

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST MARY, THATCHAM

England & Wales · Charity number 1154079

Details

Other names ST MARY'S THATCHAM PCC

Status Registered

Legal form Previously excepted

Registered 2013-10-03

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 29 Exmoor Road
Thatcham
RG19 3UY

Phone 01635864567

Email office.stmarysthatcham@gmail.com

Website www.stmarysthatcham.org.uk

Activities

Objects: PROMOTING IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH THE WHOLE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

Activities: Thatcham PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector and Team Vicar in promoting in Thatcham Parish the whole mission of the church - spiritual, pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical. The PCC met four times in 2022. Services are held in St Mary's, the Parish Church and at St Barnabas which meets in Thatcham Park Church of England Primary School.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- West Berkshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31		-	-	-
2023-12-31	£149,063	£181,160	-	-
2022-12-31	£189,555	£137,131	-	-
2021-12-31	£136,780	£139,738	-	-
2020-12-31	£131,826	£141,157	-	-
2019-12-31	£159,863	£163,655	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Revd Canon Mark David Bennet	Chair	2013-10-02
Ann Dibble		2023-05-29
Christopher Watts		2014-04-29
Colin Leslie Waters		2020-10-18
Judith Bennet		2023-05-21
Lourdes Cottam		2023-05-29
Mark Douglas Backhouse		2020-10-08
Mary Stagg		2017-04-26
Michael Ivan Godfrey Watson		2023-05-21
Rev Angela Hazell McSweeney Brennan		2020-10-08
Rev BRENDA JUNE HARLAND		2013-10-02
Stephen Rice		2023-05-21

Accounts



2023

Thatcham Annual Parish Meeting Annual Report APCM 21 April 2024

Parish Office
St Mary's Church
Churchgate
Thatcham
RG19 3PN

Contents	page
Parochial Church Council 2023/4.....	2
Team Rector's Report.....	2
Report of the proceedings of the PCC	3
Membership.....	4
Committees.....	4
Finance -Report to the accounts.....	4
Stewardship Secretary's Report.....	6
Safeguarding Report.....	7
ABCs.....	8
Children and Young People	8
Churchwardens	9
Music at St Mary's.....	12
St Barnabas Church.....	13
Newbury Deanery Synod.....	14
Bellringers' Report	15
Inventory.	17
Flowers- Sewing Group	17
Little Churches, Home Communions, West Berks Community Hospital	18
Prayer Ministry and Prayer Circle.....	18
C.A.M.E.O	19
Thatcham Parochial Charities.....	20
Missions – Christian Aid – Children's Society – USPG West Berks Foodbank	21
Girl Guiding – Rainbows	23
Connect	23
Service Support Teams.....	23
St Mary's Website.....	23
Appendix 1 Minutes of the Annual Meetings 29 May 2022	
Appendix 2 Summary of Accounts 2022	

Thatcham Parochial Church Council 2022/3

Ex Officio Revd. Mark Bennet Revd Nicola Hulks Revd Brenda Harland Revd Angela Brennan Churchwardens Colin Waters (2020) Sue Ball (2023) Mike Watson (2023) Deanery Synod Representatives (to 2026) Chris Watts Catherine Forbes	Elected Lay Members John Hicks (St Barnabas) Bernadette Ellison (St Barnabas) Leanne Fowler (St Barnabas) Alison Dean (St Barnabas) Lourdes Cottam (St Barnabas) Simon Stagg (2021) Chris Druce (2021) Kevin Dunwell (2023) Viv Druce (2023) Co-options Mark Backhouse (Tower Bells) Mike Stevenson (PCC Secretary) Ann Dibble (Safeguarding)

Team Rectors Report

There was a lot going on in 2023 – it started with Nicola on parental leave, and with a sense that we were recovering somewhat from lockdown and getting back on our feet again. Some of the things we do have changed, perhaps for ever – with a special chalice so we can dip wafers and not spread infections – now an option, but surely with us to stay at our communion services.

The summer saw us trying outside services again during August – these were such a blessing during lockdown, but the inconveniences became evident and we will likely only do one of these each year on Bank Holiday weekend and make something special of it.

Marcia Wadham, who had previously been with us on placement, was (finally) ordained to serve in Hungerford, and out two ordinands – Alison and Leanne continued with their training, on track to be ordained on 29 June 2024 – Alison to serve in Walbury Beacon and Leanne in South Newbury (now including Enborne) Somehow our finances held up (just) and we managed to get some of our outstanding work on the building done. Fun was had raising funds for the Organ and that project is going well thanks to Angela and others on the team.

We held Lent groups too and there was a sense of faith being nurtured, and I hope, of the exploration of faith being encouraged – but the main focus of my thinking and action at least was about reconnecting with our wider community. The practices around funerals and weddings have changed because of lockdown, and the number of baptisms has reduced – in all cases numbers have increased from 2022, but are not yet back at pre-pandemic levels. In common with other churches we are seeing less of the families that we used to see (that, if you think about it, has been quite a normal trend as children have grown up) – but the pipeline of replacement families has been rather broken. Work with schools has continued – invisibly to many, but effectively all the same, and that is now strategically important, alongside the family

based initiatives like ABC, Muddy Church, Baby Café and The Nest. And I am now regularly visiting Thornford Park – something Leonard used to do.

With all the modest positives, my main feeling has been of continuing challenge – some core members have moved away, and others have in death moved closer to God – including the longest list of regular members and friends in my time in Thatcham: you will know several of Leonard Onugha, Joan Meechan, Joan Pook, Tony Collie, Joyce Lovelock, Judith Caton, Valerie Muttram, Ron and Rita Christopher and Barbara and John Saunders – it feels as though we will not see their like again – but you, if you are reading this, stand alongside them in service and faith.

We have also seen John Coombs stepping back from visibly active ministry in retirement, and we have started to see some new people stepping up to significant roles – not least our Churchwardens for the year – Sue Ball, Mike Watson and Colin Waters – who have been a great support and encouragement this year – as has Sue Stevenson with her practical assistance and care of the rotas – which with all the various “defections” have become more difficult to fill – though we are seeing a few volunteers stepping forwards. If we each do a little, no-one will have to do a lot.

Special thanks must go to Ann Dibble who has transformed the management of our safeguarding and has started to put our processes on the more formal footing that is now required. We are in a very different place even though there are many (including myself) who have to make sure we are fully on the new way of doing things.

Chris and Ann Watts have kept the accounts and administration alive and active through the year, and though they have been gradually stepping back, they have been gracious enough not to leave us in the lurch over a challenging time: COVID recovery has not been easy, and the many years of service they have given are not easily noted, measured or marked.

And my clergy colleagues have been a pillar of strength – Brenda, Angela, and Nicola all very active and making a difference above and beyond any reasonable call of duty. And of course Marion, whose greatest contribution to my life is as a consistent prayer partner in the mornings at our services of Morning Prayer, and who seems to be working as hard in retirement as the rest of us.

There is much more I could say, and there are many more people to thank – but you will read about them in the other reports, and see just how much is going on. But above all this is praying for God’s blessing on you, as a member of our Church community. Thank you for being part of something special.

Mark Bennet

Parochial Church Council – Background and Proceedings

Thatcham PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector and the Team Vicar in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church – spiritual, pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical.

The PCC met at St Mary’s Church six times during 2023/4.

Arrangements were made during 2023 for 47 baptisms (55 in 2022) and 6 (7) weddings. In addition there were 31 (36) funerals (21 with a service at St Mary's, 10 with services at a crematorium or cemetery)

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex officio, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. St Barnabas Church is represented on the PCC by up to 5 members elected by their own church meeting.

Committees

The PCC operates through a Standing Committee and working groups on Safeguarding and Appeals (Organ and Major Repairs), which met between full meetings of the Council. The Standing Committee is the only Committee required by law; it has power to transact business of the Council between meetings, subject to any decisions made by the PCC.

FINANCE REPORT

Report to the Accounts December 2023

St Mary's General Account (day to day running of church activities) shows an increase of £4,937 in the cumulative deficit from £13,496 to £18,433. This is taking into account £10,654 raised through a fundraising appeal towards running costs including a match funding grant of £5,000 from Greenham Common Good Exchange Scheme.

Regular giving through Standing Orders and The Parish Giving Scheme has been most welcome but the need to attract new regular givers to replace those who have died or moved away is a challenge.

The St Barnabas General Account shows a positive balance of £3,605 at the end of the year.

We again managed to pay the Parish Share (our contribution to the diocese for clergy stipends, housing and pensions) in full (£95,790).

The Parish Share was set at £103,531 for 2024 despite objections from Thatcham that this 7% increase was not achievable.

Income from Services and other activities improved gradually through the year. Further donations were attracted to the Organ Pipedream Repair Project. The total funds available in organ restricted funds is £54,291. A further £4,211 is held in designated accounts. An additional £872 has been raised in 2024 following a concert at St Mary's.

Major repairs were undertaken to the roof and south west wall of St Marys, including replacement of internal areas of lime plaster. Minor repairs were made to tiled areas of aisles and nave floors. The total cost of these works was £47,988 including fees and VAT the bulk of which (£ 35,752) was paid in 2023. The VAT (£7483) has been reclaimed. A grant of £4,000 from the Berkshire Heritage Churches Fund has been awarded and the balance of £1,250 of Architect fees has yet to be paid.

As forecast last May the cost of gas and electricity increase sharply in 2023. The rate of increase over the last three years has been from £2,160; £3,690; and £7,410 in 2023.

The need to increase regular giving is critical, especially if we are to meet the running costs of both churches and pay the Parish Share again in full in 2023. If anyone is thinking of increasing their Stewardship payments during 2023 or joining the Scheme, please speak to the Treasurer or any of the Churchwardens.

A particular vote of thanks is due to the small team maintaining the books and banking the cash - Ann Watts at St Mary's and Bernie Ellison at St Barnabas – and to all who so generously support the work of the Church in this parish.

Investments and Fund Structure

There were no changes to the structure of the St Mary's PCC investment funds during 2022. The value of investments held by the PCC have begun to recover following significant impact on markets of Covid19 and the war in Ukraine.

There follows a brief description of the history, management and restrictions of each of these PCC managed funds.

Curates Housing and Expenses (formerly known as the Hatherley) Fund

The capital arose from the sale of a house given to the Church in 1935 for a succession of curates to live in. The PCC has a 29.4% share of the rent after deduction of expenses on a property in Station Road which continued to be let by the Diocese while it is not required to house a curate. The income is applied for general parish purposes and so is **unrestricted**. However the first call on any surplus income is the payment of curate / clergy expenses.

Thatcham Church of England Charity

The original capital arose from two-thirds of the sale proceeds of the Old Infant School in the Broadway; one-third is administered separately by the Diocesan Board of Education.

This charity is governed by a Charity Commission Scheme sealed on the 21st May 1980; the clear income from the permanent endowment is for furthering the religious and other charitable work of the Church of England in the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary's Thatcham and is therefore an **unrestricted** fund. All the income is applied in the parish.

The Church Estate Charity

Charity Commission ref – 00436

This is an ancient charity referred to in the Charity Commissioners Report of 1907; the income is to be applied to the upkeep of the church and the churchyard so this is a **restricted** fund.

Income is derived partly from investments and partly from 6/16ths of the income from Moor Meadow Charity, administered by Thatcham Parochial Charities.

The Rookery Church Fund

The small amount of income arising from the legacy by Mrs Hall who died in 1916, subject to the income being **restricted** to the fostering of the Sunday school. The Rookery was the name of the house.

Bankers: St Mary's PCC - Lloyds Bank plc & St Barnabas - HSBC
Independent Examiners: Tax Avenue, Turnfields Court,
Thatcham Investment Managers:

BlackRock Investment Managers, 12 Throgmorton Avenue London
EC2N 2DL
CCLA, Senator House, One Angel Lane , London EC4R 3AB

A summary of the Accounts is attached at Appendix 2.

Stewardship Secretary's Report – St Mary's.

A total of £76,379 was given through the Stewardship Scheme in 2021 (£69,553 in 2021). This included £24,671 through the Parish Giving Scheme introduced in September 2018. Giving through weekly envelopes was £4,327 and standing order payments were £20,987.

The total of £118,674 received in 2022 was the result of the bequest of £25,000 and a donation of £20,000 referred to on the Finance Report for 2022.

By the end of 2023 there were 21 donors paying by Direct Debits through the Parish Giving Scheme. 31 donors gave to St Mary's through Standing Orders. 10 donors use weekly envelopes. New envelopes have not been ordered for the last two years as the minimum order is now 25 sets. Unused envelopes from previous years will be available for 2024.

Great thanks are due to the faithful members of the Stewardship Scheme who by regular and sacrificial levels of giving keep St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches going.

Please continue to review your giving at least annually – index linking is a principle worth considering. Occasional donations are greatly welcomed, but commitment to regular giving is essential if we are to budget for paying for our priests through the Parish Share, maintain the fabric and support sustainable growth of the church in Thatcham.

'Donate' facilities have been incorporated into the website for St Mary's and ideas to encourage other ways to enable online payments are in development.

Giving by contactless payments via the GOODBOX at the back of St Mary's increased significantly to £1,830 (£1,462 in 2021).

I continue to positively recommend the Parish Giving Scheme to all regular givers. Over half the Dioceses in England have joined and together they cover the costs of the small administrative team based at Gloucester Diocese. All that is donated is paid direct to the nominated parish by the 10th of each month and income tax is reclaimed from HMRC through the GIFT AID scheme and distributed to parishes about five days later. This significantly reduces costs and administration at the local level.

Other bonuses are:

- the donations can be index linked if the donors so choose,
- the donations are paid as a single sum to the parish bank account thus avoiding the checking of multiple pages on Bank Statement entries,
- it reduces the bank charges (currently about £28 per month) for handling cheque or cash donations
- minimising the handling of cash and cheques, and delays in payment to the bank account via the Post Office (necessitated by the closure of the Thatcham branch of Lloyds Bank in August 2022)

I would again encourage everyone to make a will and to consider making a bequest to St Mary's. It is not difficult to arrange and can make a significant difference to the future of a growing church in Thatcham.

Chris Watts
Stewardship Secretary

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Committee have met 3 times since the last Annual meeting and reported regularly to the PCC. The support received has enabled us to make some really good progress. Members of the PCC set the example by completing DBS checks and undertaking the basic and foundation safeguarding training offered by the Church of England. Many volunteers in specific roles are now fully trained in safeguarding and up to date with their DBS checks for the church. Thank you to everyone for recognising the change in the public attitude to safeguarding and the necessity for us to keep up.

Steve Rice and Colin Waters are our id verifiers for the DBS process. Thank you to them both, for their efforts and for ensuring a comparatively straightforward experience for members of either St Mary's or St Barnabas.

Having identified 10 activities involving children or vulnerable adults, we have set out to structure the organisation of these activities so that they are as safe as we can make them for all those involved. This is still a work in progress, but the following key steps have been taken:

- Each of the 10 activities has been allocated a PCC member who is not part of that group. Their task is to get to know the group leader and to help with completing some of the paperwork. We are calling them PCC Link Adviser, because they will be able to inform the PCC when safeguarding documents have been reviewed.
- A database has been developed for the church nationally and made available to us. It will allow us to keep track of volunteers in roles with children or vulnerable adults. This will eventually remove the need to keep such records on paper or in private computers.
- Sue Ball is our Recruiter and, despite having several key posts to fill, she is doing an excellent job in following all 16 steps that 'safer recruitment' demands. We hope that the safeguarding hub i.e. the database mentioned above, will, eventually, reduce the quantity of paper involved. It is a steep learning curve for us all.

My thanks go to all of you for your vigilance. Several matters of concern have been reported through the year. it is the nature of safeguarding that once things are passed on, we do not expect to know the outcome. Rest assured that your input can make a difference.

My particular thanks to the safeguarding committee who have a commitment that has made my job considerably easier and a positive outlook that keeps us all hopeful.

Ann Dibble
Parish Safeguarding Officer

ABC

Wednesday mornings are lively at St Mary's!

Pop into church between 10:30 and 12am and you will see the friendly and informal toddler group run by Brenda and the team of volunteers who welcome pre-school children and their carers, offering refreshments, a variety of play areas, craft, a time to chat.

The morning concludes with a short service, animated talk, often involving props, and ending with prayers. The children are always keen to gather at the altar to sing their familiar songs and dance around.

A highlight of the year is the Crib Service when the children and carers are invited to dress up and be part of the nativity play on Christmas Eve, chaotic, fun and moving, all in one.

Each year we say farewell to children who will be beginning formal education with a special little service and a gift to send them on their way but rest assured, there is a steady stream of new babies arriving to occupy 'baby corner' and become part of their own church. It's wonderful if those babies are brought to St Mary's for baptism.

We witness friendships and support groups blossom among the adults and enjoy our conversations with them in an encouraging and relaxed environment.

The average attendance is upwards of 25 adults and 25 children, with a broad age range as grandparents and even great grandparents attend with their family occasionally. The group is valued by all and the aim is to be open at least 46 weeks each year.

If you think you would like to be involved then do speak to Brenda.

The ABC team.

Children's Ministry.

Val Watts and I are extremely privileged to lead the children's' group during the 10am Sunday service at St. Mary's, meeting on the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th (where appropriate) during term time.

So, what do we all get up to?

Well... there's Bible reading, various resources which Val produces from a vast catalogue of books, including the 'Mosaic' series specifically targeted for small groups. Colouring in a weekly worksheet that relates to the Bible story is something the children really seem to enjoy. The youngsters also bring their own ideas and games to share and although there are three at most, they come back each week enthusiastic and ready to join in.

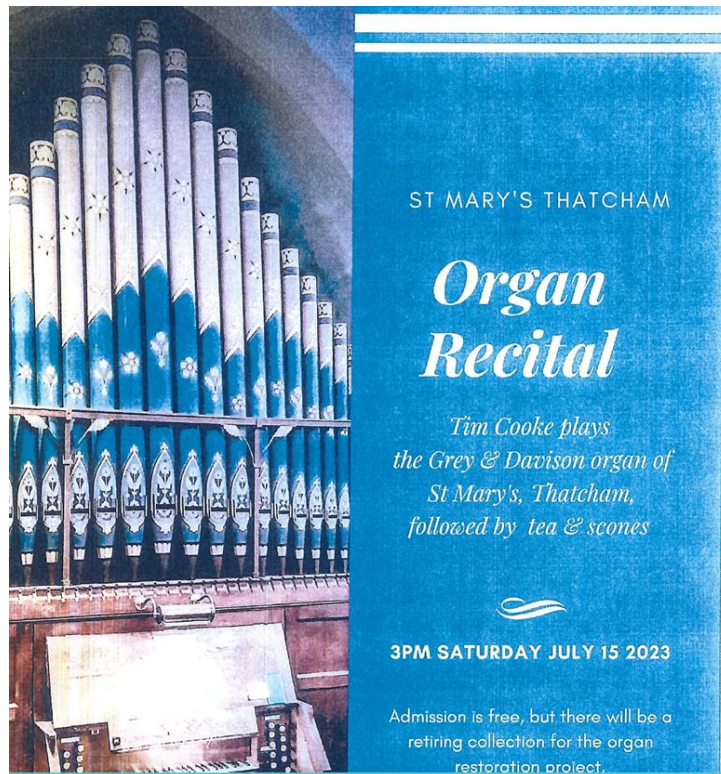
It is of course open to all youngsters, and parents are welcome to sit in if they like.

Christine Rice and The Team

Churchwardens

We would like to give our heartfelt thanks to all the clergy and volunteers, for their hard work in keeping St Mary's & St Barnabas smooth running over the last year.

We have increased the number of Leadership and PCC meetings this year to try and improve the effectiveness of our meetings and running of our churches. Meetings have been well attended.



The Organ

Over the last year we have held successful fund raising events for repair work to be completed on the Church Organ and to repair the roof of the church making us water tight again!

Events include Café & Cabaret, Organ recitals and we have received grants from the Greenham Trust Good Exchange. The majority of the work on the roof has now been completed and church is feeling a little warmer. Hillsdon & Sons Ltd were appointed to carry out much needed work to our church building. There was a significant repair needed to mend the roof and stop the ingress of water, before any more damage was done.

The guttering needed repairing above the south aisle, drying out walls, making good the lime plaster and fixing floor tiles in the main church area.

There have been many musical concerts in the church some of which have been fundraisers as we continue to need money to pay for the day to day running of the church.

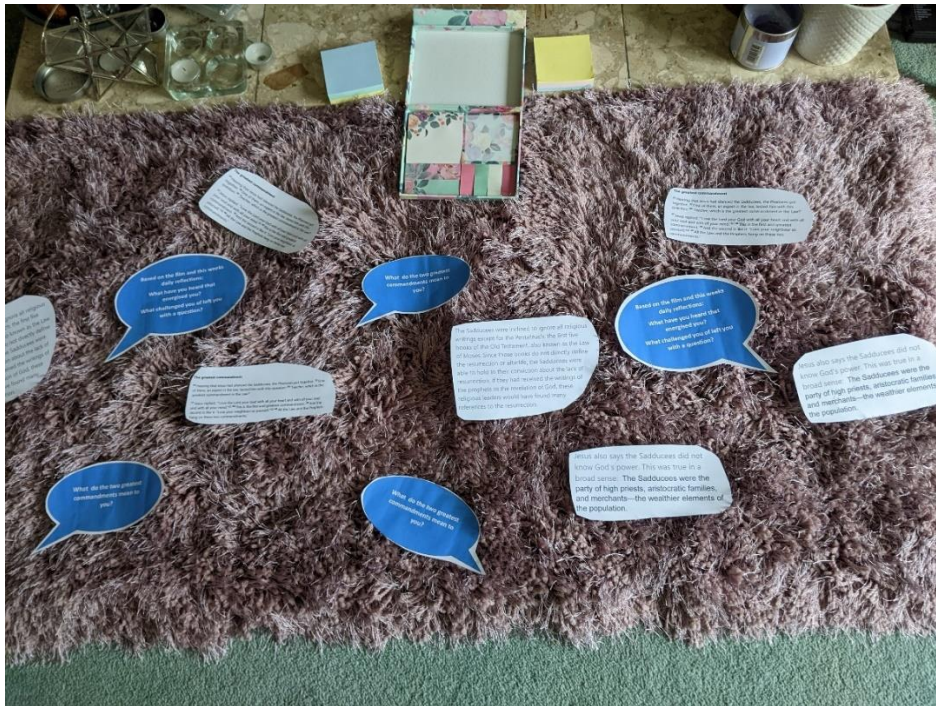
We are appreciative of the role that ABC has in bringing new families to our church.

CAMEO plays an important role in bringing elderly people together in fellowship; we thank very much the volunteers in CAMEO & ABC for their hard work. We have re-introduced prayer helpers in the Chapel after the Sunday 10 am service.

Our services have been slowly getting back to pre-Covid times. However, we need to move on and we are being helped by the Clergy and the Diocese to set a new vision for our Churches.

Lent Groups

We have joined the Oxford Diocese study group for Lent – 'Come and See the way of love' Approximately, seventeen have signed up to this as well as a few individuals studying at home.



Things to consider after our Annual Meeting

1. Home study groups – Weekly, Fortnightly, Monthly
2. Working with other churches
3. Developing our mission and vision for St.Mary's.
4. Invitations issued to families inviting them to our Sunday Morning Activities.

We are aware of the need to review our Parish Share because the way funding is calculated is currently unfair. We struggle each month to pay this bill which means we must look at ways to create more income to sustain and grow our Christian mission in Thatcham. Thank you all for your reports which together highlight the numerous activities in our Churches. Please continue the good work and pray for outreach into the community.

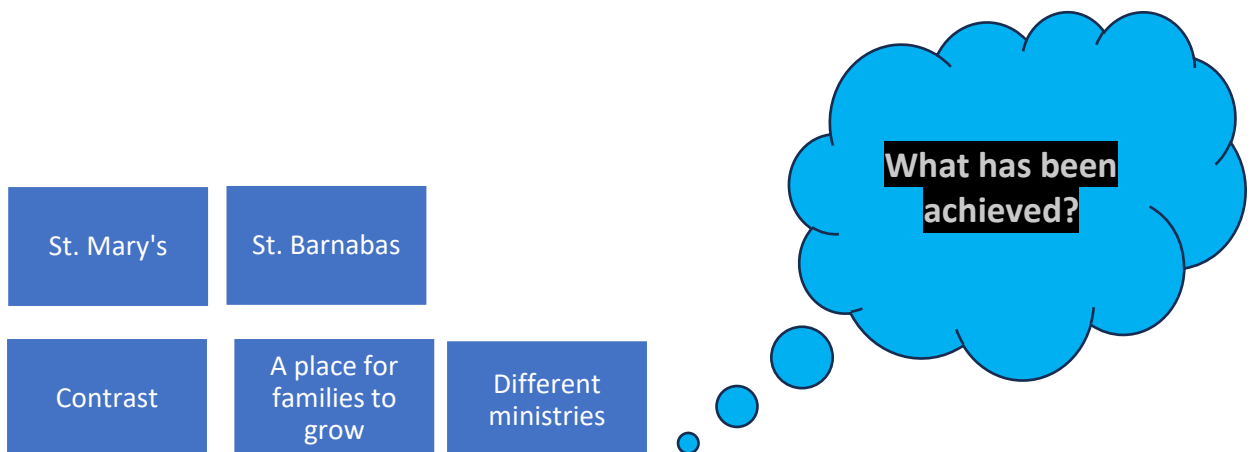
Reflections from the PCC.. ...

