts Receivable	2,024	2,024
Total Current assets	220,718	232,145
Liabilities		
6699: Agency collections	4,275	1,714
Z04: Accounts Payable	(1,389)	(1,389)
Total Liabilities	2,886	325
Net Asset surplus (deficit)	217,832	231,821
Reserves		
Excess/(deficit) for the year to 31 Dec 2023	(13,988)	64,439
Z01: Starting balances	231,821	167,382
Total Reserves	217,832	231,821

Represented by Funds		
General (Unrestricted)	10,709	21,206
Designated	93,660	44,535
Restricted	60,193	112,809
Endowment	53,270	53,270
Total	217,832	231,821

See page 1 to 4 of the Finance Report for details on all funds

Cowley Team Ministry
Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Incoming resources					
Incoming resources from donors	47,549	254	0	47,803	51,652
Other voluntary incoming resources	2,741	2,176	0	4,918	47,439
Activities in furtherance of the councils objects	9,202	2,420	0	11,621	13,086
Activities for generating funds	2,243	20,643	0	22,886	21,416
Income from investments	2,418	2,845	0	5,263	3,783
Other incoming resources	5,151	0	0	5,151	46,104
Total income	69,304	28,339	0	97,642	183,478
Resources used					
Costs of generating funds	0	2,472	0	2,472	2,487
Activities relating to the work of the Church	74,271	30,099	0	104,370	113,177
Support costs	93	0	0	93	91
Church management and administration	3,245	1,449	0	4,695	3,285
Total expenditure	77,610	34,021	0	111,630	119,039
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(8,306)	(5,682)	0	(13,988)	64,439
Transfers:					
Gross transfers between funds - in	47,790	838	0	48,628	4,212
Gross transfers between funds - out	(856)	(47,773)	0	(48,628)	(4,212)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains/losses on investment assets	0	0	0	0	0
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	0	0	0	0	0
Net movement in funds	38,628	(52,616)	0	(13,988)	64,439
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	65,741	112,809	53,270	231,821	167,382
Total funds carried forward	104,369	60,193	53,270	217,832	231,821
Represented by					
Unrestricted					
General fund	10,709	0	0	10,709	21,206
Designated					
Feed-in Tariff Payments	7,306	0	0	7,306	0
Music	3,800	0	0	3,800	0
Outreach	42	0	0	42	452
St Francis Activities	1,053	0	0	1,053	0
St James Centre	35,203	0	0	35,203	(0)
St James Legacy Fund	46,257	0	0	46,257	44,084
Restricted					
Bell Tower	0	722	0	722	955
Feed-in Tariff Payments	0	0	0	0	7,306
Friends Of St James Old School	0	4,011	0	4,011	4,011
Mission	0	617	0	617	2,812
Music	0	0	0	0	4,300
Organ Restoration	0	2,990	0	2,990	2,990
St F Church Fabric Fund	0	14,371	0	14,371	13,450
St Francis Activities	0	0	0	0	1,652
St James Centre	0	0	0	0	31,140
St James Church Fabric Fund	0	18,182	0	18,182	16,759
Toilet In St James Church	0	19,100	0	19,100	27,234
Youth Work	0	200	0	200	200
Endowment					
St James Centre	0	0	53,270	53,270	53,270
Total funds	104,369	60,193	53,270	217,832	231,821



CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name: The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical
Parish of Cowley, Oxford.

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1153602

Set out on pages

1 to 9

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above
charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 / 12 / 2023

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation
of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act
2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out
under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I
have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission
under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have
come to my attention (~~other than that disclosed below~~*) in connection with
the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material
respect:

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

I have no concerns and 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.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

R Mohun

Date:

25/10/2024

Name:

RICHARD JOHN GEORGE MOHUN

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Address:

28, Church Hill Road
Oxford
OX4 3SE