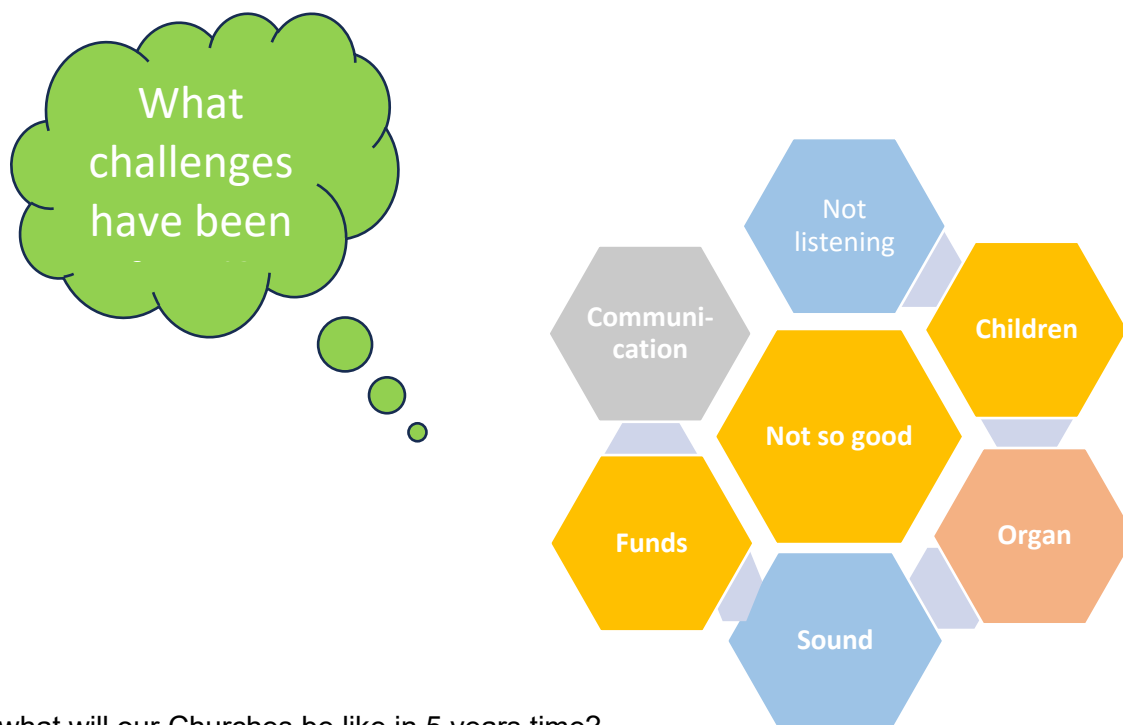


How Christ like are we?



We would welcome your thoughts as we look to reinvigorate the church in Thatcham, post pandemic. What would you like to see changed/ tweaked or improved?





So, what will our Churches be like in 5 years time?

Music at St. Mary's

It's been good year for choir. We have sung an anthem at every 10am service apart from August and two Sundays in the year designated as low Sundays and at every Evensong.

We've sung a variety of Anthems from those that are relatively simple to those that more complex, from those that we have been singing for years to those that are new to the choir. Choir numbers remain steady though sadly ill health caused one of our sopranos to retire at least for a while, but we recruited a new voice and Wendy has now been singing with us for some months. We are very lucky to have so many years of experience among us. It makes learning new material really quite easy.

The major festivals over the year were celebrated with, as usual, a range of music. A service for the start of Holy Week took place on Palm Sunday evening led by the choir which was well received.

With the Coronation in May, the choir sang the RSCM suggested anthem with aplomb.

Christmas was slightly different. St Mary's no longer hosts the Hospital Friends service and we were not asked to participate in the switching on of Thatcham lights though some of us did join with the Baptist Church to sing carols on the green. For the first time in many years, St Mary's hosted a traditional carol service which was very well attended by many people from the community and members of the congregation.

As always I am looking for new choir members . We are happy to take young people from age 14. All that is needed is a commitment to the choir, enjoyment of choral singing and

wanting to learn. It's worth pointing out that faith is a journey and that you don't have to have arrived to join the choir. It's an excellent way to explore faith.

We couldn't sing as we do without two people who need particular mention – Alice who is our rehearsal accompanist and Tim who plays for services. They are both invaluable. Thank you.

Many thanks also go to all the members of choir not only for their effort and achievement but for all the other things they do to enhance the music in our worship.

Mary Stagg

Prayer Ministry

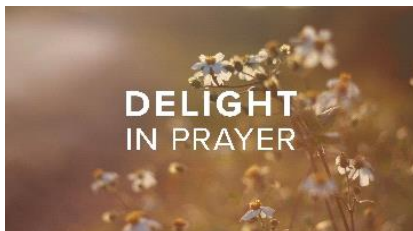
The prayer ministry provides regular meetings for quiet, personal and reflective prayer. The group is a local hub of the Guild of St. John and St. Mary Magdalene and respond to prayers requested from overseas and the local community in Thatcham & surrounding areas. The group is run by Michael Watson, meets every alternate Tuesday and is always encouraging others to join these times of worship.

We have set up a WhatsApp group for prayer requests that anyone can join and introduced a intercessional prayer Initiative for the local community to specifically pray for all those who are suffering and affected by the cost of living crisis. A prayer point has been established at the entrance to the church.

We continue to work with other local church groups which bring together as many as possible from all the churches in Thatcham in order to pray for our town.

Michael Watson

Prayer Ministry Circle



We continue to pray in our homes, on our walks, on the phone and video calls, in fact wherever we have safely been whilst we haven't been able to pray with people in person.

Sue Stevenson.

St Barnabas Church

This year has been another great year at St Barnabas, many of us have noticed that there has been a good buzz in the community and we have happily welcomed some new members. We continue to seek new ways to worship together as a community that includes everyone who has found a home with us, of all ages and stages of faith. Our Zoom

community group led by Ben has gone from strength to strength and offers a weekly opportunity for people to explore the Bible in more depth and discuss what this means for their lives.

Our link with Thatcham Park School remains important to us and since Nicola returned from leave weekly assemblies have resumed. As a community we volunteered at the Christmas and Summer fair, providing food and a craft stand. Nicola has also begun a research project in school to explore how storytelling can support children spiritually and several children have already been part of this project which will be ongoing for the next year. Angela has also been visiting school weekly to support the work with children with additional needs in the school. We continue to support the school in celebrating the festivals of the Christian year, whether in school or at St Mary's.

Our Baby Cafe, meeting at the Old Bluecoat School, continues to be a vibrant community where support is offered to parents of young babies. As you will see in the report on ABC, this also continues to thrive under Brenda's leadership. Our work with children is important to us and we are excited to have recently relaunched Muddy Church, now in St Mary's Churchyard. Our opening event attracted around 50 people and we hope that many will come back for our next event in April.

There is much to be thankful for this year at St B's and we look forward to a new year and all that God has in store for us!

Revd Nicola Hulks

Deanery Synod Report

Thatcham Parish is part of the Newbury Deanery – a group of parishes in West Berkshire running as far as Hungerford and Lambourn and up to Compton and The Ridgeway. In some recent documents the Deanery has described itself briefly as follows:

Newbury Deanery covers some 105 square miles of the western part of West Berkshire. It includes the urban centres of Newbury and Thatcham, the market town of Hungerford and an extensive rural hinterland. The eleven benefices (roughly speaking groups of churches overseen by a single priest) encompass 36 parishes ranging in population from over 25,000 to under 100, together with 42 church buildings, and one church which has no building of its own.

The Deanery is an administrative unit of the Church of England which is part of its structure of “synodical government” – the way the Church makes decisions about its internal workings where they affect more than a single parish. Traditionally the Deanery has had two functions – (the money function) allocating the parish share which pays for the clergy and support costs (just under £1million for Newbury Deanery) and then collecting it; and (the people function) negotiating the deployment of clergy at a time when clergy numbers nationally have been declining. More recently the people function has been developed into a more positive mode of mission planning (The Mission Action Plan) – actively supporting parishes and their people to meet the common challenges we face.

The effects of the pandemic had meant progress on the plan had slowed. Bruce Laurie, Lay Chair of Synod having reviewed the plan in 2021 found it was still wholly relevant to today's needs. It was stressed that this is the Deanery's plan to support and encourage benefices and parishes rather than to direct or impose requirements from the Diocese. Synod had

identified four action groups and work was continuing on putting these into being. These are:

- Finance
 - Schools and Education
 - Lay Training
 - Environment
- (Consideration on new housing developments and also communities will be incorporated in due course.)

The Newbury Deanery Synod also maintains a link with the South African parish of Batlharos in the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman.

Deanery Synod elects representatives to Diocesan Synod – notably our own Team Rector.

The Deanery is run by the Deanery Synod. Like the PCC this is a mixture of clergy and elected lay members, but in the Deanery case the members represent the different parishes. The Deanery Synod elects a standing committee and appoints officers to act as an executive, and to progress the various aspects of its work. It may also receive requests from the Diocese of Oxford or from the National Church to respond to matters of interest. The Deanery Synod can also raise matters of concern and ask for these to be addressed at a Diocesan or national level.

In 2023/4 the Synod considered issues arising from progress on the Living in Love and Faith Report, the Cost of Living Crisis and the value of community hubs and 'Warm Spaces', the reinvigoration of St Mary's Shaw and promotion of the ECO Church strategy

The Deanery Share was paid in full to the Diocese, despite shortfalls from some benefices, by use of the reserve. Two-thirds of the rebate due to the Deanery will be distributed to parishes after further consideration is given to support those parishes in financial difficulty.

Thank you for your support for our clergy members of Synod and our lay members Cath Forbes and myself.

I also note with grateful thanks the support received from our good friend, the late Tony Collie, a long standing member of the Deanery Synod.

Chris Watts

St. Mary's Church Bellringers

We have rung every Sunday over the last year including half muffled on Remembrance Sunday. There was late night ringing for New Year and prior to the Christmas midnight service. We have had a handful of weddings to ring for.

The national highlight of the year was the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla and all thirteen members of the band were able to ring on the day including our (at the time) very new recruit Rhiannan who rang totally unassisted for the first time and managed this with her family watching on! A quarter peal attempt for the occasion was unsuccessful but we did manage a pleasing 720.

The board in memory of Ron Christopher was dedicated in July and now hangs in the ringing chamber. We have managed to ring eight bells (or more) on most Sundays and numbers on practice night have varied between six and sixteen. We usually welcome one or more visitors to practice.

The Tuesday peal band have started coming again every two or three months and we have had several visiting bands.

The Guild 8 bell striking competition trophy is currently on display in the ringing chamber as Mark and Rachel were part of the winning band representing the Newbury branch.

A few members of the band have had health problems during the year and Janet was out of action for several months following a broken wrist.

I would like to thank all the band for their support and especially Richard and the team looking after the bells and John for dealing with the monies and accounts.

Finally, we are grateful to the members of the clergy who brave the stairs on a Sunday morning to say belfry prayers with us.

Rachel Backhouse
Tower Captain

Fabric

In summary the log of work by contractors and volunteers to the fabric of St Mary's includes:

- Spring and autumn clean and clear
- Test lightning conductor
- Test and service Fire Extinguishers
- Service heating boilers
- Tune and minor repairs to organ (noting the Choir manual is not operational)
- Clearing block drains and soakaways
- Major repairs to roof, wall and tiled floors
- Completion of a 5 yearly EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report)
- Completion of a 2 yearly PAT (portable appliance testing) report
- Repair to the pump to the WC

The Organ Restoration Working Group has continued to work through the implications of repair and restoration of the organ. It has become clear that the scale of the work requires the involvement of a major grant funding source – probably the Heritage Lottery Fund. The HLF undertook in 2023 a full review of its grant making policies and has published revised guidance and application procedure with significant implications for our proposed project.

A temporary protective 'umbrella' has been placed above the organ pipework to protect the instrument from dust and small pieces of debris falling from walls and roof. Minor repairs and application of sealant to roof edge above organ.

The PCC's architect, Christian Randall of Wantage has begun preparation of his second five yearly report on the state of the fabric. In 2018 he listed the regular concerns of clearing gutters and repairs to rainwater downpipes, repairs to stonework and flint facing and ivy on the tower. In addition to the major repairs to roof and walls referred to in the above Finance report he noted:

- significant dampness and deterioration to the plaster on the external walls to north and south aisles,
- rotting of timber thresholds to both north doors.
- a series of minor repairs to stonework

Further improvements are required to the Meeting Room and kitchen. In particular a replacement heating and hot water boiler is required that satisfies the Diocesan guidance which strongly favours a carbon free solution.

There are also warning signs that the church's main heating boiler will need major repair or replacement within the next 2 years.

The PCC has taken the first steps in adopting a Maintenance checklist and reporting process.

Thanks are again due to Chris Druce and Mark Backhouse for help with general repairs and lower level lamp replacements, to Marion and a team of dedicated gardeners for work on the flower borders, to Rita for polishing the brass and to all who regularly clean, arrange the flowers and maintain the equipment.

Chris Watts

Inventory

The Memorial Book has been updated to include the names of all for whom our Ministry team have undertaken a funeral service up to 18 January 2024.

20 copies of Carols for Choirs no. 5 have been donated to the Choir music library.

2 defective electric urns have been disposed of and 1 replacement donated. 1 electric kettle has been replaced. 3 pedal operated recycling bins and a sanitary waste bin have been donated and several plastic bins recycled.

Sewing group and Flowers.

Where to start? Let me give you the history of the Group.

Back in 1998 several ladies were talking about getting together to make something to commemorate the Millenium.

We decided to make a new altar frontal for the chapel, the old one was getting very shabby. We worked together on the design, a grape vine, to represent the church rooted and alive and fruitful in the community. About 8 of us worked on the frontal. The base fabric was bought and the additional materials were collected from our own stocks.

The finished frontal was dedicated in 2000 and I was ordained priest in the September of the same year. If you look on the back of the frontal you will see the list of names of the makers, many of whom have since died. That was just the start of course and the cry was what do we make next. There followed banners, alterations and remaking the white / gold frontal, the purple frontal plus vestments and a new purple frontal for the Chapel.

Alongside this we have made and mended small white surplices for the children in the choir, taken up and down blue cassocks and made white clothes for use at Communion and white corners for the altars.

There have also been the fun things, soft toys, patchwork covers, cushions, blankets etc. etc.

Our latest project was the new red frontal. Now we are making things for sale later this year.

We meet on Mondays at one of our group's houses where we relax, drink tea, eat biscuits – oh, and sew, knit or crochet.

Come and See

Marion and team.

'Little Churches'

I am very much in debt to those who are part of this vital ministry.

Over the last year we have seen attendance fall and rise across the three locations that host a monthly service of Holy Communion.

Faithful members of St. Mary's congregation volunteer to bring God's message of love and hope to those who, for one reason or another, are not able to attend church on a Sunday.

Nevil Court

This has seen numbers decline and it has been decided by the one remaining resident who comes that this service should no longer continue for the time being. I will, of course, keep the situation under review and if there is interest, I will reinstate.

Last year, members of St. Mary's choir hosted a carol service which was, by all accounts very successful and generated a goodly donation towards the church coffers.

Joan Collins assists with this service.

Ferndale Court

Sees three or four folk who attend regularly and I am grateful to Emma Watts who provides valuable assistance to me and conversation to others.

Thatcham Court

This has proved to be the most successful venue in terms of attendees.

Most months we welcome between 15 and 20 residents. This home also hosted a carol service which was also well attended.

Joan takes the lead here and I provide assistance.

Steve Rice

West Berkshire Community Hospital

This service of about 45 minutes sees a number of in-patients each week and is led by the Rev. Dr. Simon Thorn who is also chaplain to the hospital in Wokingham.

Due to other commitments, I am not able to attend the service so regularly but St. Mary's is very well represented by Joan Collins, Barbara Carwardine and Margaret Goodhead, all of whom support Simon by fetching and returning patients after the service, reading and leading the prayers.

Members of other churches in the area also attend which makes for a lively ecumenical time of fellowship. Individual prayer is offered and available to anyone and volunteers also take the opportunity to chat with those who might not otherwise see a visitor that day.

There is always a need for more help so if you are reading this and are interested, please get in touch.

Steve Rice

Prayer ministry

Every Tuesday fortnight at 6pm, Michael Watson leads a short service of about half an hour using litany and prayer.

We are privileged to pray for our brothers and sisters overseas whose prayers are emailed to Michael and also for ourselves and those things on our hearts and minds.

This is a beautiful time held in St. Ann's chapel – quiet, reflective and peaceful.

As Michael frequently iterates, everyone is most welcome to join us.

We are also privileged to pray for anyone after the 10am Sunday service. Again, this is held in St. Ann's chapel and two people are there each week to listen and to pray with those who come.

Steve Rice

C.A.M.E.O. Come and Meet Each Other

There have been many changes this year, Margaret left for family reasons and Ann and Roger moved to the Marlborough area leaving a big hole in the organizing team. We were very fortunate that Carol and Max Dowding stepped in to help with the driving and setting up of each meeting. Carol is also an excellent cake maker and joined our now substantial rota of willing helpers. Our sincere thanks to them for stepping in so ably and Theresa and I would also like to thank all our members for their support and cakes during this difficult year.

A first for us was the addition of two students from Kennet School this winter term, on work experience. They helped where they could but they said they gained most from interacting and talking with the elderly members and were surprised at how good we all were at games and quizzes!

We covered a wide range of activities and entertainments, Hand bell ringing, Local comic poet, Saxophonist, local choir visit and very interestingly a member of the WI talking about her space walk experience with Elon Musk!! Locally grown activities include quizzes, craft, games, bingo, singing, beetle drive, etc..



We also had our usual termly celebrations of summer tea party, fish and chip lunch, Halloween, Christmas party and an extra tea with special cake in January for CAMEO's 10th Anniversary and a very special send off to Ann and Roger in September.

The group meets every Monday afternoon with activities from 2.00 pm until tea and cake is served. We currently have a regular membership of 25 to 30 and meet every week and although we are limited in space we are able to take new members. We are a very friendly group so if you know of anybody who is lonely or bereaved please let them know they can be sure of a warm welcome.

Viv Druce – 820718
Theresa Lucas - 635923

The Thatcham Parochial Charities

This ancient charity has continued to play a significant role, both in the life of our churches and in support of local people in need, this year. The rector and our three churchwardens are ex officio members of the Board of Trustees and I (Chris Druce) am currently a representative of Thatcham Town Council and Chairman of Trustees. Other members of the Trustees Board are drawn from representatives of other local councils in Cold Ash, Greenham and Midgham. We cover the area of the 'Ancient Borough of Thatcham', encompassing modern Thatcham, together with Cold Ash, Midgham and Greenham.

The trustees have a wide remit of responsibility, covering various needs of our local community. This year, two of our churchwardens stood down and two new people, therefore, were elected as churchwardens and, as such, are now serving on our Trustee Board, immediately becoming involved with the work of the charities and involvement with the residents and organisations within our local community. Our Cold Ash parish council representative trustee also retired after 55 years of dedicated service to the charities. The occasion was marked at his final meeting in December.

There are 2 principal charities – the 'Thatcham Parochial Almshouse Charity' and 'Thatcham Relief in Need Charity'.

The Almshouses – The first almshouses in Thatcham were established by Thomas Loundyes, in 1446 AD. Some of the present almshouse flats, in Chapel Street, are named after him. To qualify for accommodation, applicants should be 'of a certain age', a resident in the Ancient Borough and can demonstrate a housing need.

We have 14 flats in all. During the year we said a sad farewell to two very long-standing residents. One lady passed away in the latter half of 2023 & not long after, her neighbour moved out of her almshouse accommodation & into more sheltered accommodation. These neighbours had created a very happy environment within their community & are missed by everyone. This means that currently, there are 2 vacant flats are within the oldest almshouse building, necessitating much redecoration, prior to new residents taking up residency. The trustees are currently in the final stages of appointing the new residents.

The Trustees agreed unanimously not to increase the weekly maintenance contributions (rent equivalent) this year & there continues to be no increase since 2017. The variable energy costs still present a challenge & trustees are very keen not to increase the heating and lighting contributions after the last increase in 2022, striving always to avoid unnecessary increases in cost to our residents.

Relief in Need Charity –

The object of this charity is to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the Ancient Borough, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress, by making grants of money or providing items or services to reduce that need.

As with the Almshouse Charity, this year had very special needs for our local community and Relief in Need was very much 'Open for Business'.

During the year, the charity made grants in excess of £15,000. In addition to individual needs, including a new mobility scooter, the charity made a donation towards playground equipment for young children and contributed to the local newspaper's "over 80's Christmas food-parcel" fund. So, as you can see, it has been another eventful year. If you know of anyone who may need a helping hand, or a piece of equipment otherwise unaffordable, do, please, have a word with me, Mark, or one of the churchwardens.

Thankyou – Chris Druce

MISSIONS



Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

As ever, a very big thank you for the money you have helped raise to give people in the developing world the chance of a better life.

This financial year (October '22 to September '23) we raised over £3,500 for Christian Aid – a very creditable effort given the continuing demands on people's wallets, if still down on pre-pandemic levels.

Following on from that, we have held another Beetle Drive and Fish & Chip supper, and two Lent Lunches (one at St Mary's on Good Friday).

We are now gearing up for Christian Aid Week – which runs from 12th to 18th May this year, and is where we raise most of the money. This year's appeal is for Burundi, for a province where 70% of people live in poverty, and 52% of children are underweight. Most are reliant on finding casual work each day, in order to buy food for that evening, and many go to bed hungry. The money raised will provide support to set up small businesses, so people can work towards a better future for their families.

You can help by:

- Taking Gift Aid envelopes in Church, filling them yourself, and passing on spares to friends and family (a congregation member raised £60 that way last year).
- Volunteering for an hour from 10am-4pm on Saturday 18th May at our Collection Point in St Mary's Church porch.
- Giving donations for coffee and cake after the Service on Sunday 19th May - or even baking a cake yourself.

In addition, we are delighted that Phil Evans (Christian Aid's Home Counties Region Officer for Church Engagement & Fundraising) will preach for us on Sunday 12th May, and show the new Christian Aid Week video after the Service – please do come and be inspired, and invite your friends too, all are welcome.

We still hope to add a supermarket collection and carol singing later this year, but are still looking for venues. This will be greatly helped by the new contactless-giving phone App.

We are a small Committee, and always welcome new members. However, we are particularly reliant on Church members volunteering at our events. We would like to particularly thank everyone at St Mary's who has helped over the past year

- cooking soup, baking cakes, washing up, collecting, or even just going to events, donating, and praying. As ever, the needs remain huge, so please give if you can, and if not do please continue to pray.

Sarah Bennet Chair,
Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

Children's Society and USPG

The use of collecting boxes and globes has significantly declined in recent years, probably as a result in the reduction in the use of coins. Support for Missions has increasingly transferred to event such as the ever popular Cream Teas and to direct donations including those made online. *Collecting boxes continue to be available however for anyone wanting to support Missions in this way.*

£303.53 was donated to the Children's Society in 2023. The money goes to help the Society and its network of centres and projects to deliver specialist services for children who face disaster and danger in their daily lives; children who are unable to find the support they need elsewhere.

USPG

£462.27 was donated to USPG in 2023. USPG is working with the Anglican Church in Zambia to develop healthcare and leadership programmes that will have an impact on the life and outreach of the church and community. Support was given for training of specialists at the Hospital of St Francis at Katete and other health projects in Zambia.

If you would like to help with either of these Missions please speak to Ann Watts (864567).

Ann Watts

West Berks Foodbank



The continuing pandemic and then cost of living increases have meant that a significant number of people used West Berks Foodbank (WBFB) during 2023. Single adults, couples and families contacted the Crisis FoodLine for help and support.

The Foodbank no longer collects donations from St Mary's. Donations continue to be made, however and thanks is due to Matt Evans for regular transfer of these to the depot at Greenham particularly at Harvest and Christmas.

WBFB's Foodbank Centres in Thatcham, Hungerford and Burghfield and Mortimer continue to experience increasing need for support. The hybrid operational model is also well used in responding to requests for food deliveries to clients unable to get to a Foodbank Centre.

Thank you for supporting the Foodbank – please continue to donate when you can.

Rainbows (Girlguiding at St. Mary's)



Two separate groups of Rainbows (5-7 year olds) meet at St Mary's on Tuesday and Friday evenings to do all sorts of things from game and crafts to pamper evenings and escape rooms.

If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to help with the Rainbows of Girlguiding please contact Julie, julie@dunwell.org or www.girlguiding.org.uk/

Connect

Connect, our parish magazine, is published ten times a year, double issues being December/January and July/August. Particular emphasis was made of circulating the magazine by email, on the website and by hand delivery on request. The magazine includes news, information and illustrations about services and events in St. Mary's and St. Barnabas. All of our clergy team provide a regular article but more contributors are always welcome. Any articles or adverts to be published can be sent to Steve Rice, steverice1@virginmedia.com, or Julie Dunwell, julie@dunwell.org.

Julie Dunwell

Service Support Teams

We have continued to operate a scaled down version of the rota during the year, not quite getting back to normal but doing what we're comfortable with. Thank you to everyone who supported Sunday services, baptisms, weddings and funerals by reading, leading prayers, handing out books, making people welcome, operating IT equipment to enable those at home to participate in worship. Additional help would be very welcome in any of the teams. Just get in touch.

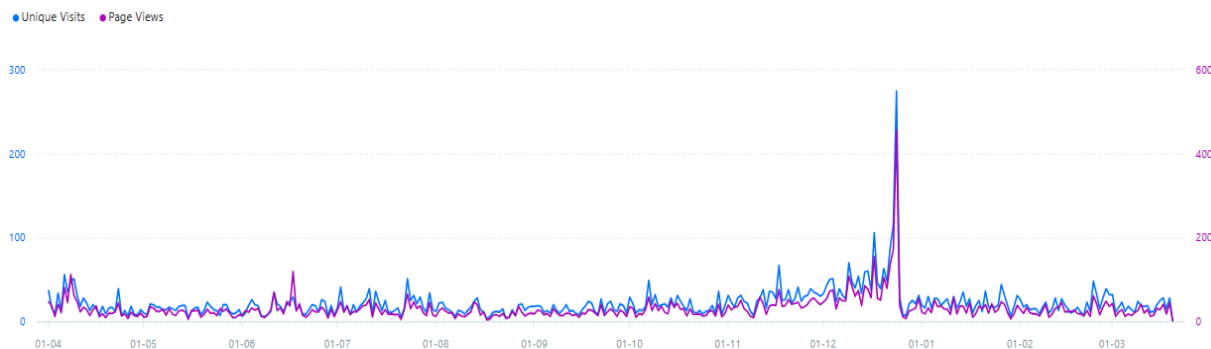
Sue Stevenson

St Mary's Church Website

There has been little change in the structure and management of the web site. The content remains fairly static with most of the updates being the Bulletin, Connect, What's On and the Choir schedule.

The following chart shows the number of unique visits and the number of page views over the period 1-April-2023 to 24-Feb-2024. Activity peaked on 24-Dec-2023 with over twice as many unique visits compared to 2023 with an average of 2.5 pages accessed per visit. The overall activity throughout the year was more evenly spread.

The peak activities occur in the Easter and Christmas periods. The information that is shown seems to suggest that many users know what they need and go straight to the required page.



The traffic breakdown is shown in the chart below



As always, the web site is wholly reliant on its content from all those who are directly and indirectly involved with St. Mary's and who produce information for general consumption and those who organise events. Compared to the previous year, the number of unique visits has increased and the average number of pages viewed per visit has also increased. The web site is the public face of St. Mary's and needs to reflect the life of the church community and be up-to-date.

An exercise to review the web site content was conducted. There were 16 contributors covering 36 pages. The response was disappointing with only 25% of the contributors replying. The web site potentially has pages that are out of date and should therefore be removed.

Grateful thanks are given to all active contributors. Please keep the information flowing.



Minutes of the APCM meeting of the Thatcham Parochial Church Council held at St Mary's Church on 21st May 2023.

In attendance: Mary Baker, Sue Ball, Judith Bennet, Revd Mark Bennet (Chair), Sarah Bennet, Revd Angela Brennan, Paul Bullock, Joan Collins, John Collins, Mike Collins, John Coombs, Alison Dean, Ann Dibble, Doreen Dines, Chris Druce, Viv Druce, Julie Dunwell, Kevin Dunwell, Maggie Fidler, Marion Fontaine, Revd Brenda Harland, Debbie Harley, Michael Harley, Christine Rice, Steve Rice, John Robinson, Margaret Robinson, Mary Stagg, Simon Stagg, Lynne Starr, Mike Stevenson, Susan Stevenson, Colin Waters, Debbie Waters, Mike Watson, Ann Watts, Chris Watts, Emma Watts

Apologies: Tony Collie, Jeremy Cottam, Lourdes Cottam, Bernadette Ellison, Cath Forbes, Leanne Fowler, John Hicks, Pam Hicks

---oOo---

Mark Bennet opened the meeting with a prayer.

Minute No. **APCM** /

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action
1	Minutes Previous APCM The minutes of the APCM of the 29 th May 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by Mark Bennet.	
2	Matters Arising None	
3	Fabric Log Book The fabric log book for the year was accepted as a correct record and signed by Mark Bennet.	
3a	It was noted that there was no hot water in the kitchen or the toilets. Chris Watts explained that the heating system works but the component that supplies hot water to the taps is not functioning. Due to the age of the boiler, it is very unlikely that it can be repaired and a replacement unit will be required. The standing committee will address this issue.	
4	Safeguarding Ann Dibble provided an update and current status of Safeguarding. Everyone should do the basic on-line training as anyone could be the first person approached. DBS checks and further training will continue to be performed.	

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action				
5	Parish Organisations Paul Bullock will be stepping down from his role. A replacement is being sought.					
6	Electoral Roll Chris Watts said that there are 178 people on the Electoral Roll. The previous count was 179. The Electoral Roll is due for review in 2025.					
7	Inventory The inventory was presented. Chris Watts explained that a photo record of key items is now required by the insurers. Mark Bennet said that the inventory will have to be formally transferred to the Church Wardens.					
8	Financial Accounts Chris Watts presented the financial accounts which are awaiting formal verification. The financial situation seems to be resilient but is still not in the “black”. The meeting wished to thank Pam Broads’ family for the bequest of £25K. A further £20K has also been donated. This money has been ring-fenced in the Fabric Fund. It was noted that there has been no income from advertising in Connect, as very few copies are now printed because most people receive an electronic copy.					
8a	It was proposed that the Standing Committee will review the report. <table><tr><td>Proposed</td><td>Chris Watts</td></tr><tr><td>Seconded</td><td>Paul Bullock</td></tr></table> The meeting approved the proposal.	Proposed	Chris Watts	Seconded	Paul Bullock	
Proposed	Chris Watts					
Seconded	Paul Bullock					
8b	It was also proposed that the <i>Tax Avenue</i> be reappointed as the Independent Examiner for the accounts. <table><tr><td>Proposed</td><td>Chris Watts</td></tr><tr><td>Seconded</td><td>Paul Bullock</td></tr></table> The meeting approved the proposal.	Proposed	Chris Watts	Seconded	Paul Bullock	
Proposed	Chris Watts					
Seconded	Paul Bullock					
9	Deanery Synod Mary Stagg and Tony Collie stated that they wish to stand down from their rolls. Kath Forbes and Chris Watts will continue with their roll.					

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action																									
10	PCC Members The following people were accepted for the PCC for St. Mary's <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Judith Bennet</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Mark Bennet</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>Steve Rice</td></tr> </table> <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Kevin Dunwell</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Mike Watson</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>???</td></tr> </table> <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Mary Stagg</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Simon Stagg</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>Mike Warson</td></tr> </table> <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Steve Rice</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Ann Watts</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>Emma Watts</td></tr> </table> <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Viv Druce</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Chris Druce</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>Sarah Bennet</td></tr> </table>	Judith Bennet	Proposed	Mark Bennet	Seconded	Steve Rice	Kevin Dunwell	Proposed	Mike Watson	Seconded	???	Mary Stagg	Proposed	Simon Stagg	Seconded	Mike Warson	Steve Rice	Proposed	Ann Watts	Seconded	Emma Watts	Viv Druce	Proposed	Chris Druce	Seconded	Sarah Bennet	
Judith Bennet	Proposed		Mark Bennet																								
	Seconded	Steve Rice																									
Kevin Dunwell	Proposed	Mike Watson																									
	Seconded	???																									
Mary Stagg	Proposed	Simon Stagg																									
	Seconded	Mike Warson																									
Steve Rice	Proposed	Ann Watts																									
	Seconded	Emma Watts																									
Viv Druce	Proposed	Chris Druce																									
	Seconded	Sarah Bennet																									
10a	The following people have been accepted for the PCC for St. Barnabas - Alison Dean - John Hicks - Kath Forbes - Lourdes Cottam																										
11	CTiT																										

AOB

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action
1	<i>Ascension Day</i> Debbie Harley mentioned that the Ascension Day service was appreciated and very much enjoyed and asked if it could be held later in the day and not at 7:00 am. Mark Bennet replied that the time was to enable people who worked could attend yet still get to work. However, he would review the timing of the service.	MB
2	<i>Lent Groups</i> Joan Collins asked if a future Lent Group could be held in the afternoon and be better publicised. Mark Bennet replied that request this would be looked at.	MB
3	<i>Communion Cup</i> Sarah Bennet raised the idea of returning to the common Communion Cup instead of intinction. After a general discussion, Mark Bennet replied that there was a need to carefully consider the options and the needs and preferences of the congregation.	
4	<i>Parish Away / Quite Day</i> Debbie Harley asked if a Parish Away / Quite Day was planned. Mark Bennet said that this was being considered.	
5	<i>Evening Services</i> The meeting wished to thank Mark Bennet for special evening services. These were enjoyed and appreciated.	
6	<i>Outside / Open-Air Services</i> Simon Stagg asked if Outside / Open Air Services were planned similar to the services that were held during "lock-down". Mark Bennet replied that this was being considered for the month of August.	

The meeting was closed with a prayer.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY'S, THATCHAM, BERKSHIRE**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2023**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from donors	104,470	0	0	104,470	147,884
Other voluntary incoming resources	18,548	1,154	0	19,702	14,837
Income from investments	3,770	0	0	3,770	2,221
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	21,121	0	0	21,121	21,057
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	147,909	1,154	0	149,063	185,999
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Grants and Special Collections	1,197	0	0	1,197	901
Activities relating to the work of the Church	173,313	0	0	173,313	129,379
Church Management and administration	8,559	(1,908)	0	6,650	6,852
Transfers	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	183,068	(1,908)	0	181,160	137,131
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(35,159)	3,062	0	(32,097)	48,867
Gains on investment assets:					
on disposal	0	0	0		0
on revaluation	0	11,509	0	11,509	(2,977)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(35,159)	14,571	0	(20,588)	45,890
BALANCES B/FWD 1 JANUARY	64,982	116,147	169,535	364,848	318,958
BALANCES C/FWD 31 DECEMBER	29,823	130,719	169,535	344,261	364,848

Thatcham Team Ministry
Profit & Loss
 January through December 2023

11:11 AM

28/02/24

Accrual Basis

	Jan - Dec 23	Jan - Dec 22
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
3000 · General Income		
3100 · Donor income		
3110 · Service Collections		
3112 · Goodbox	1,829.93	1,462.49
3113 · Petty Cash	-3.93	-103.62
3110 · Service Collections - Other	5,540.74	5,618.85
Total 3110 · Service Collections	7,366.74	6,977.72
3120 · Stewardship		
3121 · Envelopes	4,326.90	5,880.70
3122 · PGS	24,670.69	23,086.98
3123 · Standing Orders	20,987.00	21,417.00
3124 · Tax reclaimed	21,876.83	15,579.88
3125 · Donations	2,622.62	26,131.92
3126 · Bequests	100.00	25,937.05
3127 · Share Rebate	1,795.34	635.85
3128 · Stripe Parish Buying	0.00	4.94
Total 3120 · Stewardship	76,379.38	118,674.32
3100 · Donor income - Other	0.00	65.00
Total 3100 · Donor income	83,746.12	125,717.04
3210 · Other voluntary Income		
3220 · Mission		
3221 · Childrens' Society	303.53	360.90
3222 · Christian Aid	0.00	5.00
3223 · USPG	462.27	333.18
Total 3220 · Mission	765.80	699.08
3230 · St Barnabas - Share	5,500.00	6,800.00
3240 · Gifts / Presentations	-2.00	122.00
3250 · Grants Youth Work	0.00	1,587.71
3251 · Grants general	12,284.13	1,745.59
3260 · Curate Hsg - Rent	1,153.89	5,470.05
Total 3210 · Other voluntary Income	19,701.82	16,424.43
3310 · Investment Income		
3315 · Investment Income	3,023.78	2,220.87
3310 · Investment Income - Other	746.07	0.00
Total 3310 · Investment Income	3,769.85	2,220.87
3410 · Charity and Trading		
3415 · BRF income	164.45	209.30
3420 · Fees		
3422 · Funerals	9,929.00	9,274.00
3426 · Wedding	5,382.00	5,140.00
Total 3420 · Fees	15,311.00	14,414.00
3428 · Printing / Photocopying	150.30	86.26
3430 · Functions / Activities	395.58	1,313.75
3440 · Mast Rental	5,100.00	5,100.00
3450 · Altar Books	0.00	-66.19
Total 3410 · Charity and Trading	21,121.33	21,057.12
3510 · Building / Equipment Income		
3520 · Hall Hire	1,896.00	1,325.00
3530 · Other B/E income	864.16	1,260.17
3536 · Organ Appeal	6,361.61	7,890.26
Total 3510 · Building / Equipment Income	9,121.77	10,475.43
3610 · Choir Income		
3620 · Choir Fees	240.00	240.00
Total 3610 · Choir Income	240.00	240.00
3710 · St Barnabas Income	11,362.33	9,811.28
Total 3000 · General Income	149,063.22	185,946.17
Total Income	149,063.22	185,946.17
Expense		
4001 · General Expense		
4010 · Grants & Special Collection		

	Jan - Dec 23	Jan - Dec 22
4011 · Missions		
4012 · Berkshire Churches Trust	0.00	10.00
4013 · Childrens' Society	303.53	360.90
4014 · USPG	462.27	333.18
4016 · Christian Aid	131.25	0.00
4019 · Other grants	200.00	100.00
Total 4011 · Missions	1,097.05	804.08
4021 · Presentations	100.00	97.00
Total 4010 · Grants & Special Collection	1,197.05	901.08
4030 · Work of the Church		
4031 · Ministry		
4032 · Parish Share	95,790.42	88,869.33
4033 · Clergy Expenses	104.99	347.56
4034 · Youth work	377.88	1,482.86
4035 · Function & Activities	354.56	570.11
4036 · Fees (ODBF)	6,041.00	7,598.00
4036/1 · Fees (Clergy)	557.00	142.00
4037 · Bank Account Charges	316.83	404.98
4038 · BRF expenses	219.60	257.70
4041 · Curate Training		
4042 · Curate expenses	0.00	75.00
4043 · Curate Housing	279.82	374.78
4041 · Curate Training - Other	-2,188.02	0.00
Total 4041 · Curate Training	-1,908.20	449.78
4031 · Ministry - Other	0.00	50.00
Total 4031 · Ministry	101,854.08	100,172.32
4051 · Church running costs		
4052 · Utilities		
4053 · Electricity	4,708.48	2,079.04
4054 · Gas	2,701.72	1,611.38
4055 · Water	265.20	314.94
4056 · Telephone / Broadband	720.00	720.00
Total 4052 · Utilities	8,395.40	4,725.36
4057 · Insurance	5,149.71	4,918.41
4058 · Professional Fees	4,960.00	4,510.00
Total 4051 · Church running costs	18,505.11	14,153.77
4061 · Upkeep of Services		
4062 · Altar	538.09	753.72
Total 4061 · Upkeep of Services	538.09	753.72
6510 · Choir expenses		
6524 · RSCM	127.00	110.00
6526 · CCLI Copyright	248.00	231.00
Total 6510 · Choir expenses	375.00	341.00
Total 4030 · Work of the Church	121,272.28	115,420.81
4070 · Administration		
4072 · Copier	733.33	722.04
4073 · Stationery	555.03	899.51
4074 · Subscriptions	10.00	0.00
4076 · Audit	954.00	882.00
4077 · Administrator	0.00	2,287.45
4078 · General Admin	75.00	144.00
4079 · Memorial Book	0.00	654.12
Total 4070 · Administration	2,327.36	5,589.12
Total 4001 · General Expense	124,796.69	121,911.01
5001 · Building Expense		
5010 · Repairs	944.34	119.40
5020 · Fixed Equipment		
4025 · Organ tuning & minor repair	315.08	291.74
4026 · Organ Appeal & Major Repair	5,541.16	180.00
Total 5020 · Fixed Equipment	5,856.24	471.74
5040 · Equipment repair & replacement	1,318.32	3,264.26
5070 · Projects		
5074 · South west wall	35,752.00	1,250.00
Total 5070 · Projects	35,752.00	1,250.00
Total 5001 · Building Expense	43,870.90	5,105.40
7010 · Bells		
7020 · Projects		
7021 · Air Conditioning	144.00	0.00
7020 · Projects - Other	0.00	2,000.00
Total 7020 · Projects	144.00	2,000.00
Total 7010 · Bells	144.00	2,000.00
8001 · St Barnabas payments	12,348.60	8,114.83
Total Expense	181,160.19	137,131.24

	Jan - Dec 23	Jan - Dec 22
Net Ordinary Income	-32,096.97	48,814.93
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
9000 · Unrealised revaluation		
9001 · revaluation CBF Bells 3	3,336.43	-2,640.44
9002 · revaluation CBF Bells 2	7.49	-33.13
9003 · revaluation BLK Bell COIF	2,626.12	0.00
9004 · revaluation BLK Organ (desig'd)	321.17	-4.05
9005 · revaluation BLK Organ (res'd)	3,853.30	-48.60
9006a · revaluation Rookery	1.50	-23.48
9007 · revaluation TCE Charishare	140.25	-227.68
9008 · revaluation Thatch02 CharBond	277.42	-3,406.53
9009 · revaluation Thatch02 Charishare	945.60	0.00
Total 9000 · Unrealised revaluation	11,509.28	-6,383.91
Total Other Income	11,509.28	-6,383.91
Other Expense		
8002 · St Barnabas account correction	0.00	0.20
Total Other Expense	0.00	0.20
Net Other Income	11,509.28	-6,384.11
Profit for the Year	-20,587.69	42,430.82

Thatcham Team Ministry
Balance Sheet
 As of 31 December 2023

11:25 AM
 28/02/24
 Accrual Basis

	<u>31 Dec 23</u>	<u>31 Dec 22</u>
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand		
1001 · PCC Thatcham		
1002 · General Fund		
1002/1 · Running Costs Greenham G Exchan	10,654	0
1002 · General Fund - Other	(29,087)	(13,496)
Total 1002 · General Fund	(18,433)	(13,496)
1003 · Fabric	45,557	77,061
1004 · Organ (Designated)	401	362
1005 · Organ (Restricted)		
1005/1 · Organ Appeal Greenham Good Exch	8,578	8,015
Total 1005 · Organ (Restricted)	8,578	8,015
1006 · Choir	144	191
1007 · Childrens Work		
1007/1 · Baby Cafe Greenham G Exchange	1,563	0
1007 · Childrens Work - Other	5	5
Total 1007 · Childrens Work	1,568	5
1008 · Curate (Hsg/Expenses)	9,778	6,716
1009 · Bell Maintenance	115	259
Total 1001 · PCC Thatcham	47,708	79,113
1050 · St Barnabas	3,605	4,591
1052 · St Barnabas - Set Up	90	90
2101 · Vicar & Churchwardens Treasurer	2,524	2,345
2102 · Vicar & Churchwardens Instant	1,230	1,114
Total Cash at bank and in hand	55,157	87,253
Other Current Assets		
2001 · Investment		
2005 · 47a Station Road	76,339	76,339
2010 · CBF Bell Maintenance 3	29,889	26,552
2020 · CBF Bell Maintenance 2	241	234
2030 · BLK C of E Charity COIF Perp	31,155	28,528
2050 · BLK Organ Fund (Designated)	3,810	3,489
2060 · BLK Organ Fund (Restricted)	45,713	41,860
2070 · Rookery Church Fund	92	91
2071 · Rookery Fund (Lloyds)	149	149
2090 · Thatcham Church Estate	3,068	2,928
2093 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Bond	14,956	14,678
2094 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Equity	70,114	69,168
Total 2001 · Investment	275,526	264,016
Total Other Current Assets	275,526	264,016
Total Current Assets	330,683	351,269
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>330,683</u>	<u>351,269</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Capital and Reserves		
1010 · Share Capital Account	304,730	304,730
3200 · Unrestricted Net Assets	46,538	4,108
Profit for the Year	(20,588)	42,431
Shareholder funds	330,680	351,269
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>330,680</u>	<u>351,269</u>

THATCHAM PCC
Year ended 31 December 2023

Unrestricted funds	Total	General	Organ	Fabric	Youth	Choir	St B
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES							
Incoming resources from donors	104,470	83,746	6,362	2,760	0	240	11,362
Other voluntary incoming resources	18,548	18,548					
Income from investments	3,770	3,770					
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	21,121	21,121					
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	147,909	127,185	6,362	2,760	0	240	11,362
RESOURCES EXPENDED							
Grants and Special Collections	1,197	1197					0
Activities relating to the work of the Church	173,313	122572		38015	378		12349
Church Management and administration	8,559	2327	5856			375	
Transfers	0						
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	183,068	126,096	5,856	38,015	378	375	12,349
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(35,159)	1,089	505	(35,255)	(378)	(135)	(986)

Restricted funds	Total	Bells	Curates	
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from donors	0			
Other voluntary incoming resources	1,154		1,154	
Income from investments	0			
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	0			
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	1,154	0	1,154	
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Grants and Special Collections	0			
Activities relating to the work of the Church	0		0	
Church Management and administration	(1,908)		(1,908)	
Transfers	0			
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	(1,908)	0	(1,908)	
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(754)	0	(754)	
Gains on investment assets:				
on disposal				
on revaluation	11,509		11,509	
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	10,755	0	(754)	11,509

THATCHAM PCC**Year ended 31 December 2023****Assets****2023****2022**

2023
St Mary's Lloyds Acc St Barnabas HSBC Acc

unrestricted restricted

Analysis of current account (Lloyds Bank)

31-Dec-23

General fund	-18,433	-8,289	-18433.00	-18,433.00	
Organ (Designated)	401	513	401.00	401.00	
Organ (Restricted)	8,578	140	8578.00		8,578
Fabric	45,557	34,240	45557.00	45,557.00	
Youth	1,568	-495	1568.00	1,568.00	
Choir	144	-49	144.00	144.00	
Bell Maintenance	115	2,259	115.00		115
Curates Hsg/Expenses (formerly Hatherley)	9,778	3,809	9778.00		9,778
other	0	-281	0.00		
total	47,708.00	31,847			

St Barnabas (HSBC Acc)	3,605	1,909		3,605	3,605
St Barnabas (Set up - HSBC Acc)	90	90		90	90
	51,403	33,846	47708.00	3,695	29,237.00
			51403		51,403

Assets of general funds

Current accounts (Lloyds + HSBC)	51,403	33,846
Charishare (CBF Organ Funds)	49,523	45,402
Charishare (Blk Bell Maintenance)	31,155	28,562
CBF (Bell Maintenance 2+ 3)	30,130	29,424

Total	162,211	137,233
--------------	----------------	----------------

Endowments

Station Road (Curate Hsg)	76,339	76,339
Charifund (Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Ltd)	85,070	87,253
Rookery	241	263
Church Estate (Blk Bond + Equity / V&C Lloyds)	6,822	6,764
	168,472	170,619

Total assets

330,683 307,852

Reconciliation PCC Thatcham Acc at Lloyds

QB 31/12/2023		47,707.21
less o/s credits		
Funeralcare	329.00	
HMRC (Tax Reclaim)	418.28	
Funeralcare	565.00	
Funeralcare	658.00	
Funeralcare	751.00	
		2,721.28
plus o/s debits		
F Dumont Candles	139.20	
Pozitive Energy (gas)	629.40	
ODBF Fees	1,894.00	
USPG Mission	462.27	
Children's Society Mission	303.53	
Lyreco paper	62.48	
G Blythman Professional Services	50.00	
		3,540.88
		48,526.81
Lloyds Statement 31/12/2022		48,526.81
check		0.00



2023

Thatcham Annual Parish Meeting Annual Report APCM 21 April 2024

Parish Office
St Mary's Church
Churchgate
Thatcham
RG19 3PN

Contents	page
Parochial Church Council 2023/4.....	2
Team Rector's Report.....	2
Report of the proceedings of the PCC	3
Membership.....	4
Committees.....	4
Finance -Report to the accounts.....	4
Stewardship Secretary's Report.....	6
Safeguarding Report.....	7
ABCs.....	8
Children and Young People	8
Churchwardens	9
Music at St Mary's.....	12
St Barnabas Church.....	13
Newbury Deanery Synod.....	14
Bellringers' Report	15
Inventory.	17
Flowers- Sewing Group	17
Little Churches, Home Communions, West Berks Community Hospital	18
Prayer Ministry and Prayer Circle.....	18
C.A.M.E.O	19
Thatcham Parochial Charities.....	20
Missions – Christian Aid – Children's Society – USPG West Berks Foodbank	21
Girl Guiding – Rainbows	23
Connect	23
Service Support Teams.....	23
St Mary's Website.....	23
Appendix 1 Minutes of the Annual Meetings 29 May 2022	
Appendix 2 Summary of Accounts 2022	

Thatcham Parochial Church Council 2022/3

Ex Officio Revd. Mark Bennet Revd Nicola Hulks Revd Brenda Harland Revd Angela Brennan Churchwardens Colin Waters (2020) Sue Ball (2023) Mike Watson (2023) Deanery Synod Representatives (to 2026) Chris Watts Catherine Forbes	Elected Lay Members John Hicks (St Barnabas) Bernadette Ellison (St Barnabas) Leanne Fowler (St Barnabas) Alison Dean (St Barnabas) Lourdes Cottam (St Barnabas) Simon Stagg (2021) Chris Druce (2021) Kevin Dunwell (2023) Viv Druce (2023) Co-options Mark Backhouse (Tower Bells) Mike Stevenson (PCC Secretary) Ann Dibble (Safeguarding)

Team Rectors Report

There was a lot going on in 2023 – it started with Nicola on parental leave, and with a sense that we were recovering somewhat from lockdown and getting back on our feet again. Some of the things we do have changed, perhaps for ever – with a special chalice so we can dip wafers and not spread infections – now an option, but surely with us to stay at our communion services.

The summer saw us trying outside services again during August – these were such a blessing during lockdown, but the inconveniences became evident and we will likely only do one of these each year on Bank Holiday weekend and make something special of it.

Marcia Wadham, who had previously been with us on placement, was (finally) ordained to serve in Hungerford, and out two ordinands – Alison and Leanne continued with their training, on track to be ordained on 29 June 2024 – Alison to serve in Walbury Beacon and Leanne in South Newbury (now including Enborne) Somehow our finances held up (just) and we managed to get some of our outstanding work on the building done. Fun was had raising funds for the Organ and that project is going well thanks to Angela and others on the team.

We held Lent groups too and there was a sense of faith being nurtured, and I hope, of the exploration of faith being encouraged – but the main focus of my thinking and action at least was about reconnecting with our wider community. The practices around funerals and weddings have changed because of lockdown, and the number of baptisms has reduced – in all cases numbers have increased from 2022, but are not yet back at pre-pandemic levels. In common with other churches we are seeing less of the families that we used to see (that, if you think about it, has been quite a normal trend as children have grown up) – but the pipeline of replacement families has been rather broken. Work with schools has continued – invisibly to many, but effectively all the same, and that is now strategically important, alongside the family

based initiatives like ABC, Muddy Church, Baby Café and The Nest. And I am now regularly visiting Thornford Park – something Leonard used to do.

With all the modest positives, my main feeling has been of continuing challenge – some core members have moved away, and others have in death moved closer to God – including the longest list of regular members and friends in my time in Thatcham: you will know several of Leonard Onugha, Joan Meechan, Joan Pook, Tony Collie, Joyce Lovelock, Judith Caton, Valerie Muttram, Ron and Rita Christopher and Barbara and John Saunders – it feels as though we will not see their like again – but you, if you are reading this, stand alongside them in service and faith.

We have also seen John Coombs stepping back from visibly active ministry in retirement, and we have started to see some new people stepping up to significant roles – not least our Churchwardens for the year – Sue Ball, Mike Watson and Colin Waters – who have been a great support and encouragement this year – as has Sue Stevenson with her practical assistance and care of the rotas – which with all the various “defections” have become more difficult to fill – though we are seeing a few volunteers stepping forwards. If we each do a little, no-one will have to do a lot.

Special thanks must go to Ann Dibble who has transformed the management of our safeguarding and has started to put our processes on the more formal footing that is now required. We are in a very different place even though there are many (including myself) who have to make sure we are fully on the new way of doing things.

Chris and Ann Watts have kept the accounts and administration alive and active through the year, and though they have been gradually stepping back, they have been gracious enough not to leave us in the lurch over a challenging time: COVID recovery has not been easy, and the many years of service they have given are not easily noted, measured or marked.

And my clergy colleagues have been a pillar of strength – Brenda, Angela, and Nicola all very active and making a difference above and beyond any reasonable call of duty. And of course Marion, whose greatest contribution to my life is as a consistent prayer partner in the mornings at our services of Morning Prayer, and who seems to be working as hard in retirement as the rest of us.

There is much more I could say, and there are many more people to thank – but you will read about them in the other reports, and see just how much is going on. But above all this is praying for God’s blessing on you, as a member of our Church community. Thank you for being part of something special.

Mark Bennet

Parochial Church Council – Background and Proceedings

Thatcham PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector and the Team Vicar in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church – spiritual, pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical.

The PCC met at St Mary’s Church six times during 2023/4.

Arrangements were made during 2023 for 47 baptisms (55 in 2022) and 6 (7) weddings. In addition there were 31 (36) funerals (21 with a service at St Mary's, 10 with services at a crematorium or cemetery)

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex officio, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. St Barnabas Church is represented on the PCC by up to 5 members elected by their own church meeting.

Committees

The PCC operates through a Standing Committee and working groups on Safeguarding and Appeals (Organ and Major Repairs), which met between full meetings of the Council. The Standing Committee is the only Committee required by law; it has power to transact business of the Council between meetings, subject to any decisions made by the PCC.

FINANCE REPORT

Report to the Accounts December 2023

St Mary's General Account (day to day running of church activities) shows an increase of £4,937 in the cumulative deficit from £13,496 to £18,433. This is taking into account £10,654 raised through a fundraising appeal towards running costs including a match funding grant of £5,000 from Greenham Common Good Exchange Scheme.

Regular giving through Standing Orders and The Parish Giving Scheme has been most welcome but the need to attract new regular givers to replace those who have died or moved away is a challenge.

The St Barnabas General Account shows a positive balance of £3,605 at the end of the year.

We again managed to pay the Parish Share (our contribution to the diocese for clergy stipends, housing and pensions) in full (£95,790).

The Parish Share was set at £103,531 for 2024 despite objections from Thatcham that this 7% increase was not achievable.

Income from Services and other activities improved gradually through the year. Further donations were attracted to the Organ Pipedream Repair Project. The total funds available in organ restricted funds is £54,291. A further £4,211 is held in designated accounts. An additional £872 has been raised in 2024 following a concert at St Mary's.

Major repairs were undertaken to the roof and south west wall of St Marys, including replacement of internal areas of lime plaster. Minor repairs were made to tiled areas of aisles and nave floors. The total cost of these works was £47,988 including fees and VAT the bulk of which (£ 35,752) was paid in 2023. The VAT (£7483) has been reclaimed. A grant of £4,000 from the Berkshire Heritage Churches Fund has been awarded and the balance of £1,250 of Architect fees has yet to be paid.

As forecast last May the cost of gas and electricity increase sharply in 2023. The rate of increase over the last three years has been from £2,160; £3,690; and £7,410 in 2023.

The need to increase regular giving is critical, especially if we are to meet the running costs of both churches and pay the Parish Share again in full in 2023. If anyone is thinking of increasing their Stewardship payments during 2023 or joining the Scheme, please speak to the Treasurer or any of the Churchwardens.

A particular vote of thanks is due to the small team maintaining the books and banking the cash - Ann Watts at St Mary's and Bernie Ellison at St Barnabas – and to all who so generously support the work of the Church in this parish.

Investments and Fund Structure

There were no changes to the structure of the St Mary's PCC investment funds during 2022. The value of investments held by the PCC have begun to recover following significant impact on markets of Covid19 and the war in Ukraine.

There follows a brief description of the history, management and restrictions of each of these PCC managed funds.

Curates Housing and Expenses (formerly known as the Hatherley) Fund

The capital arose from the sale of a house given to the Church in 1935 for a succession of curates to live in. The PCC has a 29.4% share of the rent after deduction of expenses on a property in Station Road which continued to be let by the Diocese while it is not required to house a curate. The income is applied for general parish purposes and so is **unrestricted**. However the first call on any surplus income is the payment of curate / clergy expenses.

Thatcham Church of England Charity

The original capital arose from two-thirds of the sale proceeds of the Old Infant School in the Broadway; one-third is administered separately by the Diocesan Board of Education.

This charity is governed by a Charity Commission Scheme sealed on the 21st May 1980; the clear income from the permanent endowment is for furthering the religious and other charitable work of the Church of England in the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary's Thatcham and is therefore an **unrestricted** fund. All the income is applied in the parish.

The Church Estate Charity

Charity Commission ref – 00436

This is an ancient charity referred to in the Charity Commissioners Report of 1907; the income is to be applied to the upkeep of the church and the churchyard so this is a **restricted** fund.

Income is derived partly from investments and partly from 6/16ths of the income from Moor Meadow Charity, administered by Thatcham Parochial Charities.

The Rookery Church Fund

The small amount of income arising from the legacy by Mrs Hall who died in 1916, subject to the income being **restricted** to the fostering of the Sunday school. The Rookery was the name of the house.

Bankers: St Mary's PCC - Lloyds Bank plc & St Barnabas - HSBC
Independent Examiners: Tax Avenue, Turnfields Court,
Thatcham Investment Managers:

BlackRock Investment Managers, 12 Throgmorton Avenue London
EC2N 2DL
CCLA, Senator House, One Angel Lane , London EC4R 3AB

A summary of the Accounts is attached at Appendix 2.

Stewardship Secretary's Report – St Mary's.

A total of £76,379 was given through the Stewardship Scheme in 2021 (£69,553 in 2021). This included £24,671 through the Parish Giving Scheme introduced in September 2018. Giving through weekly envelopes was £4,327 and standing order payments were £20,987.

The total of £118,674 received in 2022 was the result of the bequest of £25,000 and a donation of £20,000 referred to on the Finance Report for 2022.

By the end of 2023 there were 21 donors paying by Direct Debits through the Parish Giving Scheme. 31 donors gave to St Mary's through Standing Orders. 10 donors use weekly envelopes. New envelopes have not been ordered for the last two years as the minimum order is now 25 sets. Unused envelopes from previous years will be available for 2024.

Great thanks are due to the faithful members of the Stewardship Scheme who by regular and sacrificial levels of giving keep St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches going.

Please continue to review your giving at least annually – index linking is a principle worth considering. Occasional donations are greatly welcomed, but commitment to regular giving is essential if we are to budget for paying for our priests through the Parish Share, maintain the fabric and support sustainable growth of the church in Thatcham.

'Donate' facilities have been incorporated into the website for St Mary's and ideas to encourage other ways to enable online payments are in development.

Giving by contactless payments via the GOODBOX at the back of St Mary's increased significantly to £1,830 (£1,462 in 2021).

I continue to positively recommend the Parish Giving Scheme to all regular givers. Over half the Dioceses in England have joined and together they cover the costs of the small administrative team based at Gloucester Diocese. All that is donated is paid direct to the nominated parish by the 10th of each month and income tax is reclaimed from HMRC through the GIFT AID scheme and distributed to parishes about five days later. This significantly reduces costs and administration at the local level.

Other bonuses are:

- the donations can be index linked if the donors so choose,
- the donations are paid as a single sum to the parish bank account thus avoiding the checking of multiple pages on Bank Statement entries,
- it reduces the bank charges (currently about £28 per month) for handling cheque or cash donations
- minimising the handling of cash and cheques, and delays in payment to the bank account via the Post Office (necessitated by the closure of the Thatcham branch of Lloyds Bank in August 2022)

I would again encourage everyone to make a will and to consider making a bequest to St Mary's. It is not difficult to arrange and can make a significant difference to the future of a growing church in Thatcham.

Chris Watts
Stewardship Secretary

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Committee have met 3 times since the last Annual meeting and reported regularly to the PCC. The support received has enabled us to make some really good progress. Members of the PCC set the example by completing DBS checks and undertaking the basic and foundation safeguarding training offered by the Church of England. Many volunteers in specific roles are now fully trained in safeguarding and up to date with their DBS checks for the church. Thank you to everyone for recognising the change in the public attitude to safeguarding and the necessity for us to keep up.

Steve Rice and Colin Waters are our id verifiers for the DBS process. Thank you to them both, for their efforts and for ensuring a comparatively straightforward experience for members of either St Mary's or St Barnabas.

Having identified 10 activities involving children or vulnerable adults, we have set out to structure the organisation of these activities so that they are as safe as we can make them for all those involved. This is still a work in progress, but the following key steps have been taken:

- Each of the 10 activities has been allocated a PCC member who is not part of that group. Their task is to get to know the group leader and to help with completing some of the paperwork. We are calling them PCC Link Adviser, because they will be able to inform the PCC when safeguarding documents have been reviewed.
- A database has been developed for the church nationally and made available to us. It will allow us to keep track of volunteers in roles with children or vulnerable adults. This will eventually remove the need to keep such records on paper or in private computers.
- Sue Ball is our Recruiter and, despite having several key posts to fill, she is doing an excellent job in following all 16 steps that 'safer recruitment' demands. We hope that the safeguarding hub i.e. the database mentioned above, will, eventually, reduce the quantity of paper involved. It is a steep learning curve for us all.

My thanks go to all of you for your vigilance. Several matters of concern have been reported through the year. it is the nature of safeguarding that once things are passed on, we do not expect to know the outcome. Rest assured that your input can make a difference.

My particular thanks to the safeguarding committee who have a commitment that has made my job considerably easier and a positive outlook that keeps us all hopeful.

Ann Dibble
Parish Safeguarding Officer

ABC

Wednesday mornings are lively at St Mary's!

Pop into church between 10:30 and 12am and you will see the friendly and informal toddler group run by Brenda and the team of volunteers who welcome pre-school children and their carers, offering refreshments, a variety of play areas, craft, a time to chat.

The morning concludes with a short service, animated talk, often involving props, and ending with prayers. The children are always keen to gather at the altar to sing their familiar songs and dance around.

A highlight of the year is the Crib Service when the children and carers are invited to dress up and be part of the nativity play on Christmas Eve, chaotic, fun and moving, all in one.

Each year we say farewell to children who will be beginning formal education with a special little service and a gift to send them on their way but rest assured, there is a steady stream of new babies arriving to occupy 'baby corner' and become part of their own church. It's wonderful if those babies are brought to St Mary's for baptism.

We witness friendships and support groups blossom among the adults and enjoy our conversations with them in an encouraging and relaxed environment.

The average attendance is upwards of 25 adults and 25 children, with a broad age range as grandparents and even great grandparents attend with their family occasionally. The group is valued by all and the aim is to be open at least 46 weeks each year.

If you think you would like to be involved then do speak to Brenda.

The ABC team.

Children's Ministry.

Val Watts and I are extremely privileged to lead the children's' group during the 10am Sunday service at St. Mary's, meeting on the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th (where appropriate) during term time.

So, what do we all get up to?

Well... there's Bible reading, various resources which Val produces from a vast catalogue of books, including the 'Mosaic' series specifically targeted for small groups. Colouring in a weekly worksheet that relates to the Bible story is something the children really seem to enjoy. The youngsters also bring their own ideas and games to share and although there are three at most, they come back each week enthusiastic and ready to join in.

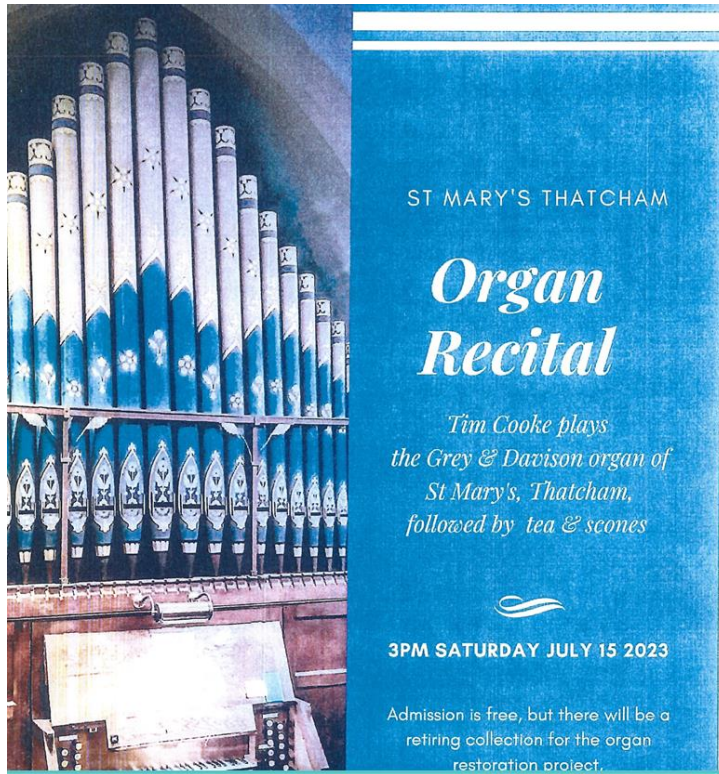
It is of course open to all youngsters, and parents are welcome to sit in if they like.

Christine Rice and The Team

Churchwardens

We would like to give our heartfelt thanks to all the clergy and volunteers, for their hard work in keeping St Mary's & St Barnabas smooth running over the last year.

We have increased the number of Leadership and PCC meetings this year to try and improve the effectiveness of our meetings and running of our churches. Meetings have been well attended.



The Organ

Over the last year we have held successful fund raising events for repair work to be completed on the Church Organ and to repair the roof of the church making us water tight again!

Events include Café & Cabaret, Organ recitals and we have received grants from the Greenham Trust Good Exchange. The majority of the work on the roof has now been completed and church is feeling a little warmer. Hillsdon & Sons Ltd were appointed to carry out much needed work to our church building. There was a significant repair needed to mend the roof and stop the ingress of water, before any more damage was done.

The guttering needed repairing above the south aisle, drying out walls, making good the lime plaster and fixing floor tiles in the main church area.

There have been many musical concerts in the church some of which have been fundraisers as we continue to need money to pay for the day to day running of the church.

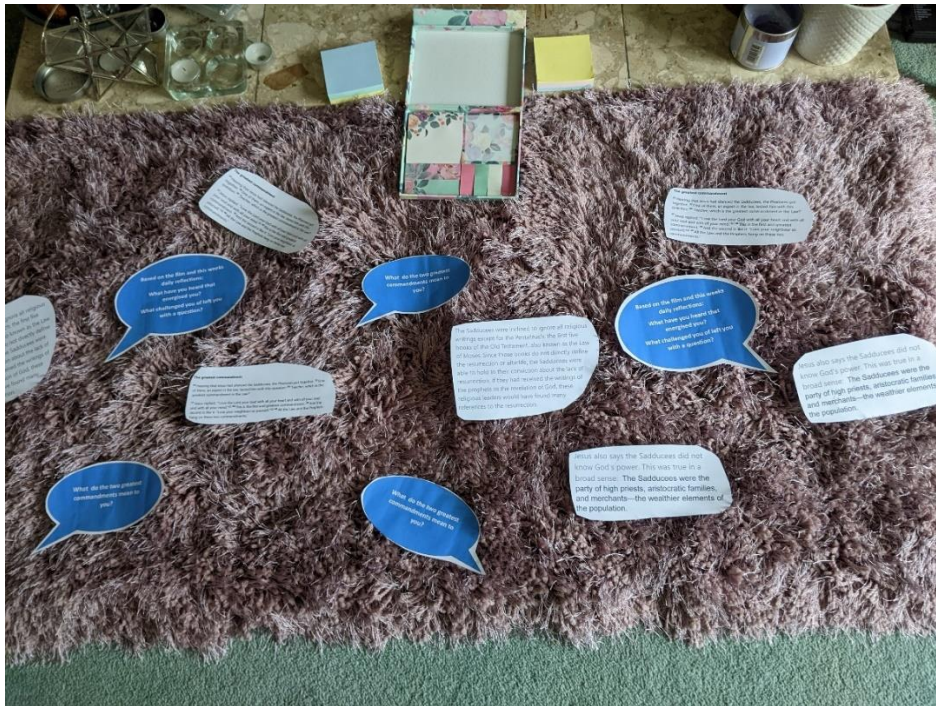
We are appreciative of the role that ABC has in bringing new families to our church.

CAMEO plays an important role in bringing elderly people together in fellowship; we thank very much the volunteers in CAMEO & ABC for their hard work. We have re-introduced prayer helpers in the Chapel after the Sunday 10 am service.

Our services have been slowly getting back to pre-Covid times. However, we need to move on and we are being helped by the Clergy and the Diocese to set a new vision for our Churches.

Lent Groups

We have joined the Oxford Diocese study group for Lent – 'Come and See the way of love' Approximately, seventeen have signed up to this as well as a few individuals studying at home.



Things to consider after our Annual Meeting

1. Home study groups – Weekly, Fortnightly, Monthly
2. Working with other churches
3. Developing our mission and vision for St.Mary's.
4. Invitations issued to families inviting them to our Sunday Morning Activities.

We are aware of the need to review our Parish Share because the way funding is calculated is currently unfair. We struggle each month to pay this bill which means we must look at ways to create more income to sustain and grow our Christian mission in Thatcham. Thank you all for your reports which together highlight the numerous activities in our Churches. Please continue the good work and pray for outreach into the community.

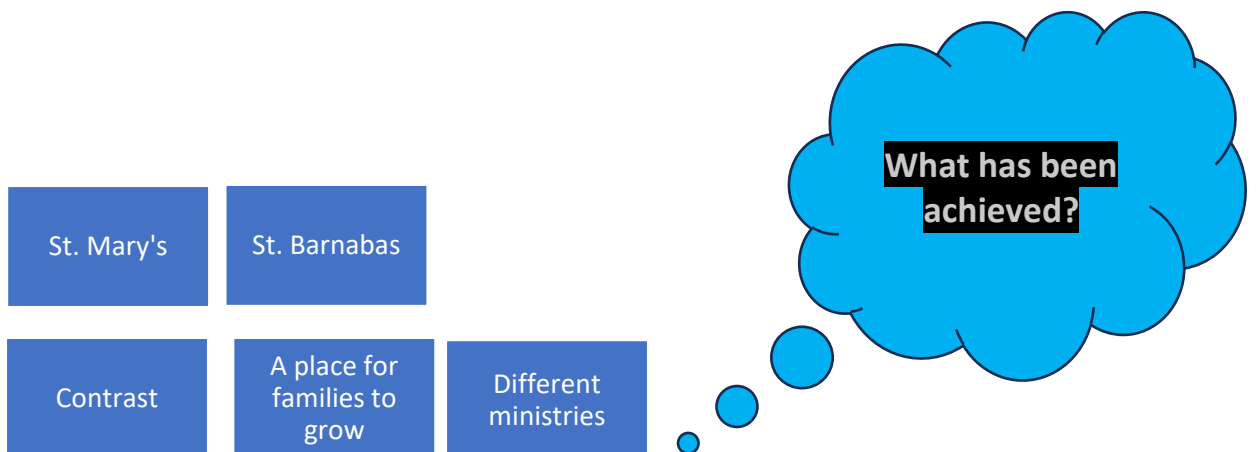
Reflections from the PCC.. ...

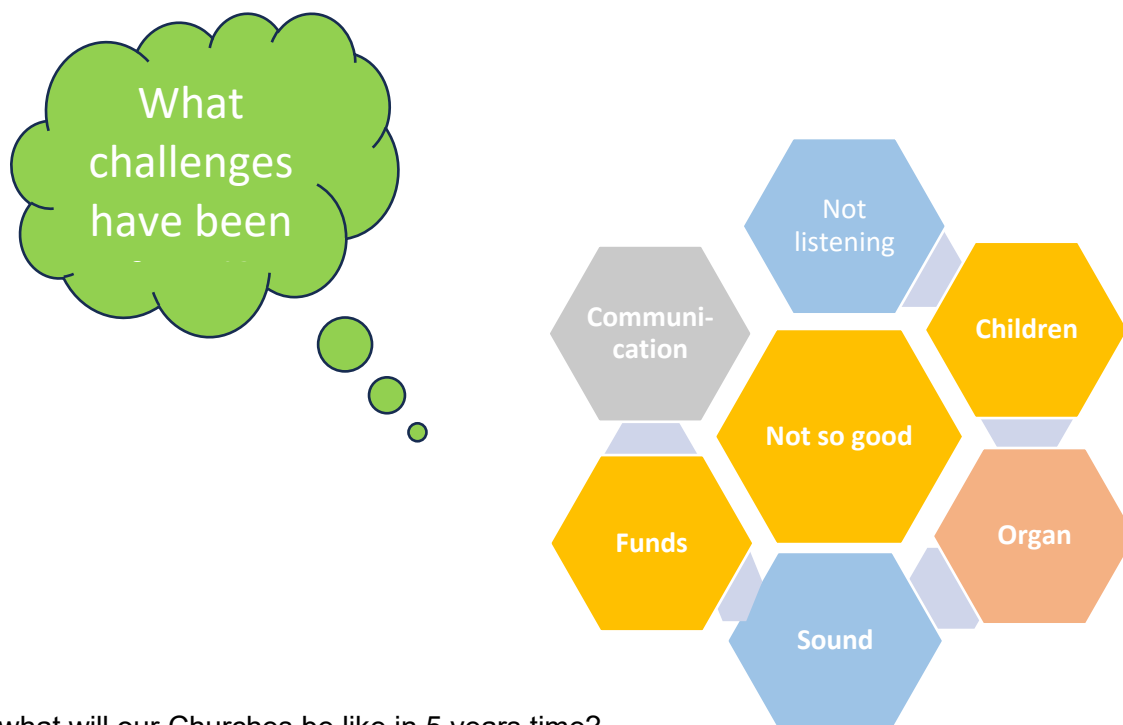


How Christ like are we?



We would welcome your thoughts as we look to reinvigorate the church in Thatcham, post pandemic. What would you like to see changed/ tweaked or improved?





So, what will our Churches be like in 5 years time?

Music at St. Mary's

It's been good year for choir. We have sung an anthem at every 10am service apart from August and two Sundays in the year designated as low Sundays and at every Evensong.

We've sung a variety of Anthems from those that are relatively simple to those that more complex, from those that we have been singing for years to those that are new to the choir. Choir numbers remain steady though sadly ill health caused one of our sopranos to retire at least for a while, but we recruited a new voice and Wendy has now been singing with us for some months. We are very lucky to have so many years of experience among us. It makes learning new material really quite easy.

The major festivals over the year were celebrated with, as usual, a range of music. A service for the start of Holy Week took place on Palm Sunday evening led by the choir which was well received.

With the Coronation in May, the choir sang the RSCM suggested anthem with aplomb.

Christmas was slightly different. St Mary's no longer hosts the Hospital Friends service and we were not asked to participate in the switching on of Thatcham lights though some of us did join with the Baptist Church to sing carols on the green. For the first time in many years, St Mary's hosted a traditional carol service which was very well attended by many people from the community and members of the congregation.

As always I am looking for new choir members . We are happy to take young people from age 14. All that is needed is a commitment to the choir, enjoyment of choral singing and

wanting to learn. It's worth pointing out that faith is a journey and that you don't have to have arrived to join the choir. It's an excellent way to explore faith.

We couldn't sing as we do without two people who need particular mention – Alice who is our rehearsal accompanist and Tim who plays for services. They are both invaluable. Thank you.

Many thanks also go to all the members of choir not only for their effort and achievement but for all the other things they do to enhance the music in our worship.

Mary Stagg

Prayer Ministry

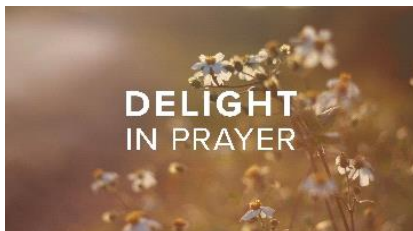
The prayer ministry provides regular meetings for quiet, personal and reflective prayer. The group is a local hub of the Guild of St. John and St. Mary Magdalene and respond to prayers requested from overseas and the local community in Thatcham & surrounding areas. The group is run by Michael Watson, meets every alternate Tuesday and is always encouraging others to join these times of worship.

We have set up a WhatsApp group for prayer requests that anyone can join and introduced a intercessional prayer Initiative for the local community to specifically pray for all those who are suffering and affected by the cost of living crisis. A prayer point has been established at the entrance to the church.

We continue to work with other local church groups which bring together as many as possible from all the churches in Thatcham in order to pray for our town.

Michael Watson

Prayer Ministry Circle



We continue to pray in our homes, on our walks, on the phone and video calls, in fact wherever we have safely been whilst we haven't been able to pray with people in person.

Sue Stevenson.

St Barnabas Church

This year has been another great year at St Barnabas, many of us have noticed that there has been a good buzz in the community and we have happily welcomed some new members. We continue to seek new ways to worship together as a community that includes everyone who has found a home with us, of all ages and stages of faith. Our Zoom

community group led by Ben has gone from strength to strength and offers a weekly opportunity for people to explore the Bible in more depth and discuss what this means for their lives.

Our link with Thatcham Park School remains important to us and since Nicola returned from leave weekly assemblies have resumed. As a community we volunteered at the Christmas and Summer fair, providing food and a craft stand. Nicola has also begun a research project in school to explore how storytelling can support children spiritually and several children have already been part of this project which will be ongoing for the next year. Angela has also been visiting school weekly to support the work with children with additional needs in the school. We continue to support the school in celebrating the festivals of the Christian year, whether in school or at St Mary's.

Our Baby Cafe, meeting at the Old Bluecoat School, continues to be a vibrant community where support is offered to parents of young babies. As you will see in the report on ABC, this also continues to thrive under Brenda's leadership. Our work with children is important to us and we are excited to have recently relaunched Muddy Church, now in St Mary's Churchyard. Our opening event attracted around 50 people and we hope that many will come back for our next event in April.

There is much to be thankful for this year at St B's and we look forward to a new year and all that God has in store for us!

Revd Nicola Hulks

Deanery Synod Report

Thatcham Parish is part of the Newbury Deanery – a group of parishes in West Berkshire running as far as Hungerford and Lambourn and up to Compton and The Ridgeway. In some recent documents the Deanery has described itself briefly as follows:

Newbury Deanery covers some 105 square miles of the western part of West Berkshire. It includes the urban centres of Newbury and Thatcham, the market town of Hungerford and an extensive rural hinterland. The eleven benefices (roughly speaking groups of churches overseen by a single priest) encompass 36 parishes ranging in population from over 25,000 to under 100, together with 42 church buildings, and one church which has no building of its own.

The Deanery is an administrative unit of the Church of England which is part of its structure of “synodical government” – the way the Church makes decisions about its internal workings where they affect more than a single parish. Traditionally the Deanery has had two functions – (the money function) allocating the parish share which pays for the clergy and support costs (just under £1million for Newbury Deanery) and then collecting it; and (the people function) negotiating the deployment of clergy at a time when clergy numbers nationally have been declining. More recently the people function has been developed into a more positive mode of mission planning (The Mission Action Plan) – actively supporting parishes and their people to meet the common challenges we face.

The effects of the pandemic had meant progress on the plan had slowed. Bruce Laurie, Lay Chair of Synod having reviewed the plan in 2021 found it was still wholly relevant to today's needs. It was stressed that this is the Deanery's plan to support and encourage benefices and parishes rather than to direct or impose requirements from the Diocese. Synod had

identified four action groups and work was continuing on putting these into being. These are:

- Finance
 - Schools and Education
 - Lay Training
 - Environment
- (Consideration on new housing developments and also communities will be incorporated in due course.)

The Newbury Deanery Synod also maintains a link with the South African parish of Batlharos in the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman.

Deanery Synod elects representatives to Diocesan Synod – notably our own Team Rector.

The Deanery is run by the Deanery Synod. Like the PCC this is a mixture of clergy and elected lay members, but in the Deanery case the members represent the different parishes. The Deanery Synod elects a standing committee and appoints officers to act as an executive, and to progress the various aspects of its work. It may also receive requests from the Diocese of Oxford or from the National Church to respond to matters of interest. The Deanery Synod can also raise matters of concern and ask for these to be addressed at a Diocesan or national level.

In 2023/4 the Synod considered issues arising from progress on the Living in Love and Faith Report, the Cost of Living Crisis and the value of community hubs and 'Warm Spaces', the reinvigoration of St Mary's Shaw and promotion of the ECO Church strategy

The Deanery Share was paid in full to the Diocese, despite shortfalls from some benefices, by use of the reserve. Two-thirds of the rebate due to the Deanery will be distributed to parishes after further consideration is given to support those parishes in financial difficulty.

Thank you for your support for our clergy members of Synod and our lay members Cath Forbes and myself.

I also note with grateful thanks the support received from our good friend, the late Tony Collie, a long standing member of the Deanery Synod.

Chris Watts

St. Mary's Church Bellringers

We have rung every Sunday over the last year including half muffled on Remembrance Sunday. There was late night ringing for New Year and prior to the Christmas midnight service. We have had a handful of weddings to ring for.

The national highlight of the year was the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla and all thirteen members of the band were able to ring on the day including our (at the time) very new recruit Rhiannan who rang totally unassisted for the first time and managed this with her family watching on! A quarter peal attempt for the occasion was unsuccessful but we did manage a pleasing 720.

The board in memory of Ron Christopher was dedicated in July and now hangs in the ringing chamber. We have managed to ring eight bells (or more) on most Sundays and numbers on practice night have varied between six and sixteen. We usually welcome one or more visitors to practice.

The Tuesday peal band have started coming again every two or three months and we have had several visiting bands.

The Guild 8 bell striking competition trophy is currently on display in the ringing chamber as Mark and Rachel were part of the winning band representing the Newbury branch.

A few members of the band have had health problems during the year and Janet was out of action for several months following a broken wrist.

I would like to thank all the band for their support and especially Richard and the team looking after the bells and John for dealing with the monies and accounts.

Finally, we are grateful to the members of the clergy who brave the stairs on a Sunday morning to say belfry prayers with us.

Rachel Backhouse
Tower Captain

Fabric

In summary the log of work by contractors and volunteers to the fabric of St Mary's includes:

- Spring and autumn clean and clear
- Test lightning conductor
- Test and service Fire Extinguishers
- Service heating boilers
- Tune and minor repairs to organ (noting the Choir manual is not operational)
- Clearing block drains and soakaways
- Major repairs to roof, wall and tiled floors
- Completion of a 5 yearly EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report)
- Completion of a 2 yearly PAT (portable appliance testing) report
- Repair to the pump to the WC

The Organ Restoration Working Group has continued to work through the implications of repair and restoration of the organ. It has become clear that the scale of the work requires the involvement of a major grant funding source – probably the Heritage Lottery Fund. The HLF undertook in 2023 a full review of its grant making policies and has published revised guidance and application procedure with significant implications for our proposed project.

A temporary protective 'umbrella' has been placed above the organ pipework to protect the instrument from dust and small pieces of debris falling from walls and roof. Minor repairs and application of sealant to roof edge above organ.

The PCC's architect, Christian Randall of Wantage has begun preparation of his second five yearly report on the state of the fabric. In 2018 he listed the regular concerns of clearing gutters and repairs to rainwater downpipes, repairs to stonework and flint facing and ivy on the tower. In addition to the major repairs to roof and walls referred to in the above Finance report he noted:

- significant dampness and deterioration to the plaster on the external walls to north and south aisles,
- rotting of timber thresholds to both north doors.
- a series of minor repairs to stonework

Further improvements are required to the Meeting Room and kitchen. In particular a replacement heating and hot water boiler is required that satisfies the Diocesan guidance which strongly favours a carbon free solution.

There are also warning signs that the church's main heating boiler will need major repair or replacement within the next 2 years.

The PCC has taken the first steps in adopting a Maintenance checklist and reporting process.

Thanks are again due to Chris Druce and Mark Backhouse for help with general repairs and lower level lamp replacements, to Marion and a team of dedicated gardeners for work on the flower borders, to Rita for polishing the brass and to all who regularly clean, arrange the flowers and maintain the equipment.

Chris Watts

Inventory

The Memorial Book has been updated to include the names of all for whom our Ministry team have undertaken a funeral service up to 18 January 2024.

20 copies of Carols for Choirs no. 5 have been donated to the Choir music library.

2 defective electric urns have been disposed of and 1 replacement donated. 1 electric kettle has been replaced. 3 pedal operated recycling bins and a sanitary waste bin have been donated and several plastic bins recycled.

Sewing group and Flowers.

Where to start? Let me give you the history of the Group.

Back in 1998 several ladies were talking about getting together to make something to commemorate the Millenium.

We decided to make a new altar frontal for the chapel, the old one was getting very shabby. We worked together on the design, a grape vine, to represent the church rooted and alive and fruitful in the community. About 8 of us worked on the frontal. The base fabric was bought and the additional materials were collected from our own stocks.

The finished frontal was dedicated in 2000 and I was ordained priest in the September of the same year. If you look on the back of the frontal you will see the list of names of the makers, many of whom have since died. That was just the start of course and the cry was what do we make next. There followed banners, alterations and remaking the white / gold frontal, the purple frontal plus vestments and a new purple frontal for the Chapel.

Alongside this we have made and mended small white surplices for the children in the choir, taken up and down blue cassocks and made white clothes for use at Communion and white corners for the altars.

There have also been the fun things, soft toys, patchwork covers, cushions, blankets etc. etc.

Our latest project was the new red frontal. Now we are making things for sale later this year.

We meet on Mondays at one of our group's houses where we relax, drink tea, eat biscuits – oh, and sew, knit or crochet.

Come and See

Marion and team.

'Little Churches'

I am very much in debt to those who are part of this vital ministry.

Over the last year we have seen attendance fall and rise across the three locations that host a monthly service of Holy Communion.

Faithful members of St. Mary's congregation volunteer to bring God's message of love and hope to those who, for one reason or another, are not able to attend church on a Sunday.

Nevil Court

This has seen numbers decline and it has been decided by the one remaining resident who comes that this service should no longer continue for the time being. I will, of course, keep the situation under review and if there is interest, I will reinstate.

Last year, members of St. Mary's choir hosted a carol service which was, by all accounts very successful and generated a goodly donation towards the church coffers.

Joan Collins assists with this service.

Ferndale Court

Sees three or four folk who attend regularly and I am grateful to Emma Watts who provides valuable assistance to me and conversation to others.

Thatcham Court

This has proved to be the most successful venue in terms of attendees.

Most months we welcome between 15 and 20 residents. This home also hosted a carol service which was also well attended.

Joan takes the lead here and I provide assistance.

Steve Rice

West Berkshire Community Hospital

This service of about 45 minutes sees a number of in-patients each week and is led by the Rev. Dr. Simon Thorn who is also chaplain to the hospital in Wokingham.

Due to other commitments, I am not able to attend the service so regularly but St. Mary's is very well represented by Joan Collins, Barbara Carwardine and Margaret Goodhead, all of whom support Simon by fetching and returning patients after the service, reading and leading the prayers.

Members of other churches in the area also attend which makes for a lively ecumenical time of fellowship. Individual prayer is offered and available to anyone and volunteers also take the opportunity to chat with those who might not otherwise see a visitor that day.

There is always a need for more help so if you are reading this and are interested, please get in touch.

Steve Rice

Prayer ministry

Every Tuesday fortnight at 6pm, Michael Watson leads a short service of about half an hour using litany and prayer.

We are privileged to pray for our brothers and sisters overseas whose prayers are emailed to Michael and also for ourselves and those things on our hearts and minds.

This is a beautiful time held in St. Ann's chapel – quiet, reflective and peaceful.

As Michael frequently iterates, everyone is most welcome to join us.

We are also privileged to pray for anyone after the 10am Sunday service. Again, this is held in St. Ann's chapel and two people are there each week to listen and to pray with those who come.

Steve Rice

C.A.M.E.O. Come and Meet Each Other

There have been many changes this year, Margaret left for family reasons and Ann and Roger moved to the Marlborough area leaving a big hole in the organizing team. We were very fortunate that Carol and Max Dowding stepped in to help with the driving and setting up of each meeting. Carol is also an excellent cake maker and joined our now substantial rota of willing helpers. Our sincere thanks to them for stepping in so ably and Theresa and I would also like to thank all our members for their support and cakes during this difficult year.

A first for us was the addition of two students from Kennet School this winter term, on work experience. They helped where they could but they said they gained most from interacting and talking with the elderly members and were surprised at how good we all were at games and quizzes!

We covered a wide range of activities and entertainments, Hand bell ringing, Local comic poet, Saxophonist, local choir visit and very interestingly a member of the WI talking about her space walk experience with Elon Musk!! Locally grown activities include quizzes, craft, games, bingo, singing, beetle drive, etc..



We also had our usual termly celebrations of summer tea party, fish and chip lunch, Halloween, Christmas party and an extra tea with special cake in January for CAMEO's 10th Anniversary and a very special send off to Ann and Roger in September.

The group meets every Monday afternoon with activities from 2.00 pm until tea and cake is served. We currently have a regular membership of 25 to 30 and meet every week and although we are limited in space we are able to take new members. We are a very friendly group so if you know of anybody who is lonely or bereaved please let them know they can be sure of a warm welcome.

Viv Druce – 820718
Theresa Lucas - 635923

The Thatcham Parochial Charities

This ancient charity has continued to play a significant role, both in the life of our churches and in support of local people in need, this year. The rector and our three churchwardens are ex officio members of the Board of Trustees and I (Chris Druce) am currently a representative of Thatcham Town Council and Chairman of Trustees. Other members of the Trustees Board are drawn from representatives of other local councils in Cold Ash, Greenham and Midgham. We cover the area of the 'Ancient Borough of Thatcham', encompassing modern Thatcham, together with Cold Ash, Midgham and Greenham.

The trustees have a wide remit of responsibility, covering various needs of our local community. This year, two of our churchwardens stood down and two new people, therefore, were elected as churchwardens and, as such, are now serving on our Trustee Board, immediately becoming involved with the work of the charities and involvement with the residents and organisations within our local community. Our Cold Ash parish council representative trustee also retired after 55 years of dedicated service to the charities. The occasion was marked at his final meeting in December.

There are 2 principal charities – the 'Thatcham Parochial Almshouse Charity' and 'Thatcham Relief in Need Charity'.

The Almshouses – The first almshouses in Thatcham were established by Thomas Loundyes, in 1446 AD. Some of the present almshouse flats, in Chapel Street, are named after him. To qualify for accommodation, applicants should be 'of a certain age', a resident in the Ancient Borough and can demonstrate a housing need.

We have 14 flats in all. During the year we said a sad farewell to two very long-standing residents. One lady passed away in the latter half of 2023 & not long after, her neighbour moved out of her almshouse accommodation & into more sheltered accommodation. These neighbours had created a very happy environment within their community & are missed by everyone. This means that currently, there are 2 vacant flats are within the oldest almshouse building, necessitating much redecoration, prior to new residents taking up residency. The trustees are currently in the final stages of appointing the new residents.

The Trustees agreed unanimously not to increase the weekly maintenance contributions (rent equivalent) this year & there continues to be no increase since 2017. The variable energy costs still present a challenge & trustees are very keen not to increase the heating and lighting contributions after the last increase in 2022, striving always to avoid unnecessary increases in cost to our residents.

Relief in Need Charity –

The object of this charity is to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the Ancient Borough, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress, by making grants of money or providing items or services to reduce that need.

As with the Almshouse Charity, this year had very special needs for our local community and Relief in Need was very much 'Open for Business'.

During the year, the charity made grants in excess of £15,000. In addition to individual needs, including a new mobility scooter, the charity made a donation towards playground equipment for young children and contributed to the local newspaper's "over 80's Christmas food-parcel" fund. So, as you can see, it has been another eventful year. If you know of anyone who may need a helping hand, or a piece of equipment otherwise unaffordable, do, please, have a word with me, Mark, or one of the churchwardens.

Thankyou – Chris Druce

MISSIONS



Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

As ever, a very big thank you for the money you have helped raise to give people in the developing world the chance of a better life.

This financial year (October '22 to September '23) we raised over £3,500 for Christian Aid – a very creditable effort given the continuing demands on people's wallets, if still down on pre-pandemic levels.

Following on from that, we have held another Beetle Drive and Fish & Chip supper, and two Lent Lunches (one at St Mary's on Good Friday).

We are now gearing up for Christian Aid Week – which runs from 12th to 18th May this year, and is where we raise most of the money. This year's appeal is for Burundi, for a province where 70% of people live in poverty, and 52% of children are underweight. Most are reliant on finding casual work each day, in order to buy food for that evening, and many go to bed hungry. The money raised will provide support to set up small businesses, so people can work towards a better future for their families.

You can help by:

- Taking Gift Aid envelopes in Church, filling them yourself, and passing on spares to friends and family (a congregation member raised £60 that way last year).
- Volunteering for an hour from 10am-4pm on Saturday 18th May at our Collection Point in St Mary's Church porch.
- Giving donations for coffee and cake after the Service on Sunday 19th May - or even baking a cake yourself.

In addition, we are delighted that Phil Evans (Christian Aid's Home Counties Region Officer for Church Engagement & Fundraising) will preach for us on Sunday 12th May, and show the new Christian Aid Week video after the Service – please do come and be inspired, and invite your friends too, all are welcome.

We still hope to add a supermarket collection and carol singing later this year, but are still looking for venues. This will be greatly helped by the new contactless-giving phone App.

We are a small Committee, and always welcome new members. However, we are particularly reliant on Church members volunteering at our events. We would like to particularly thank everyone at St Mary's who has helped over the past year

- cooking soup, baking cakes, washing up, collecting, or even just going to events, donating, and praying. As ever, the needs remain huge, so please give if you can, and if not do please continue to pray.

Sarah Bennet Chair,
Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

Children's Society and USPG

The use of collecting boxes and globes has significantly declined in recent years, probably as a result in the reduction in the use of coins. Support for Missions has increasingly transferred to event such as the ever popular Cream Teas and to direct donations including those made online. *Collecting boxes continue to be available however for anyone wanting to support Missions in this way.*

£303.53 was donated to the Children's Society in 2023. The money goes to help the Society and its network of centres and projects to deliver specialist services for children who face disaster and danger in their daily lives; children who are unable to find the support they need elsewhere.

USPG

£462.27 was donated to USPG in 2023. USPG is working with the Anglican Church in Zambia to develop healthcare and leadership programmes that will have an impact on the life and outreach of the church and community. Support was given for training of specialists at the Hospital of St Francis at Katete and other health projects in Zambia.

If you would like to help with either of these Missions please speak to Ann Watts (864567).

Ann Watts

West Berks Foodbank



The continuing pandemic and then cost of living increases have meant that a significant number of people used West Berks Foodbank (WBFB) during 2023. Single adults, couples and families contacted the Crisis FoodLine for help and support.

The Foodbank no longer collects donations from St Mary's. Donations continue to be made, however and thanks is due to Matt Evans for regular transfer of these to the depot at Greenham particularly at Harvest and Christmas.

WBFB's Foodbank Centres in Thatcham, Hungerford and Burghfield and Mortimer continue to experience increasing need for support. The hybrid operational model is also well used in responding to requests for food deliveries to clients unable to get to a Foodbank Centre.

Thank you for supporting the Foodbank – please continue to donate when you can.

Rainbows (Girlguiding at St. Mary's)



Two separate groups of Rainbows (5-7 year olds) meet at St Mary's on Tuesday and Friday evenings to do all sorts of things from game and crafts to pamper evenings and escape rooms.

If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to help with the Rainbows of Girlguiding please contact Julie, julie@dunwell.org or www.girlguiding.org.uk/

Connect

Connect, our parish magazine, is published ten times a year, double issues being December/January and July/August. Particular emphasis was made of circulating the magazine by email, on the website and by hand delivery on request. The magazine includes news, information and illustrations about services and events in St. Mary's and St. Barnabas. All of our clergy team provide a regular article but more contributors are always welcome. Any articles or adverts to be published can be sent to Steve Rice, steverice1@virginmedia.com, or Julie Dunwell, julie@dunwell.org.

Julie Dunwell

Service Support Teams

We have continued to operate a scaled down version of the rota during the year, not quite getting back to normal but doing what we're comfortable with. Thank you to everyone who supported Sunday services, baptisms, weddings and funerals by reading, leading prayers, handing out books, making people welcome, operating IT equipment to enable those at home to participate in worship. Additional help would be very welcome in any of the teams. Just get in touch.

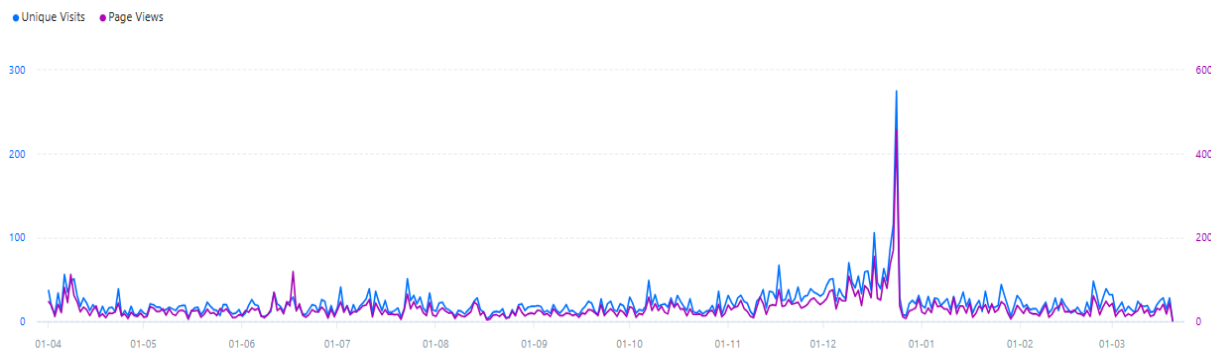
Sue Stevenson

St Mary's Church Website

There has been little change in the structure and management of the web site. The content remains fairly static with most of the updates being the Bulletin, Connect, What's On and the Choir schedule.

The following chart shows the number of unique visits and the number of page views over the period 1-April-2023 to 24-Feb-2024. Activity peaked on 24-Dec-2023 with over twice as many unique visits compared to 2023 with an average of 2.5 pages accessed per visit. The overall activity throughout the year was more evenly spread.

The peak activities occur in the Easter and Christmas periods. The information that is shown seems to suggest that many users know what they need and go straight to the required page.



The traffic breakdown is shown in the chart below



As always, the web site is wholly reliant on its content from all those who are directly and indirectly involved with St. Mary's and who produce information for general consumption and those who organise events. Compared to the previous year, the number of unique visits has increased and the average number of pages viewed per visit has also increased. The web site is the public face of St. Mary's and needs to reflect the life of the church community and be up-to-date.

An exercise to review the web site content was conducted. There were 16 contributors covering 36 pages. The response was disappointing with only 25% of the contributors replying. The web site potentially has pages that are out of date and should therefore be removed.

Grateful thanks are given to all active contributors. Please keep the information flowing.



Minutes of the APCM meeting of the Thatcham Parochial Church Council held at St Mary's Church on 21st May 2023.

In attendance: Mary Baker, Sue Ball, Judith Bennet, Revd Mark Bennet (Chair), Sarah Bennet, Revd Angela Brennan, Paul Bullock, Joan Collins, John Collins, Mike Collins, John Coombs, Alison Dean, Ann Dibble, Doreen Dines, Chris Druce, Viv Druce, Julie Dunwell, Kevin Dunwell, Maggie Fidler, Marion Fontaine, Revd Brenda Harland, Debbie Harley, Michael Harley, Christine Rice, Steve Rice, John Robinson, Margaret Robinson, Mary Stagg, Simon Stagg, Lynne Starr, Mike Stevenson, Susan Stevenson, Colin Waters, Debbie Waters, Mike Watson, Ann Watts, Chris Watts, Emma Watts

Apologies: Tony Collie, Jeremy Cottam, Lourdes Cottam, Bernadette Ellison, Cath Forbes, Leanne Fowler, John Hicks, Pam Hicks

---oOo---

Mark Bennet opened the meeting with a prayer.

Minute No. **APCM** /

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action
1	Minutes Previous APCM The minutes of the APCM of the 29 th May 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by Mark Bennet.	
2	Matters Arising None	
3	Fabric Log Book The fabric log book for the year was accepted as a correct record and signed by Mark Bennet.	
3a	It was noted that there was no hot water in the kitchen or the toilets. Chris Watts explained that the heating system works but the component that supplies hot water to the taps is not functioning. Due to the age of the boiler, it is very unlikely that it can be repaired and a replacement unit will be required. The standing committee will address this issue.	
4	Safeguarding Ann Dibble provided an update and current status of Safeguarding. Everyone should do the basic on-line training as anyone could be the first person approached. DBS checks and further training will continue to be performed.	

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action				
5	Parish Organisations Paul Bullock will be stepping down from his role. A replacement is being sought.					
6	Electoral Roll Chris Watts said that there are 178 people on the Electoral Roll. The previous count was 179. The Electoral Roll is due for review in 2025.					
7	Inventory The inventory was presented. Chris Watts explained that a photo record of key items is now required by the insurers. Mark Bennet said that the inventory will have to be formally transferred to the Church Wardens.					
8	Financial Accounts Chris Watts presented the financial accounts which are awaiting formal verification. The financial situation seems to be resilient but is still not in the “black”. The meeting wished to thank Pam Broads’ family for the bequest of £25K. A further £20K has also been donated. This money has been ring-fenced in the Fabric Fund. It was noted that there has been no income from advertising in Connect, as very few copies are now printed because most people receive an electronic copy.					
8a	It was proposed that the Standing Committee will review the report. <table><tr><td>Proposed</td><td>Chris Watts</td></tr><tr><td>Seconded</td><td>Paul Bullock</td></tr></table> The meeting approved the proposal.	Proposed	Chris Watts	Seconded	Paul Bullock	
Proposed	Chris Watts					
Seconded	Paul Bullock					
8b	It was also proposed that the <i>Tax Avenue</i> be reappointed as the Independent Examiner for the accounts. <table><tr><td>Proposed</td><td>Chris Watts</td></tr><tr><td>Seconded</td><td>Paul Bullock</td></tr></table> The meeting approved the proposal.	Proposed	Chris Watts	Seconded	Paul Bullock	
Proposed	Chris Watts					
Seconded	Paul Bullock					
9	Deanery Synod Mary Stagg and Tony Collie stated that they wish to stand down from their rolls. Kath Forbes and Chris Watts will continue with their roll.					

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action																									
10	PCC Members The following people were accepted for the PCC for St. Mary's <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Judith Bennet</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Mark Bennet</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>Steve Rice</td></tr> </table> <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Kevin Dunwell</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Mike Watson</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>???</td></tr> </table> <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Mary Stagg</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Simon Stagg</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>Mike Warson</td></tr> </table> <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Steve Rice</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Ann Watts</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>Emma Watts</td></tr> </table> <table> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Viv Druce</td><td>Proposed</td><td>Chris Druce</td></tr> <tr> <td>Seconded</td><td>Sarah Bennet</td></tr> </table>	Judith Bennet	Proposed	Mark Bennet	Seconded	Steve Rice	Kevin Dunwell	Proposed	Mike Watson	Seconded	???	Mary Stagg	Proposed	Simon Stagg	Seconded	Mike Warson	Steve Rice	Proposed	Ann Watts	Seconded	Emma Watts	Viv Druce	Proposed	Chris Druce	Seconded	Sarah Bennet	
Judith Bennet	Proposed		Mark Bennet																								
	Seconded	Steve Rice																									
Kevin Dunwell	Proposed	Mike Watson																									
	Seconded	???																									
Mary Stagg	Proposed	Simon Stagg																									
	Seconded	Mike Warson																									
Steve Rice	Proposed	Ann Watts																									
	Seconded	Emma Watts																									
Viv Druce	Proposed	Chris Druce																									
	Seconded	Sarah Bennet																									
10a	The following people have been accepted for the PCC for St. Barnabas - Alison Dean - John Hicks - Kath Forbes - Lourdes Cottam																										
11	CTiT																										

AOB

No.	Minutes / Notes	Action
1	<i>Ascension Day</i> Debbie Harley mentioned that the Ascension Day service was appreciated and very much enjoyed and asked if it could be held later in the day and not at 7:00 am. Mark Bennet replied that the time was to enable people who worked could attend yet still get to work. However, he would review the timing of the service.	MB
2	<i>Lent Groups</i> Joan Collins asked if a future Lent Group could be held in the afternoon and be better publicised. Mark Bennet replied that request this would be looked at.	MB
3	<i>Communion Cup</i> Sarah Bennet raised the idea of returning to the common Communion Cup instead of intinction. After a general discussion, Mark Bennet replied that there was a need to carefully consider the options and the needs and preferences of the congregation.	
4	<i>Parish Away / Quite Day</i> Debbie Harley asked if a Parish Away / Quite Day was planned. Mark Bennet said that this was being considered.	
5	<i>Evening Services</i> The meeting wished to thank Mark Bennet for special evening services. These were enjoyed and appreciated.	
6	<i>Outside / Open-Air Services</i> Simon Stagg asked if Outside / Open Air Services were planned similar to the services that were held during "lock-down". Mark Bennet replied that this was being considered for the month of August.	

The meeting was closed with a prayer.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY'S, THATCHAM, BERKSHIRE**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2023**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from donors	104,470	0	0	104,470	147,884
Other voluntary incoming resources	18,548	1,154	0	19,702	14,837
Income from investments	3,770	0	0	3,770	2,221
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	21,121	0	0	21,121	21,057
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	147,909	1,154	0	149,063	185,999
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Grants and Special Collections	1,197	0	0	1,197	901
Activities relating to the work of the Church	173,313	0	0	173,313	129,379
Church Management and administration	8,559	(1,908)	0	6,650	6,852
Transfers	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	183,068	(1,908)	0	181,160	137,131
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(35,159)	3,062	0	(32,097)	48,867
Gains on investment assets:					
on disposal	0	0	0		0
on revaluation	0	11,509	0	11,509	(2,977)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(35,159)	14,571	0	(20,588)	45,890
BALANCES B/FWD 1 JANUARY	64,982	116,147	169,535	364,848	318,958
BALANCES C/FWD 31 DECEMBER	29,823	130,719	169,535	344,261	364,848

Thatcham Team Ministry
Profit & Loss
 January through December 2023

11:11 AM

28/02/24

Accrual Basis

	Jan - Dec 23	Jan - Dec 22
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
3000 · General Income		
3100 · Donor income		
3110 · Service Collections		
3112 · Goodbox	1,829.93	1,462.49
3113 · Petty Cash	-3.93	-103.62
3110 · Service Collections - Other	5,540.74	5,618.85
Total 3110 · Service Collections	7,366.74	6,977.72
3120 · Stewardship		
3121 · Envelopes	4,326.90	5,880.70
3122 · PGS	24,670.69	23,086.98
3123 · Standing Orders	20,987.00	21,417.00
3124 · Tax reclaimed	21,876.83	15,579.88
3125 · Donations	2,622.62	26,131.92
3126 · Bequests	100.00	25,937.05
3127 · Share Rebate	1,795.34	635.85
3128 · Stripe Parish Buying	0.00	4.94
Total 3120 · Stewardship	76,379.38	118,674.32
3100 · Donor income - Other	0.00	65.00
Total 3100 · Donor income	83,746.12	125,717.04
3210 · Other voluntary Income		
3220 · Mission		
3221 · Childrens' Society	303.53	360.90
3222 · Christian Aid	0.00	5.00
3223 · USPG	462.27	333.18
Total 3220 · Mission	765.80	699.08
3230 · St Barnabas - Share	5,500.00	6,800.00
3240 · Gifts / Presentations	-2.00	122.00
3250 · Grants Youth Work	0.00	1,587.71
3251 · Grants general	12,284.13	1,745.59
3260 · Curate Hsg - Rent	1,153.89	5,470.05
Total 3210 · Other voluntary Income	19,701.82	16,424.43
3310 · Investment Income		
3315 · Investment Income	3,023.78	2,220.87
3310 · Investment Income - Other	746.07	0.00
Total 3310 · Investment Income	3,769.85	2,220.87
3410 · Charity and Trading		
3415 · BRF income	164.45	209.30
3420 · Fees		
3422 · Funerals	9,929.00	9,274.00
3426 · Wedding	5,382.00	5,140.00
Total 3420 · Fees	15,311.00	14,414.00
3428 · Printing / Photocopying	150.30	86.26
3430 · Functions / Activities	395.58	1,313.75
3440 · Mast Rental	5,100.00	5,100.00
3450 · Altar Books	0.00	-66.19
Total 3410 · Charity and Trading	21,121.33	21,057.12
3510 · Building / Equipment Income		
3520 · Hall Hire	1,896.00	1,325.00
3530 · Other B/E income	864.16	1,260.17
3536 · Organ Appeal	6,361.61	7,890.26
Total 3510 · Building / Equipment Income	9,121.77	10,475.43
3610 · Choir Income		
3620 · Choir Fees	240.00	240.00
Total 3610 · Choir Income	240.00	240.00
3710 · St Barnabas Income	11,362.33	9,811.28
Total 3000 · General Income	149,063.22	185,946.17
Total Income	149,063.22	185,946.17
Expense		
4001 · General Expense		
4010 · Grants & Special Collection		

	Jan - Dec 23	Jan - Dec 22
4011 · Missions		
4012 · Berkshire Churches Trust	0.00	10.00
4013 · Childrens' Society	303.53	360.90
4014 · USPG	462.27	333.18
4016 · Christian Aid	131.25	0.00
4019 · Other grants	200.00	100.00
Total 4011 · Missions	1,097.05	804.08
4021 · Presentations	100.00	97.00
Total 4010 · Grants & Special Collection	1,197.05	901.08
4030 · Work of the Church		
4031 · Ministry		
4032 · Parish Share	95,790.42	88,869.33
4033 · Clergy Expenses	104.99	347.56
4034 · Youth work	377.88	1,482.86
4035 · Function & Activities	354.56	570.11
4036 · Fees (ODBF)	6,041.00	7,598.00
4036/1 · Fees (Clergy)	557.00	142.00
4037 · Bank Account Charges	316.83	404.98
4038 · BRF expenses	219.60	257.70
4041 · Curate Training		
4042 · Curate expenses	0.00	75.00
4043 · Curate Housing	279.82	374.78
4041 · Curate Training - Other	-2,188.02	0.00
Total 4041 · Curate Training	-1,908.20	449.78
4031 · Ministry - Other	0.00	50.00
Total 4031 · Ministry	101,854.08	100,172.32
4051 · Church running costs		
4052 · Utilities		
4053 · Electricity	4,708.48	2,079.04
4054 · Gas	2,701.72	1,611.38
4055 · Water	265.20	314.94
4056 · Telephone / Broadband	720.00	720.00
Total 4052 · Utilities	8,395.40	4,725.36
4057 · Insurance	5,149.71	4,918.41
4058 · Professional Fees	4,960.00	4,510.00
Total 4051 · Church running costs	18,505.11	14,153.77
4061 · Upkeep of Services		
4062 · Altar	538.09	753.72
Total 4061 · Upkeep of Services	538.09	753.72
6510 · Choir expenses		
6524 · RSCM	127.00	110.00
6526 · CCLI Copyright	248.00	231.00
Total 6510 · Choir expenses	375.00	341.00
Total 4030 · Work of the Church	121,272.28	115,420.81
4070 · Administration		
4072 · Copier	733.33	722.04
4073 · Stationery	555.03	899.51
4074 · Subscriptions	10.00	0.00
4076 · Audit	954.00	882.00
4077 · Administrator	0.00	2,287.45
4078 · General Admin	75.00	144.00
4079 · Memorial Book	0.00	654.12
Total 4070 · Administration	2,327.36	5,589.12
Total 4001 · General Expense	124,796.69	121,911.01
5001 · Building Expense		
5010 · Repairs	944.34	119.40
5020 · Fixed Equipment		
4025 · Organ tuning & minor repair	315.08	291.74
4026 · Organ Appeal & Major Repair	5,541.16	180.00
Total 5020 · Fixed Equipment	5,856.24	471.74
5040 · Equipment repair & replacement	1,318.32	3,264.26
5070 · Projects		
5074 · South west wall	35,752.00	1,250.00
Total 5070 · Projects	35,752.00	1,250.00
Total 5001 · Building Expense	43,870.90	5,105.40
7010 · Bells		
7020 · Projects		
7021 · Air Conditioning	144.00	0.00
7020 · Projects - Other	0.00	2,000.00
Total 7020 · Projects	144.00	2,000.00
Total 7010 · Bells	144.00	2,000.00
8001 · St Barnabas payments	12,348.60	8,114.83
Total Expense	181,160.19	137,131.24

	Jan - Dec 23	Jan - Dec 22
Net Ordinary Income	-32,096.97	48,814.93
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
9000 · Unrealised revaluation		
9001 · revaluation CBF Bells 3	3,336.43	-2,640.44
9002 · revaluation CBF Bells 2	7.49	-33.13
9003 · revaluation BLK Bell COIF	2,626.12	0.00
9004 · revaluation BLK Organ (desig'd)	321.17	-4.05
9005 · revaluation BLK Organ (res'd)	3,853.30	-48.60
9006a · revaluation Rookery	1.50	-23.48
9007 · revaluation TCE Charishare	140.25	-227.68
9008 · revaluation Thatch02 CharBond	277.42	-3,406.53
9009 · revaluation Thatch02 Charishare	945.60	0.00
Total 9000 · Unrealised revaluation	11,509.28	-6,383.91
Total Other Income	11,509.28	-6,383.91
Other Expense		
8002 · St Barnabas account correction	0.00	0.20
Total Other Expense	0.00	0.20
Net Other Income	11,509.28	-6,384.11
Profit for the Year	-20,587.69	42,430.82

Thatcham Team Ministry
Balance Sheet
As of 31 December 2023

11:25 AM
 28/02/24
 Accrual Basis

	<u>31 Dec 23</u>	<u>31 Dec 22</u>
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand		
1001 · PCC Thatcham		
1002 · General Fund		
1002/1 · Running Costs Greenham G Exchan	10,654	0
1002 · General Fund - Other	(29,087)	(13,496)
Total 1002 · General Fund	(18,433)	(13,496)
1003 · Fabric	45,557	77,061
1004 · Organ (Designated)	401	362
1005 · Organ (Restricted)		
1005/1 · Organ Appeal Greenham Good Exch	8,578	8,015
Total 1005 · Organ (Restricted)	8,578	8,015
1006 · Choir	144	191
1007 · Childrens Work		
1007/1 · Baby Cafe Greenham G Exchange	1,563	0
1007 · Childrens Work - Other	5	5
Total 1007 · Childrens Work	1,568	5
1008 · Curate (Hsg/Expenses)	9,778	6,716
1009 · Bell Maintenance	115	259
Total 1001 · PCC Thatcham	47,708	79,113
1050 · St Barnabas	3,605	4,591
1052 · St Barnabas - Set Up	90	90
2101 · Vicar & Churchwardens Treasurer	2,524	2,345
2102 · Vicar & Churchwardens Instant	1,230	1,114
Total Cash at bank and in hand	55,157	87,253
Other Current Assets		
2001 · Investment		
2005 · 47a Station Road	76,339	76,339
2010 · CBF Bell Maintenance 3	29,889	26,552
2020 · CBF Bell Maintenance 2	241	234
2030 · BLK C of E Charity COIF Perp	31,155	28,528
2050 · BLK Organ Fund (Designated)	3,810	3,489
2060 · BLK Organ Fund (Restricted)	45,713	41,860
2070 · Rookery Church Fund	92	91
2071 · Rookery Fund (Lloyds)	149	149
2090 · Thatcham Church Estate	3,068	2,928
2093 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Bond	14,956	14,678
2094 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Equity	70,114	69,168
Total 2001 · Investment	275,526	264,016
Total Other Current Assets	275,526	264,016
Total Current Assets	330,683	351,269
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>330,683</u>	<u>351,269</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Capital and Reserves		
1010 · Share Capital Account	304,730	304,730
3200 · Unrestricted Net Assets	46,538	4,108
Profit for the Year	(20,588)	42,431
Shareholder funds	330,680	351,269
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>330,680</u>	<u>351,269</u>

THATCHAM PCC
Year ended 31 December 2023

Unrestricted funds	Total	General	Organ	Fabric	Youth	Choir	St B
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES							
Incoming resources from donors	104,470	83,746	6,362	2,760	0	240	11,362
Other voluntary incoming resources	18,548	18,548					
Income from investments	3,770	3,770					
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	21,121	21,121					
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	147,909	127,185	6,362	2,760	0	240	11,362
RESOURCES EXPENDED							
Grants and Special Collections	1,197	1197					0
Activities relating to the work of the Church	173,313	122572		38015	378		12349
Church Management and administration	8,559	2327	5856			375	
Transfers	0						
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	183,068	126,096	5,856	38,015	378	375	12,349
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(35,159)	1,089	505	(35,255)	(378)	(135)	(986)

Restricted funds	Total	Bells	Curates	
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from donors	0			
Other voluntary incoming resources	1,154		1,154	
Income from investments	0			
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	0			
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	1,154	0	1,154	
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Grants and Special Collections	0			
Activities relating to the work of the Church	0		0	
Church Management and administration	(1,908)		(1,908)	
Transfers	0			
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	(1,908)	0	(1,908)	
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(754)	0	(754)	
Gains on investment assets:				
on disposal				
on revaluation	11,509		11,509	
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	10,755	0	(754)	11,509

THATCHAM PCC**Year ended 31 December 2023****Assets****2023****2022**

2023
St Mary's Lloyds Acc St Barnabas HSBC Acc

unrestricted restricted

Analysis of current account (Lloyds Bank)

31-Dec-23

General fund	-18,433	-8,289	-18433.00	-18,433.00	
Organ (Designated)	401	513	401.00	401.00	
Organ (Restricted)	8,578	140	8578.00		8,578
Fabric	45,557	34,240	45557.00	45,557.00	
Youth	1,568	-495	1568.00	1,568.00	
Choir	144	-49	144.00	144.00	
Bell Maintenance	115	2,259	115.00		115
Curates Hsg/Expenses (formerly Hatherley)	9,778	3,809	9778.00		9,778
other	0	-281	0.00		
total	47,708.00	31,847			

St Barnabas (HSBC Acc)	3,605	1,909		3,605	3,605
St Barnabas (Set up - HSBC Acc)	90	90		90	90
	51,403	33,846	47708.00	3,695	29,237.00
			51403		51,403

Assets of general funds

Current accounts (Lloyds + HSBC)	51,403	33,846
Charishare (CBF Organ Funds)	49,523	45,402
Charishare (Blk Bell Maintenance)	31,155	28,562
CBF (Bell Maintenance 2+ 3)	30,130	29,424

Total	162,211	137,233
--------------	----------------	----------------

Endowments

Station Road (Curate Hsg)	76,339	76,339
Charifund (Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Ltd)	85,070	87,253
Rookery	241	263
Church Estate (Blk Bond + Equity / V&C Lloyds)	6,822	6,764
	168,472	170,619

Total assets

330,683 307,852

Reconciliation PCC Thatcham Acc at Lloyds

QB 31/12/2023		47,707.21
less o/s credits		
Funeralcare	329.00	
HMRC (Tax Reclaim)	418.28	
Funeralcare	565.00	
Funeralcare	658.00	
Funeralcare	751.00	
		2,721.28
plus o/s debits		
F Dumont Candles	139.20	
Pozitive Energy (gas)	629.40	
ODBF Fees	1,894.00	
USPG Mission	462.27	
Children's Society Mission	303.53	
Lyreco paper	62.48	
G Blythman Professional Services	50.00	
		3,540.88
		48,526.81
Lloyds Statement 31/12/2022		48,526.81
check		0.00

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THATCHAM TEAM MINISTRY CHARITY**

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity, and a comparison on the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act, and to prepare accounts in accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Mtabat

Mrs Monika Tabatabaian ATT MAAT
Tax Avenue
Turnfields Gate, Turnfields
Thatcham, Berkshire
RG19 4PT

Date: 11 February 2025

Accounts

Contents	page
Parochial Church Council 2022/3.....	2
Team Rector's Report.....	2
Report of the proceedings of the PCC	4
Membership.....	4
Committees.....	4
Finance -Report to the accounts.....	6
Stewardship Secretary's Report.....	7
Safeguarding Report.....	8
ABCs.....	9
Children and Young People	9
Curates Report... ..	9
Music at St Mary's.....	11
Prayer Ministry and Prayer Circle.....	12
St Barnabas Church.....	13
Newbury Deanery Synod.....	15
Bellringers' Report	17
Churchwardens	19
Fabric.....	20
Inventory.....	21
Flowers – Sewing Group.....	21
Little Churches, Home Communion, West Berks Community Hospital	21
C.A.M.E.O	22
Thatcham Parochial Charities.....	23
Missions – Christian Aid – Children's Society – USPG West Berks Foodbank	24
Connect	26
Service Teams.....	27
St Mary's Website.....	27
Appendix 1 Minutes of the Annual Meetings 29 May 2022	
Appendix 2 Summary of Accounts 2022	

Thatcham Parochial Church Council 2022/3

Ex Officio Revd. Mark Bennet Revd Nicola Hulks Revd Brenda Harland Revd Angela Brennan Churchwardens Paul Bullock (2020) Colin Waters (2020) Christine Rice (2021) Deanery Synod Representatives (to 2023) Mary Stagg Chris Watts Tony Collie Catherine Forbes	Elected Lay Members John Hicks (St Barnabas) Bernadette Ellison (St Barnabas) Leanne Fowler (St Barnabas) Alison Dean (St Barnabas) Lourdes Cottam (St Barnabas) Sue Ball (2022) Simon Stagg (2021) Chris Druce (2021) Kevin Dunwell (2020) Ann Watts (2020) Viv Druce (2020) Emma Watts (2020) Co-options Mark Backhouse (Tower Bells) Mike Stevenson (PCC Secretary) Ann Dibble (Safeguarding)

Team Rectors Report

2022 has been a hard year to look back on, especially given some of the things which have happened since, but when I open my diary I see a mixture of vibrant life and cautious steps out of COVID restrictions. I see people getting engaged with church life in new ways and feel the frustration of not being able to move faster. One thing we have gained is that now we share our services over Zoom every week, and we have people – including some who are vulnerable – who regularly join us. People have dialled in from holidays too ...

The events of 2022 which shaped the life of Church and nation included the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth, and later her death and the memorial events surrounding that where we achieved a dignity and connection with the community. Our Come and Be service led by Marcia and Leanne incorporated prayers following the shocking invasion of Ukraine, and we have kept a candle alight in the chapel ever since, and we were part of a revived Thatcham Festival of Arts and Leisure.

Alongside this, some of our regular events were back in something like their previous form – the pulpit swap for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, our celebrations of Easter and Christmas (including the Crib Service). School and Carol services were back in force, and our 8:00am communion service, with its small, but faithful congregation made its way back into the chapel from the main body of the church.

We celebrated Harvest. Weddings were back too, and baptism services, though somewhat reduced in number. It has been a joy to hold proper celebrations rather than feeling that people have had to hold back, and a couple of weddings took place after multiple re-schedulings. Funeral services too were different – funerals with few present can have a quiet dignity, but the sense of loss can be intensified if there are

many people who can't be there. Sadly a number of our regular members and contacts died during the year: amongst them Tony Baldwin, who had been a regular at 8:00am, John Fidler, Peter Laverack, Ken Rye (a regular, and former Mayor of Thatcham) and Ron Christopher (bellringer in Thatcham for over 70 years). In 2023 we have also had the unexpected news of the death of our former curate Revd Leonard Onugha, and also Joan Meechan.

Other movements of people included our ordinands Leanne and Alison developing their roles – Leanne significantly from her base in Thatcham Park School and Alison developing our monthly healing service. Marcia moved on – the good news is that she has now been ordained to serve in Hungerford, but it felt inexplicable that two seemingly good placements as curate fell through, and much love and prayer was expended in support and she made a temporary move to St Nics in Newbury.

Personally, I felt busy with the many school and civic events coming back on stream, and a minor operation twice delayed, and eventually in August, knocked me out rather.

We had the joyful news that Nicola and Ben had adopted Noah, and Nicola's adoption leave which has seen her present in our community but stepping back from ministry, leaving Brenda and Angela covering at St Barnabas.

Huge thanks also to John and Michael for their contributions to our worship, not least on Wednesday mornings, where also ABC has been coming back with fresh energy. Angela's new projects include the Baby Café about which she will have written, and its important connection with new parents and developing relationships.

CAMEO and the Methodist-based Vintage Adventure continue strongly too.

I could add more about Christian Aid, USPG, the Food Bank and other ways in which we support mission more widely than our own church base, but those will have their own reports.

Thanks are due to our churchwardens, PCC members and all who have contributed to the breadth and depth of our community life this year. Although our numbers have been rather down from pre-covid times we are now starting to see larger congregations, and some new people. The challenge of bringing families back remains, and our finances continue to be under significant pressure with major works required also on our building and the organ, and the challenge of reducing our carbon footprint.

But we remain focussed and faithful with the Easter Alleluias resounding with a fresh vibrancy, and it is with faith in God that we step forward into a new year.

Mark Bennet

Parochial Church Council – Background and Proceedings

Thatcham PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector and the Team Vicar in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church – spiritual, pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical.

The PCC met at St Mary's Church four times during 2022/3. The Standing Committee was convened twice using email.

Arrangements were made during 2022 for 55 baptisms (41 in 2021) and 7 (7) weddings and 1 Service of Prayer and Dedication following a civil marriage. In addition there were 36 (55) funerals (16 with a service at St Mary's, 20 with services at a crematorium or cemetery)

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex officio, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. St Barnabas Church is represented on the PCC by up to 5 members elected by their own church meeting.

Committees

The PCC operates through a Standing Committee and working groups on Safeguarding and Appeals (Organ and Major Repairs), which meet between full meetings of the Council. The Standing Committee is the only Committee required by law; it has power to transact business of the Council between meetings, subject to any decisions made by the PCC.

FINANCE REPORT

Report to the Accounts December 2022

St Mary's General Account (day to day running of church activities) shows a surplus of expenditure over income of £4,926 giving a cumulative deficit of £13,496. Regular giving through Standing Orders and The Parish Giving Scheme has been most welcome together with a number of significant donations but the need to attract new regular givers to replace those who have died or moved away is a challenge.

The St Barnabas General Account shows a positive balance of £3,657 at the end of the year.

We again managed to pay the Parish Share (our contribution to the diocese for clergy stipends, housing and pensions) in full (£88,869). The Parish Share was set at £95,790 for 2023 and is paid by Direct Debit in 12 instalments thereby enabling rebates from the diocese. The current monthly payment due from Thatcham Parish is £7,983.

Income from Services and other activities improved gradually through the year. Donations were attracted to the Organ Pipedream Repair Project including over £2,000 of matched funding through the Greenham Trust Good Exchange Scheme and a donation of £3,000 from Englefield Trust.

Two major gifts were received in 2022- a bequest of £25,000 from the estate of the late Pamela Broad and an anonymous donation of £20,000. These have been temporarily placed in the fabric fund until the costs and availability of grants for essential repairs to the organ and the church roof are known.

Of particular note is the £1500 + raised jointly with the URC by the 'Mousefest' event in September. My thanks go to Kate and Esther who inspired knitters to produce 120 'mice', arranged the display and sold them all.

Resumption of pre-pandemic levels of use of St Mary's resulted in expenditure of £4,000 on gas and electricity in 2022 (£2,160 in 2021) but the recent dramatic increases in these costs threatens to double this cost to £ 8,000 in 2023. The diocese gave a grant of £1,800 to St Mary's in 2022 but there is no sign of this being repeated in 2023 or any help to churches from government.

The need to increase regular giving is critical, especially if we are to meet the running costs of both churches and pay the Parish Share again in full in 2023. If anyone is thinking of increasing their Stewardship payments during 2023 or joining the Scheme, please speak to the Treasurer or any of the Churchwardens.

A particular vote of thanks is due to the small team maintaining the books and banking the cash - Ann Watts at St Mary's and Bernie Ellison at St Barnabas – and to all who so generously support the work of the Church in this parish.

Investments and Fund Structure

There were no changes to the structure of the St Mary's PCC investment funds during 2022. The value of investments held by the PCC have begun to recover following significant impact on markets of Covid19 and the war in Ukraine.

There follows a brief description of the history, management and restrictions of each of these PCC managed funds.

Curates Housing and Expenses (formerly known as the Hatherley) Fund

The capital arose from the sale of a house given to the Church in 1935 for a succession of curates to live in. The PCC has a 29.4% share of the rent after deduction of expenses on a property in Station Road which continued to be let by the Diocese while it is not required to house a curate. The income is applied for general parish purposes and so is **unrestricted**. However the first call on any surplus income is the payment of curate / clergy expenses.

Thatcham Church of England Charity

The original capital arose from two-thirds of the sale proceeds of the Old Infant School in the Broadway; one-third is administered separately by the Diocesan Board of Education.

This charity is governed by a Charity Commission Scheme sealed on the 21st May 1980; the clear income from the permanent endowment is for furthering the religious and other charitable work of the Church of England in the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary's Thatcham and is therefore an **unrestricted** fund. All the income is applied in the parish.

The Church Estate Charity

Charity Commission ref – 00436

This is an ancient charity referred to in the Charity Commissioners Report of 1907; the income is to be applied to the upkeep of the church and the churchyard so this is a **restricted** fund.

Income is derived partly from investments and partly from 6/16ths of the income from Moor Meadow Charity, administered by Thatcham Parochial Charities.

The Rookery Church Fund

The small amount of income arising from the legacy by Mrs Hall who died in 1916, subject to the income being **restricted** to the fostering of the Sunday school. The Rookery was the name of the house.

Bankers: St Mary's PCC - Lloyds Bank plc & St Barnabas - HSBC
Independent Examiners: Tax Avenue, Turnfields Court,
Thatcham Investment Managers:
BlackRock Investment Managers, 12 Throgmorton Avenue London
EC2N 2DL
CCLA, Senator House, One Angel Lane , London EC4R 3AB

A summary of the Accounts is attached at Appendix 2.

Stewardship Secretary's Report – St Mary's.

A total of £118,674 was given through the Stewardship Scheme in 2021 (£69,553 in 2021). This included £23,087 through the Parish Giving Scheme introduced in September 2018. Giving through weekly envelopes was £5,881 and standing order payments were £21,417. In addition, £15,580 was reclaimed from taxes paid to HMRC (£15,689 in 2021).

The significant increase in 2022 is the result of the bequest of £25,000 and a donation of £20,000 referred to above in the Finance Report.

By the end of 2022 there were 21 donors paying by Direct Debits through the Parish Giving Scheme. 31 donors gave to St Mary's through Standing Orders. 18 donors were supplied with weekly envelopes but the number of donors using envelopes fell to 13 by December.

Great thanks are due to the faithful members of the Stewardship Scheme who by regular and sacrificial levels of giving keep St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches going.

Please continue to review your giving at least annually – index linking is a principle worth considering. Occasional donations are greatly welcomed, but commitment to regular giving is essential if we are to budget for paying for our priests through the Parish Share, maintain the fabric and support sustainable growth of the church in Thatcham.

'Donate' facilities have been incorporated into the website for St Mary's and ideas to encourage online payments using smartphones are in development.

Giving by contactless payments via the GOODBOX at the back of St Mary's increased significantly to £1,462 (518 in 2021).

I continue to positively recommend the Parish Giving Scheme to all regular givers. Over half the Dioceses in England have joined and together they cover the costs of the small administrative team based at Gloucester Diocese. All that is donated is paid direct to the nominated parish by the 10th of each month and income tax is reclaimed

from HMRC through the GIFT AID scheme and distributed to parishes about five days later. This significantly reduces costs and administration at the local level.

Other bonuses are:

- the donations can be index linked if the donors so choose,
- the donations are paid as a single sum to the parish bank account thus avoiding the checking of multiple pages on Bank Statement entries,
- it reduces the bank charges (currently about £28 per month) for handling cheque or cash donations
- minimising the handling of cash and cheques, and delays in payment to the bank account via the Post Office (necessitated by the closure of the Thatcham branch of Lloyds Bank in August 2022)

I would again encourage everyone to make a will and to consider making a bequest to St Mary's. It is not difficult to arrange and can make a significant difference to the future of a growing church in Thatcham.

Chris Watts
Stewardship Secretary

Safeguarding

The safeguarding committee has been consolidated this year and we have met four times. The members of the committee are:

Rev Brenda Harland
Churchwarden and deputy Safeguarding Officer Colin Waters
Recruiter Sue Ball
DBS verifier Steve Rice
Parish Safeguarding Officer Ann Dibble

The Oxford Diocese has been developing their parish safeguarding support. We now have a dashboard system where we can log our achievements and where the next steps are clearly laid out. There are three levels and currently the parish is on level 2. Our main concerns this year have been to:

- Display information that provides those in need of support with appropriate contact details. This has been on the websites as well as on noticeboards.
- Obtain PCC approval for a policy for the recruitment of ex-offenders and The Procedure for Responding to Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations
- Identify a list of activities carried out in the name of the church and sort it into those where children and vulnerable adults may be involved and those where the level of risk is less. The activities we are thinking about are things like Baby Café and Cameo.
- Gather job descriptions and risk assessments into one place. This activity is ongoing and one of the issues is where should that one place be?
- Identify who are eligible for DBS checks and to make sure that we comply with the requirements for the id verification. We have established that because the PCC are trustees for the activities carried out in the name of the church, all members of the PCC must have a DBS check.
- Encourage as many parishioners as possible to complete the Diocesan safeguarding training. The training is available online and relevant to our circumstances.
- Fall into line with the House of Bishops requirement for the recruitment of volunteers. This is still work in progress.

Only two matters of safeguarding concern have been referred to the Parish Safeguarding Officer during this year and, after seeking advice from the Diocese, both were left to take their own course, with a watching brief in place. We have been delighted to be involved in ensuring that correct procedures were followed in the establishment of The Nest and of Boost. Sure signs that activities are emerging after the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Ann Dibble

ABC

This has been a very good year for ABC. Numbers and enthusiasm have grown. At the moment we are delighted to have a group of grandparents who bring children, perhaps reflecting how childcare has changed since the pandemic. We continue to welcome everyone and are happy to see a fair few dads swelling our numbers.

So, the ABC congregation is thriving and becoming more aware of God in their lives. The prayer book is used for requests and people are growing in confidence both to ask for prayer and to pray and worship themselves.

During a session we enjoy a friendly time to chat and play and have refreshments which is followed by a short worship service that consists of an interactive story, singing and prayers with a blessing at the end. Jason the sheep is a great favourite of the children as he helps to tell the stories and joins in with the action songs. His friend Little Tom is livelier and likes to tease the children and make them laugh.



Our growing team of helpers enable us to function well and they are always ready with a smile of encouragement and a hot drink. Grateful thanks to everyone who contributes to this vital ministry. Towards the end of the summer term, we hold a leavers ceremony to say goodbye to those who are going off to Primary School. They are presented with a certificate and a Scripture union book entitled 'It's your next step' which is all about going to big school for the first time.

Another of the highlights of the year is Crib Service on Christmas Eve. The children dress up and become part of the story. It was wonderful to have that back for 2022. Upwards of 275 people attended. We also hold a mini version during the last ABC session of December. It means that most people have a chance to join the story if they happen to be away for Christmas Eve. The dressing up into a character is always great fun. Also, a very kind member of the group knitted us a set of characters for telling the story of the birth of Jesus, much enjoyed by the children. Here are some comments from people who currently attend the group:

'The volunteers are all so friendly and welcoming. It's great that someone stays by the door, both to say hello and welcome but also so I know the little ones can't wander off and get out.'

'My daughter said she loves the juice and biscuits and likes playing with the pull along toys and cars.'

'ABC saved me when I was at my lowest. And helped me reinforce my relationship with God when I was in a very dark place and was angry with God.'

'It gave me friendship. It has been lovely to see the positive effect being here has had on my daughter's developing confidence.'

'A friendly and safe environment for children and adults to enjoy from new-born to school age.'

The group is held on Wednesday mornings from 10.30am until 12 noon. If you have preschool children, come and pay us a visit.

Brenda and the ABC team

Children and Young People @ St Mary's 2022

Groups take place during the 10.00am service on 1st, 3rd and 4th weeks and are held in the meeting room.

Our sessions comprise looking at a Bible story and reinforcing the message with discussion, crafts, and prayer.

An enjoyable time was had on Easter day, when we saw some new faces join us for an egg hunt, which ended with all going home with Easter baskets and chocolate.

As a team we would like to see our numbers grow, but remain enthusiastic for the small, but regular group of young people who attend.

A warm welcome awaits all young people who come through our doors, and we remain optimistic for the future.

Helen Holman

Curates Report

As I write, we are almost 3 years to the day since lockdown began, and while those days of daily walks, Zoom services and clapping on doorsteps feel (to me at least) like they happened in another lifetime, barely a day seems to pass without a reminder that the scars of Covid run wide and deep. There are the personal challenges, both physical and mental, as well as practical challenges for communities about how we recover, if recovery is even the aim here.

I find myself coming back to two pieces of wisdom, serendipitously provided by my colleagues, and I hope they won't mind me quoting them here:

'We must remember to be kind to each other.'
That was from Mark.

And, 'Sometimes we need to be reminded that going to church is good for us — its good for us to gather.'

From Nicola.

In both cases we were wondering aloud how we might 'recover' from Covid, lockdown and its aftermath. Covid recovery is a huge, and wide-ranging discussion, not just for the church. Questions about how to get our numbers back up in services, seem like very small potatoes indeed in the context of a mental health epidemic, an NHS in dire straits and the alarmingly precarious nature of global economics.

Priesting didn't bring with it any magic insights into how to 'fix' everything for everyone, not that I really expected that, but it would have been handy, so I am glad to have these two nuggets of hallowed good sense as a guide, or Rule, for life and ministry. We are the people of God, and we have a message of hope, light and life for the world. Good old fashioned kindness, and gathering to lift our gaze beyond our own horizons to to God's horizon — these are the places to start.

Things to report from the last year:

Baby Cafe continues with steady numbers on Tuesday mornings in term time. We had a record 17 mums with 19 little ones for our Christmas event, and 14 mums and 15 babies last week for hot cross buns. Massive thanks to the fantastic volunteer who keep the show, and the cakes, on the road.

The Nest is a new project between the Thatcham and Newbury churches to provide a toddler group for adoptive and foster families and funded jointly between the Common Vision fund at Oxford Diocese and Greenham Parish Council. It's been a slow start but I am hopeful that good local connections plus the Holy Spirit blowing our fliers in the right direction will get the word out to families who need it. Again, we are blessed with a brilliant and faithful team who facilitate The Nest.

The Pipedreams Project gathers pace. Significantly this year we have lodged the project with the Good Exchange, secured the consultancy services of Nicholas Thistlethwaite, and, thanks to Chris Watts, arranged for a replacement organ blower and the removal of asbestos in the blower cabinet.

We'll be applying for a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund this coming year. It's a big job and only part of a larger vision to repair the building as a whole — so huge thanks to the organ team, for their energy and commitment.

Children and Schools work has increased in recent months. Taking questions from children and teenagers is by far the most terrifying aspect of parish ministry so far, but also great fun and a huge privilege. Highlights have been the stampede to smell the myrrh in year 2, a grilling from year 9 about the problem of evil, and taking a fledgling chick to St Mary's for Thatcham Park's Easter Service. We also had a really successful Year 6 Leavers Day at St Mary's last June and plan to repeat this format for Leavers Day going forward.

Muddy Church has had a bit of a hiatus, but a small team is planning a Muddy Church 'Eggstravaganza' in the churchyard for Holy Saturday. I can give no idea as to numbers, but I have invited all the baptism families this year, plus ABC, Baby Cafe, Muddy Church and the families from St M & St B's — so its my prayer that by the time you read this we will still be buzzing from the excitement of a churchyard full of children hunting for eggs, sowing seeds of hope, and singing 'Assembly Bangers' around the fire pit...

There is a recurring theme here, and in ministry as a whole, of volunteers who give up their time and money and energy to do things for other people. Churches simply do not work without people; groups do not run themselves, brass does not polish itself (thank you Rita), tea does not make itself. I am new enough to ordained ministry that I still can't quite fathom how I get to be the one at the front who says stuff — I hope the sense of responsibility and privilege never wears off — because it's all very well being at the front, but when you get there, you realise very quickly that the work of the gospel is done mostly in other ways, the majority of it quiet and unseen.

Our numbers might be lower since Covid, and it's easy to obsess about that, or use the numbers as some kind of yardstick with which to beat ourselves up. I am not worried about numbers. I'm not worried because I've been at both churches a while now, and I know that St Mary's and St Barnabas are both full to the gunwales with people who share the gospel every day of the week in the good they do both in and for our community. Our numbers might be lower, but I think our commitment is greater than ever, and in the current climate, that just as well, as so is the need.

So thank you to all of you, for everything you do in and around this patch of earth to help share good news of God's love and grace and provision with those around us — I consider it a privilege and a blessing to serve alongside you.

Rev Angela Brennan

Music at St. Mary's

It's been a good year for the choir. Numbers have remained steady. We lost our Friday evening accompanist due to family commitments but have been very fortunate in securing the services of Alice who also plays at the second Sunday service when her other commitments allow. Although she is still at school, she is a very talented musician and a real asset in our rehearsals.

We led two special services in Lent and Advent which were well attended and included anthems, hymns and readings creating a special atmosphere in order to reflect on the season away from the busyness of life.

In June we celebrated the Platinum Jubilee with a specially commissioned anthem from the RSCM. As always, the Autumn term was very busy beginning this year with 'Mousefest' where we performed six popular anthems as the public browsed the mice.



We also played a part in the Remembrance Day service both in Church and at the Memorial in November and supported the annual Time to Remember service. Being part of these memorial services is always a privilege. Advent began with our service of reflection and then we were launched into Christmas singing with Kennet School

Lower School Choir at the switch on of the Thatcham Lights where we finished the entertainment before seg-waying effortlessly into the lights being switched on.

Carol services for the Hospital League of Friends and the Town Council followed as well as our Community Carol service which featured a Children's Choir and mulled wine. Midnight Mass is always a very special service and this year the Chilcott anthem O Little Town which featured our wonderful bass line was spine tingling.

We have tried to balance well known and loved anthems with new ones both modern and more traditional which I think has been well received. As a choir we continue to be challenged and to bring depth and feeling to our singing in order to support worship.

As I said last year, we are very fortunate in having a very committed choir many of whom attend 5 services a month and some very competent and strong singers. We have recently awarded two new ribbons. One to Judith, who was long overdue to get her red ribbon. Her commitment to choir is second to none and she has blossomed in the last few years. The other ribbon was to Jim for Loyal Service. As a member of the choir for 40 years his service and loyalty cannot be doubted, and we all gratefully recognise his quiet contributions to the smooth running of the choir.



As always, we welcome new singers. There is no requirement to read music as all learning is done by rote and we would welcome anyone from the age of 14 into the adult choir in any section.

I shall finish by thanking Alice and Tim without whom we would be in a very poor state musically and by thanking all the members of the choir for sounding so brilliant every week!

Mary Stagg

Prayer Ministry

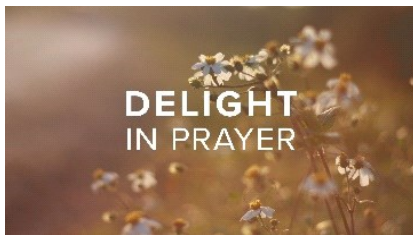
The prayer ministry provides regular meetings for quiet, personal and reflective prayer. The group is a local hub of the Guild of St. John and St. Mary Magdalene and respond to prayers requested from overseas and the local community in Thatcham & surrounding areas. The group is run by Michael Watson, meets every alternate Tuesday and is always encouraging others to join these times of worship.

We have set up a WhatsApp group for prayer requests that anyone can join and introduced a intercessional prayer Initiative for the local community to specifically pray for all those who are suffering and affected by the cost of living crisis. A prayer point has been established at the entrance to the church.

We have also started to work with other local church groups which bring together as many as possible from all the churches in Thatcham in order to pray for our town.

Sarah Summerbell

Prayer Ministry Circle



We continue to pray in our homes, on our walks, on the phone and video calls, in fact wherever we have safely been whilst we haven't been able to pray with people in person.

Sue Stevenson.

St Barnabas Church

Flushed and elated with the success of our first ever outdoor crib service for Christmas Eve 2021(attended by upwards of 80 people despite the heavy rain) we entered 2022 as St Barnabas church eagerly awaiting the lifting of Covid 19 restrictions as engaging with the community is something that St Barnabas does best.



Indeed, engaging with the school community is high on our agenda and so we enter all we can with enthusiasm. We are pleased to be back face to face in school doing collective worship, occasionally helping with lessons and helping at fundraisers.

A recent addition to our interaction with the school is that a group of 6 pupils from Thatcham Park come to Vintage Adventure each month with a member of staff. Vintage Adventure is for the young at heart and takes place at the Methodist church on the 3rd Thursday of the month. Each session is themed and includes chatting around tables, singing, praying, engaging in a craft activity and ending with tea and cake. This is run by churches together in Thatcham and has a high number of St Barnabas leaders and helpers building on the skills honed through our years of doing SOS sessions. The children from Thatcham Park really enjoy it and join in with enthusiasm, helping where appropriate. Strong bonds are formed.

We are delighted to have members of staff as part of our church, Amey, Sarah and Leanne who help us to know what is going on and where we can fit in. Leanne and Alison, another member of our congregation, are in the midst of training to become ordained ministers. They are both doing really well and are increasingly taking part in services etc. Please pray for them both as they approach the end of the second year of a 3-year course.

A very exciting event happened halfway through the year. Nicola went on parental leave and later on in the year we were thrilled to be introduced to little Noah as the Hulks family celebrated their happy event. Noah has now become an enthusiastic member of the St Barnabas family.

Other happy events included 2 baptisms of St Barnabas children, one at St Barnabas and one at St Mary's. It was wonderful that Leanne could help lead this service. We were also delighted to welcome back Glenn and Steph and their family as they popped back from Devon for the baptism of their newest granddaughter. And we were pleased to admit one of our young people to communion before confirmation. This is a stage on the way to confirmation. The young person can take communion and can be confirmed at a later stage as their faith grows and matures.

Our weekly services are held at 10am each Sunday. We alternate between worship and communion services. The beauty of holding services in a school hall is that we can move the furniture around and try new things. A recent service was called 'living room church' as we met in the round and had a carpet and tables and chairs in the centre for the children.

The congregation is a tad smaller since lockdown but links are kept via various friendship groups, the home groups and by the weekly news and information email. One of our main aims is that St Barnabas Church should be a safe place to explore faith whether you have been coming to church for years or are a newcomer.

Over the past few months, we have been pleased to welcome a variety of preachers to enhance our worship. Our thanks go to them.

The music group continues to lead us in worship during our services. We thank them all (John, Stuart, Dave and Debbie) for their skill and dedication.

Our two homegroups are thriving. One run by Ben meets most weeks via zoom which was a great innovation that happened during lockdown. Many different topics are covered and faith and fellowship grows. The second group is a continuation of an Alpha group that meets fortnightly in person, led by Alison, for fellowship, reflection and prayer.

Muddy Church, another of our outreach activities, is a bit like SOS but outdoors down at the Nature Discovery Centre. It is for families and is well attended. It is on hold at the moment while Nicola and her family are on parental leave.



Safeguarding policy is up to speed. Brenda and Colin are part of the safeguarding team which meets regularly to discuss how to make the church environment as safe as possible for all concerned. We are impressed by the quality of the online training safeguarding that is available from the diocese and would urge everyone whether you have a role or not to participate in this training at least at basic level. It is really interesting and can help you be aware of anything that could happen if we are not vigilant. The parish safeguarding policy is displayed on a board at St Barnabas together with photos of those who are in office for safeguarding with relevant phone numbers including Cath our children's advocate.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the running of St Barnabas, for Angela our curate, Colin our church warden, those who are on various bodies, our PCC members, Deanery Synod and churches together reps. Thank you to Bernie our treasurer who beavers away paying bills and keeping us solvent. And all of you who help with setting up, clearing away and sharing God's love.

The year ended with a return to an indoor crib service and you could feel the pleasure and enthusiasm in the air as people joined together to begin their Christmas celebrations after so many restrictions.

We look to the future of St Barnabas Church with hope, faith and fellowship in our hearts.

Brenda Harland and Colin Waters

Deanery Synod Report

Thatcham Parish is part of the Newbury Deanery – a group of parishes in West Berkshire running as far as Hungerford and Lambourn and up to Compton and The Ridgeway. In some recent documents the Deanery has described itself briefly as follows:

Newbury Deanery covers some 105 square miles of the western part of West Berkshire. It includes the urban centres of Newbury and Thatcham, the market town of Hungerford and an extensive rural hinterland. The eleven benefices (roughly speaking groups of churches overseen by a single priest) encompass 36 parishes ranging in population from over 25,000 to under 100,

together with 42 church buildings, and one church which has no building of its own.

The Deanery is an administrative unit of the Church of England which is part of its structure of “synodical government” – the way the Church makes decisions about its internal workings where they affect more than a single parish. Traditionally the Deanery has had two functions – (the money function) allocating the parish share which pays for the clergy and support costs (just under £1million for Newbury Deanery) and then collecting it; and (the people function) negotiating the deployment of clergy at a time when clergy numbers nationally have been declining. More recently the people function has been developed into a more positive mode of mission planning (The Mission Action Plan) – actively supporting parishes and their people to meet the common challenges we face.

The effects of the pandemic had meant progress on the plan had slowed. Bruce Laurie Lay Chair of Synod having reviewed the plan in 2021 found it was still wholly relevant to today's needs. It was stressed that this is the Deanery's plan to support and encourage benefices and parishes rather than to direct or impose requirements from the Diocese. Synod identified four action groups and started to put these into being. These are:

- Finance
- Schools and Education
- Lay Training
- Environment

(Consideration on new housing developments and also communities will be incorporated in due course.)

The Newbury Deanery Synod also maintains a link with the South African parish of Batlharos in the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman.

Deanery Synod elects representatives to Diocesan Synod – notably our own Team Rector.

The Deanery is run by the Deanery Synod. Like the PCC this is a mixture of clergy and elected lay members, but in the Deanery case the members represent the different parishes. The Deanery Synod elects a standing committee and appoints officers to act as an executive, and to progress the various aspects of its work. It may also receive requests from the Diocese of Oxford or from the National Church to respond to matters of interest. The Deanery Synod can also raise matters of concern and ask for these to be addressed at a Diocesan or national level.

In 2022/3 the Synod considered issues arising from progress on the Living in Love and Faith Report, the Cost of Living Crisis, promotion of the ECO Church strategy and arrangements for a Deanery visit by the Bishop of Oxford in March 2022.

The Deanery Share was paid in full to the Diocese, despite shortfalls from some benefices, by use of the reserve. Two-thirds of the rebate due to the Deanery will be distributed to parishes after further consideration is given to support those parishes in financial difficulty.

Thank you for your support for our clergy members of Synod and our lay members Mary, Tony, Cath and myself.

Chris Watts

St. Mary's Church Bellringers

This year has been one dominated by events and also a significant reduction in our numbers. Three of our ringers have been unwell and did not ring for most of 2022. Long standing member, Ron Christopher was able to attend one practice following his operation in December 2021, but then was diagnosed with a further outbreak of cancer and sadly died in September. A nucleus of seven of the band have maintained ringing on Sundays, sometimes ringing only five bells due to holidays. Our practices have been attended by some regular visitors, enabling us to ring eight bells on most Tuesdays.

We were pleased to be joined by Rita and Kay Christopher, when we rang the bells the evening after Ron died. We then rang a quarter peal the evening before his funeral, for which we also rang. It was decided that we should provide a memorial board in recognition of his 75 years as a loyal ringer at St Mary's. The oak board has been manufactured and is currently with the signwriter. It will be dedicated at a service later this year.

Ian Judd of Goring and Cyril Lewendon, formerly of Bucklebury, both good friends of Thatcham Ringers died during the year. We rang quarter peals in their memory and rang for Cyril's funeral at St Mary's. We also rang half muffled for the death of H M Queen Elizabeth II, having rung the bells open in February to celebrate 70 years since her accession to the throne.

A memorial board for Bill Butler and the peal board for Bill's last peal at St Mary's were dedicated by Revd Mark Bennet at The Time to Remember service in November and are now hanging in the Tower. Bill's son Richard Butler was able to join us for ringing prior to the service.



John Kape organised an enjoyable evening outing to Overton in July, where we were joined by some of our regular Tuesday evening visitors. We then adjourned to The Vine at Hannington for a meal.



We were invited by Thatcham Town Council to take part in the Festival of Arts in October. Rachel Backhouse agreed to organise a belfry open day, which would be included in the Festival Programme. Rachel chose the same day as the Craft Fair held in the Church, in the hope of attracting visitors from that event. A gazebo was erected adjacent to the door at the bottom of the tower, where literature was displayed and numbers ascending the tower were monitored.

In the ringing room an area was roped off to provide a safe seating area. Three of the bells were rung by some of our ringers. A video camera had been installed in the belfry so that visitors could watch the bells in action in the ringing room. Rachel received assistance in setting up the equipment from Mark Backhouse, Richard Marshall and Graham John and on the day from a number of the ringers. There were two sessions lasting two hours. A total of 45 visitors ascended the tower and showed considerable interest.

We had hoped that some of the visitors would come forward as new recruits, but unfortunately none did so. However, Fiona Hockedy, who last rang with us thirteen years ago, was one of the visitors and has now returned to ring with us. Also, Rhiannan contacted the Parish Office, having seen some publicity for 'Ring for the King'. She is progressing well and will be ringing on Coronation Day.

It has been an honour and a privilege to have been Tower Captain at St Marys for 14 years, where bell ringing here has national recognition. At our AGM in March I did not seek re-election. Rachel Backhouse was unanimously elected as Tower Captain, with other positions unchanged. I wish Rachel every success.

I thank all the ringers for their valued contribution. I thank Sue for her support at

all times, Rachel for looking after the ringing in my absences, particularly at the beginning of the year and for organising the Open Day, Mark for fixing the muffles on numerous occasions, Richard and his team for looking after the bells and Treasurer, John for looking after the money. I thank Revd Mark for conducting Belfry Prayers, chairing our AGM and for his valued support and encouragement, particularly during the Covid Pandemic.

Tony Smith (Tower Captain)

Churchwardens

As we come to the end of another year, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the great works accomplished by our community. Despite the challenges we faced, we have come together and made a positive impact on the lives of those around us.

This year, we reinstated warden and clergy meetings to aid the running of the church. It was a wise decision as it will help us to make subtle improvements in church life. The PCC meetings also proved invaluable in providing a forum for discussing and implementing changes that benefit the church community. As we head into another year, we are aware that there is still work to be done. We encourage the participation of all members of our community as we continue to work towards improving the life of our church. Together, we can achieve great things and overcome any challenges that may arise. Let us embrace the opportunities ahead of us with optimism and enthusiasm.

One of the highlights of the year was the Douai Abbey Day, where we welcomed hundreds of children before their move to secondary school. It was heart-warming to see the children engage with our church and learn about the importance of faith and community. The success of this event was a testament to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers.

Our ongoing programs, ABC and CAMEO, have continued to make a positive impact in our community. ABC continues to welcome families and young children, providing a safe and nurturing environment for them to learn and grow in their faith. CAMEO, on the other hand, reaches out to the elderly members of our community, providing them with fellowship and support. Our Christmas services were a beautiful display of community spirit and faith. The joy and love felt by all who attended were truly uplifting.

Similarly, the services over Easter were poignant and meaningful, reminding us of the power of resurrection and new beginnings. This year, we introduced Muddy Church in St. Mary's churchyard, which was a resounding success. It provided an opportunity for us to connect with nature and explore our faith in a unique and refreshing way. It was inspiring to see people of all ages participate in this event and come together in fellowship.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by our choir and musicians. Their talent and dedication have enriched our services and helped us connect with our faith on a deeper level. The choir's beautiful singing has been an inspiration to us all, and we are grateful for their commitment to enhancing our church experience. We are also thankful for the efforts of our musicians, who have brought a wonderful range of music to our services. A special thanks to Tim for his exceptional playing of the organ. His skill and talent have enhanced our services and created an atmosphere of reverence and awe.

As we look forward to the future, there are some important works that we need to undertake to maintain our beautiful church building. These works include repairs to the

roof and the floor. It is essential that we address these issues to ensure that our church remains a safe and welcoming space for our community. In addition to these repairs, we also need to consider how we can achieve our net-zero goals. As a church, we have a responsibility to protect the environment and reduce our carbon footprint.

There are several steps we can take to achieve this, including energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy, waste reduction, and education and awareness. I believe that as a community, we can work together to achieve these goals and make a positive impact on the environment. In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the success of our church program over the past year. Your dedication and hard work have made a significant impact on our community, and we are truly blessed to have you all as part of our church family. Let us continue to work together, learn, and grow in our faith, and make a positive difference in the world.

Sincerely,
Paul Bullock, Colin Waters and Christine Rice

Fabric

In summary the log of work by contractors and volunteers to the fabric of St Mary's includes:

- Spring and autumn clean and clear
- Monitor water/tree damaged areas to north nave wall and Pathfinders Room and the south west corner of the Meeting Room
- Test lightning conductor
- Test and service Fire Extinguishers
- Service heating boilers
- Tune and minor repairs to organ (noting the Choir manual is not operational)
- Clearing block drains and soakaways

The Revd Angela Brennan refers in her report to the work of a small group – Richard Foster, Christine Rice and Chris Watts and discussion has restarted with Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and contractors for repair of the organ. The church has registered with the Greenham Trust Good Exchange Scheme and a total of £8,000 received through donations, matched funding and Gift Aid. Work was successfully completed in April 2023 on the replacement of the blower and removal of asbestos. Other Good Exchange grant projects are in preparation. Potential sources of major grants for organ and roof repairs have also been contacted.

The PCC's architect, Christian Randall of Wantage submitted his first five yearly report on the state of the fabric in 2018. He listed the regular concerns of clearing gutters and repairs to rainwater downpipes, repairs to stonework and flint facing and ivy on the tower. In addition he noted:

- the need to address the repair of the roof and valley gutter to the western end of the north aisle and above the Pathfinders Room
- significant dampness and deterioration to the plaster on the external walls to north and south aisles,
- damaged floor tiles and 'subsidence' to the central and northern aisles
- rotting of timber thresholds to both north doors.
- a series of minor repairs to stonework

In addition improvements are required to the Meeting Room and kitchen.

A specification for the repairs to roof, walls and door thresholds has been prepared and is out for quotations. A faculty application has been approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee and is about to be granted. Options for repairs of the damaged floor tiles are in preparation.

The architect is due to submit his 2nd five yearly report in the autumn.

Thanks are again due to Chris Druce, Paul Bullock and also to Mark Backhouse for help with general repairs and lower level lamp replacements, to Marion and a team of dedicated gardeners for work on the flower borders, to Rita for polishing the brass and to all who regularly clean, arrange the flowers and maintain the equipment.

Chris Watts

Inventory

New cameras and a donated tablet to facilitate streaming services on Zoom and a fabulous Memorial Book and oak case donated in memory of Clifford and Margaret Willis have been included in the Inventory together with other minor corrections.

Sewing group and Flowers.

The Sewing Group has not met but continues to sew as required. As well as making linen items for use at communion we also repair items and alter the length of choir robes when the user changes or grows. We have been given lots of fabrics, lace, and other sewing items and these we use to create items for the craft sale and raffle usually in November.

Please feel free to visit us in the chapel at 2pm when we can get back to normal, and join in if you wish even if all you can do is tacking!

There are now a lovely group of flower arrangers with many differing talents all of which are welcomed and encouraged. Displays were created for Christmas and Easter.

Marion and team.

Little Churches, Home Communions.

'Little Churches'

I am delighted to report that things have pretty much returned to normal now that the Covid pandemic has all but gone away.

Faithful members of St. Mary's congregation volunteer to bring God's message of love and hope to those who, for one reason or another, are not able to attend church on a Sunday. With the requisite cuppa and biccies as part of our time together, Paul Bullock leads at Nevil Court, with Margaret Holmes supporting; Joan Collins takes care of the resumed Thatcham Court service and I take the lead at Ferndale Court.

Paul also helps me at Ferndale and I, in turn, help Joan to take the short service of Holy Communion, which includes hymns, scripture and prayer. These are run monthly and last approximately 45mins to an hour. My sincere thanks and appreciation to all the above named for their support in this valuable outreach ministry.

Steve Rice

West Berkshire Community Hospital

This service has also recommenced after a long period of not being able to meet because of the dreaded 'C' and other infections such as Norovirus. This vital outreach means that patients can see a different face and enjoy fellowship as part of a communion service.

Earlier this year, we welcomed our new chaplain, the Rev. Dr. Simon Thorn who is also chaplain to the hospital in Wokingham.

I would like to offer my thanks to Margaret Holmes for her previous attendance and also express my appreciation to the other helpers Joan Collins, Barbara Carwardine and Margaret Goodhead, all of whom have given up a hour or so on a Sunday afternoon to bring conversation and comfort to patients who might not otherwise see a visitor that day. This service last for about 35 minutes and attendance is usually in double figures made up of patients and visitors.

Steve Rice

C.A.M.E.O. Come and Meet Each Other

Like many organizations, it took us a while to get going again after the COVID shutdown but because many elderly people had not been out at all for some time we opened the doors as soon as it was feasible to do so. With some adjustments (open doors and blankets) we opened in April. Some members did not return but we gradually increased in numbers and now have around 25 fairly regular attenders.

Activities are limited to indoor and are not very strenuous due to age and mobility issues. Home made cakes, a raffle and tea are the focus for every week with quizzes, games, puzzles, bingo, singing or themed chats filling a little more of the time until our wonderful volunteer drivers return to take some back home. We always try to mark special occasions with a special tea which we did this year for the Jubilee, a summer garden Party was also held in June. A fish and chip lunch in September and a Christmas party at the beginning of December with a visiting choir from the U3A as entertainment rounded off the year for us. During the coming year we have arranged for a visiting poet, hand bells demonstration and a saxophonist to provide some entertainment on various occasions.

Although we are limited by physical space, we are still able to accommodate new members. So, if you know of anyone that is lonely or would benefit from meeting with a friendly, lively and supportive group of like-minded people, please get in touch with us.

Theresa Lucas - 635923
Ann Dykes – 863199
Viv Druce - 820718

The Thatcham Parochial Charities

This ancient charity has continued to play a significant role, both in the life of our churches and in support of local people in need, this year. The rector and our three churchwardens are ex officio members of the Board of Trustees and I (Chris Druce) am currently a representative of Thatcham Town Council and Chairman of Trustees.

Other members of the Trustees Board are drawn from representatives of other local councils in Cold Ash, Greenham and Midgham. We cover the area of the 'Ancient Borough of Thatcham', encompassing modern Thatcham, together with Cold Ash,

Midgham and Greenham. The trustees have a wide remit of responsibility, covering various needs of our local community.

There are 2 principal charities – the ‘Thatcham Parochial Almshouse Charity’ and ‘Thatcham Relief in Need Charity’.

The Almshouses – The first almshouses in Thatcham were established by Thomas Loundyes, in 1446 AD. Some of the present almshouse flats, in Chapel Street, are named after him. To qualify for accommodation, applicants should be ‘of a certain age’, a resident in the Ancient Borough and can demonstrate a housing need. We have 14 flats in all and all flats are currently occupied.

This year has continued to call for special attention, to ensure the continuing health and well-being of all our residents. With all residents being fully vaccinated against Covid, more regular visits are now possible, but maintenance work continues to be reduced to the more essential work, with contractors continuing to wear the necessary PPE and any non-essential work put on hold. Hand sanitizer stations and additional cleaning in communal areas are still in use. Fortunately, there has been no major outbreak of virus in any of the properties.

This has been a sad year, with the death of two of our residents but, following re-decoration, both flats are now re-let and all flats are again occupied.

Relief in Need Charity –

The object of this charity is to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the Ancient Borough, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress, by making grants of money or providing items or services to reduce that need.

As with the Almshouse Charity, this year had very special needs for our local community and Relief in Need was very much ‘Open for Business’. During the year, the charity made grants in excess of £15,000. In addition to individual needs, including a new mobility scooter, the charity made a donation towards playground equipment for young children and contributed to the local newspaper’s “over 80’s Christmas food-parcel” fund

So, as you can see, it has been another eventful year. If you know of anyone who may need a helping hand, or a piece of equipment otherwise unaffordable, do, please, have a word with me, Mark, or one of the churchwardens.

Thankyou – Chris Druce

MISSIONS



Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

First of all, a very big thank you on behalf of Christian Aid.

In Ukraine, Christian Aid has been able to deliver £10 million of emergency assistance to over 770,000 people affected by the war. The current focus is on micro-grant projects through a Survivor Community-Led Response approach, and winterisation activities (e.g. supplying warm clothing and bedding, generators, weatherproofing homes etc).

Equally, in the Turkey/NW Syrian earthquake, Christian Aid is distributing over £7 million. Christian Aid already had partner staff in the area, and so are focusing on NW Syria where there is specific expertise and experience.

In the immediate term (first 30 days) our partners were able to respond by:

- Setting up collective shelters in some of the worst affected areas
- Providing Ready to eat meals as most have lost access to a place to cook meals
- Distributions of heating materials, mattresses, blankets, winter survival kits, hygiene kits
- Individual case management for children (e.g., reunification to family, referral to others)

They will then move to more long-term aid, such as rebuilding earthquake-proof housing. This funding comes both from direct donations and a share of the DEC Appeal. St Mary's members have generously contributed to both these appeals, and we cannot thank you enough.

Locally (and in addition to these national campaigns), in the last accounting year (Oct 2021-Sept 2022) we also raised over £3000 - about £500 up from the year before, if still below pandemic levels.

We have raised still more since then, much of it thanks to generous St Mary's folks, with particular thanks to all who participated in the Beetle Drive and the 2 Lent Lunches, especially those who helped run them.

By the time of the Church Annual Meeting we will also just have finished this year's Christian Aid Week (May 14th to 20th), which remains our biggest fundraiser – volunteers for the church collection and other collections are always appreciated.

This year we are focussing on Malawi, where farmers are being provided with drought resistant pigeon peas. We are also campaigning for a 'loss and damage' fund for climate change, so that those in the undeveloped world - who are suffering most of the cost - can be recompensed by those who have most profited.

It is crucial that we continue to give however – much ‘extra’ government aid for disasters is simply moved from elsewhere in the aid budget. Also, currently 20% of ‘overseas’ government aid is being spent on housing asylum seekers in this country.

Most importantly, ongoing projects need funding to continue. Sadly, these also cost more now, with the international rise in the cost of energy and food stuffs.

For example, Christian Aid funded a pump to extract groundwater for a market-garden in Kenya. This enabled women to make enough profit to feed their families and send their children to school. But the increased cost of the (small amount of) petrol needed to run the pump was too much, and the garden is no more. So we must raise even more money if we are not to give up on people.

In these difficult economic times for all of us, can I as ever urge you to give what you can, and above all to pray.

With many thanks for your generous giving to Christian Aid throughout the year.

Sarah Bennet
Chair, Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

Children’s Society and USPG

The use of collecting boxes and globes has significantly declined in recent years, probably as a result in the reduction in the use of coins. Support for Missions has increasingly transferred to event such as the ever popular Cream Teas and to direct donations including those made online. *Collecting boxes continue to be available however for anyone wanting to support Missions in this way.*

£360.90 was donated to the Children’s Society in 2022. The money goes to help the Society and its network of centres and projects to deliver specialist services for children who face disaster and danger in their daily lives; children who are unable to find the support they need elsewhere.

USPG

£333.18 was donated to USPG in 2022. USPG is working with the Anglican Church in Zambia to develop healthcare and leadership programmes that will have an impact on the life and outreach of the church and community. Support was given for training of specialists at the Hospital of St Francis at Katete and other health projects in Zambia.

If you would like to help with either of these Missions please speak to Ann Watts (864567).

Ann Watts

West Berks Foodbank



The continuing pandemic and then cost of living increases have meant that a significant number of people used West Berks Foodbank (WBFB) during 2022. Single adults, couples and families contacted the Crisis FoodLine for help and support.

The Foodbank no longer collects donations from St Mary's. Donations continue to be made, however and thanks is due to Matt Evans for regular transfer of these to the depot at Greenham particularly at Harvest and Christmas.

WBFB's Foodbank Centres in Thatcham, Hungerford and Burghfield and Mortimer continue to experience increasing need for support. The hybrid operational model is also well used in responding to requests for food deliveries to clients unable to get to a Foodbank Centre.

Thank you for supporting the Foodbank – please continue to donate when you can.

Rainbows (Girlguiding at St. Mary's)



Two separate groups of Rainbows (5-7 year olds) meet at St Mary's on Tuesday and Friday evenings to do all sorts of things from game and crafts to pamper evenings and escape rooms.

The Rangers has ceased due to lack of numbers.

If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to help with the Rainbows of Girlguiding please contact Julie, julie@dunwell.org or www.girlguiding.org.uk/

Connect

Connect, our parish magazine, is published ten times a year, double issues being December/January and July/August. Particular emphasis was made of circulating the magazine by email, on the website and by hand delivery on request. The magazine includes news, information and illustrations about services and events in St. Mary's and St. Barnabas. All of our clergy team provide a regular article but more contributors are always welcome. Any articles or adverts to be published can be sent to Steve Rice, steverice1@virginmedia.com, or Julie Dunwell, julie@dunwell.org.

Julie Dunwell

Service Rota Teams

We have continued to operate a scaled down version of the rota during the year, not quite getting back to normal but doing what we're comfortable with.

Thank you to everyone who supported Sunday services, baptisms, weddings and funerals by reading, leading prayers, handing out books, making people welcome, operating IT equipment to enable those at home to participate in worship.

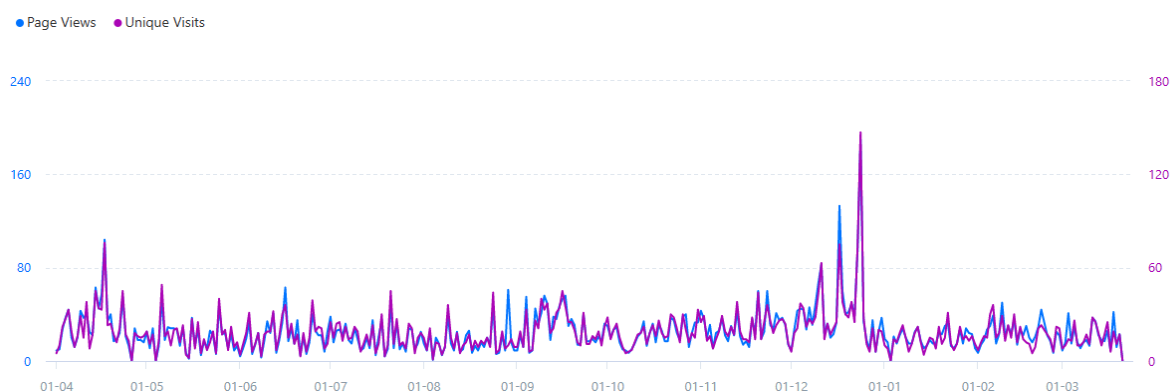
Additional help would be very welcome in any of the teams. Just get in touch.

Sue Stevenson

St Mary's Church Website

There has been little change in the structure and management of the web site. The content remains fairly static with most of the updates being the Bulletin, Connect, What's On and the Choir schedule.

The following chart shows the number of unique visits and the number of page views over the period 1-April-2022 to 31-March-2023. The peak activities occur in the Easter and Christmas periods. The information that is shown seems to suggest that many users know what they need and go straight to the required page.



The traffic breakdown is shown in the chart below

Traffic Summary

[Export](#)

Daily

1 April 2022 - 21 March 2023



As always, the web site is wholly reliant on its content from all participants who are directly and indirectly involved with St. Mary's and who produce information for general consumption and who organise events. The timely provision of such notices

is greatly appreciated and helps to promote the church activities and as can be seen from the charts above, keeps a very wide audience well informed. If there is an announcement to make, then it should be on the web site.

Please keep the information flowing.



PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY'S, THATCHAM, BERKSHIRE**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2022**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from donors	147,884	0	0	147,884	97,742
Other voluntary incoming resources	9,367	5,470	0	14,837	15,432
Income from investments	2,221	0	0	2,221	2,725
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	21,057	0	0	21,057	20,882
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	180,529	5,470	0	185,999	136,780
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Grants and Special Collections	901	0	0	901	2,076
Activities relating to the work of the Church	129,379	0	0	129,379	131,284
Church Management and administration	6,402	450	0	6,852	6,378
Transfers	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	136,682	450	0	137,131	139,738
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	43,847	5,020	0	48,867	(2,958)
Gains on investment assets:					
on disposal	0	0	0		0
on revaluation	(4)	(2,973)	0	(2,977)	17,416
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	43,843	2,047	0	45,890	14,457
BALANCES B/FWD 1 JANUARY	21,139	114,100	169,535	318,958	304,501
BALANCES C/FWD 31 DECEMBER	64,982	116,147	169,535	364,848	318,958

Thatcham Team Ministry
Profit & Loss
 January through December 2022

4:38 PM
 23/02/23 24/04/2023
 Accrual Basis

	Jan - Dec 22	Jan - Dec 21
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
3000 · General Income		
3100 · Donor income		
3110 · Service Collections		
3112 · Goodbox	1,462	518
3113 · Petty Cash	-104	-26
3110 · Service Collections - Other	5,619	4,586
Total 3110 · Service Collections	6,978	5,079
3120 · Stewardship		
3121 · Envelopes	5,881	6,369
3122 · PGS	23,087	23,455
3123 · Standing Orders	21,417	24,060
3124 · Tax reclaimed	15,580	15,669
3125 · Donations	26,132	9,454
3126 · Bequests	25,937	0
3127 · Share Rebate	636	642
3128 · Stripe Parish Buying	5	0
Total 3120 · Stewardship	118,674	79,649
3100 · Donor income - Other	65	0
Total 3100 · Donor income	125,717	84,728
3210 · Other voluntary Income		
3220 · Mission		
3221 · Childrens' Society	361	600
3222 · Christian Aid	5	0
3223 · USPG	333	1,066
Total 3220 · Mission	699	1,666
3230 · St Barnabas - Share	6,800	9,600
3240 · Gifts / Presentations	122	405
3250 · Grants Youth Work	1,588	762
3251 · Grants general	1,746	501
3260 · Curate Hsg - Rent	5,470	3,260
Total 3210 · Other voluntary Income	16,424	16,194
3310 · Investment Income		
3315 · Investment Income	2,221	2,725
Total 3310 · Investment Income	2,221	2,725
3410 · Charity and Trading		
3415 · BRF income	209	227
3420 · Fees		
3421 · Memorial	0	400
3422 · Funerals	9,274	12,203
3423 · Registrar	0	6
3426 · Wedding	5,140	2,484
Total 3420 · Fees	14,414	15,093
3427 · Advertisements	0	80
3428 · Printing / Photocopying	86	81
3430 · Functions / Activities	1,314	295
3440 · Mast Rental	5,100	5,105
3450 · Altar Books	-66	0
Total 3410 · Charity and Trading	21,057	20,882
3510 · Building / Equipment Income		
3520 · Hall Hire	1,325	650
3530 · Other B/E income	1,260	606
3536 · Organ Appeal	7,890	5
Total 3510 · Building / Equipment Income	10,475	1,261
3610 · Choir Income		
3620 · Choir Fees	240	80
3610 · Choir Income - Other	0	40
Total 3610 · Choir Income	240	120
3710 · St Barnabas Income	9,864	10,870
Total 3000 · General Income	185,999	136,780
Total Income	185,999	136,780

	Jan - Dec 22	Jan - Dec 21
Expense		
4001 · General Expense		
4010 · Grants & Special Collection		
Total 4011 · Missions	804	1,676
4021 · Presentations	97	400
Total 4010 · Grants & Special Collection	901	2,076
4030 · Work of the Church		
4031 · Ministry		
4032 · Parish Share	88,869	94,423
4033 · Clergy Expenses	348	217
4034 · Youth work	1,483	782
4035 · Function & Activities	570	40
4036 · Fees (ODBF)	7,598	10,395
4036/1 · Fees (Clergy)	142	0
4037 · Bank Account Charges	405	330
4038 · BRF expenses	258	99,673.00
Total 4041 · Curate Training	450	66
4031 · Ministry - Other	50	50.00
Total 4031 · Ministry	100,172	106,589
4051 · Church running costs		
4052 · Utilities		
4053 · Electricity	2,070	1,338
4054 · Gas	1,621	820
4055 · Water	315	16
4056 · Telephone / Broadband	720	720
Total 4052 · Utilities	4,725	2,895
4057 · Insurance	4,918	4,889
4058 · Professional Fees	4,510	4,400
Total 4051 · Church running costs	14,154	12,183
4061 · Upkeep of Services		
4062 · Altar	754	359
Total 4061 · Upkeep of Services	754	359
Total 6510 · Choir expenses	341	384
Total 4030 · Work of the Church	115,421	119,515
4070 · Administration		
4072 · Copier	722	836
4073 · Stationery	900	61
4076 · Audit	882	864
4077 · Administrator	2,287	3,675
4078 · General Admin	144	211
4079 · Memorial Book	654	0
Total 4070 · Administration	5,589	5,646
Total 4001 · General Expense	121,911	127,238
5001 · Building Expense		
5010 · Repairs	119	90
Total 5020 · Fixed Equipment	472	281
5040 · Equipment repair & replacement	3,264	835
Total 5070 · Projects	1,250	1,203
Total 5001 · Building Expense	5,105	2,408
7010 · Bells		
Total 7020 · Projects	2,000	589
Total 7010 · Bells	2,000	589
8001 · St Barnabas payments	8,115	9,503
Total Expense	137,131	139,738
Net Ordinary Income	48,867	-2,958
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Total 9000 · Unrealised revaluation	-2,977	19,414
Total Other Income	-2,977	19,414
Net Other Income	-2,977	19,414
Profit for the Year	45,890	16,456

Thatcham Team Ministry
Balance Sheet
As of 31 December 2022

5:17 PM

22/04/23

Accrual Basis

	31 Dec 22	31 Dec 21
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand		
1001 · PCC Thatcham		
1002 · General Fund	(13,496)	(8,570)
1003 · Fabric	77,061	34,240
1004 · Organ (Designated)		
1004/1 · Organ Appeal Greenham Good Exch	2,975	0
1004 · Organ (Designated) - Other	5,402	654
Total 1004 · Organ (Designated)	8,377	654
1006 · Choir	191	(49)
1007 · Youth work	5	(495)
1008 · Curate (Hsg/Expenses)	6,716	3,809
1009 · Bell Maintenance	259	2,259
Total 1001 · PCC Thatcham	79,113	31,848
1050 · St Barnabas	3,657	1,909
1052 · St Barnabas - Set Up	90	90
2101 · Vicar & Churchwardens Treasurer	2,345	2,598
2102 · Vicar & Churchwardens Instant	1,114	1,010
Total Cash at bank and in hand	86,319	37,455
Other Current Assets		
2001 · Investment		
2005 · 47a Station Road	76,339	76,339
2010 · CBF Bell Maintenance 3	26,552	29,193
2020 · CBF Bell Maintenance 2	234	231
2030 · BLK C of E Charity COIF Perp	28,528	28,562
2050 · BLK Organ Fund (Designated)	3,489	3,493
2060 · BLK Organ Fund (Restricted)	41,860	41,908
2070 · Rookery Church Fund	91	114
2071 · Rookery Fund (Lloyds)	149	149
2090 · Thatcham Church Estate	2,928	3,156
2093 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Bond	18,085	18,085
2094 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Equity	69,168	69,168
Total 2001 · Investment	267,423	270,398
Total Other Current Assets	267,423	270,398
Total Current Assets	353,742	307,853
TOTAL ASSETS	353,742	307,853
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Capital and Reserves		
1010 · Share Capital Account	304,730	304,730
3200 · Unrestricted Net Assets	3,121	(13,335)
Profit for the Year	45,890	16,456
Shareholder funds	353,741	307,851
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	353,741	307,851

THATCHAM PCC**Year ended 31 December 2022**

Unrestricted funds	Total	General	Organ	Fabric	Youth	Choir	St B
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES							
Incoming resources from donors	147,884	125,717		10,475	1,588	240	9,864
Other voluntary incoming resources	9,367	9,367					
Income from investments	2,221	2,221					
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	21,057	21,057					
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	180,529	158,362	0	10,475	1,588	240	9,864
RESOURCES EXPENDED							
Grants and Special Collections	901	901					0
Activities relating to the work of the Church	129,379	115,147		4,634	1,483		8,115
Church Management and administration	6,402	5,589	472			341	
Transfers	0						
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	136,682	121,637	472	4,634	1,483	341	8,115
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	43,847	36,724	(472)	5,842	105	(101)	1,749

Restricted funds	Total	Bells Hatherley		
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from donors	0			
Other voluntary incoming resources	5,470		5,470	
Income from investments	0			
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	0			
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	5,470	0	5,470	
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Grants and Special Collections	0			
Activities relating to the work of the Church	0		0	
Church Management and administration	450		450	
Transfers	0			
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	450	0	450	
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	5,020	0	5,020	
Gains on investment assets:				
on disposal				
on revaluation	(2,977)			(2,977)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	2,043	0	5,020	(2,977)

THATCHAM PCC**Year ended 31 December 2022**

Assets	2022	2021
Analysis of current account (Lloyds Bank)		
General fund	-13,496	-8,289
Organ (Designated)	8,377	513
Organ (Restricted)	0	140
Fabric	77,061	34,240
Youth	5	-495
Choir	191	-49
Bell Maintenance	259	2,259
Curates Hsg/Expenses (formerly Hatherley)	6,716	3,809
other	0	-281
total	79,113	31,847
St Barnabas (HSBC Acc)	3,657	1,909
St Barnabas (Set up - HSBC Acc)	90	90
	82,860	33,846
Assets of general funds		
Current accounts (Lloyds + HSBC)	82,860	33,846
Charishare (CBF Organ Funds)	45,349	45,402
Charishare (Blk Bell Maintenance)	28,528	28,562
CBF (Bell Maintenance 2+ 3)	26,786	29,424
Total	183,523	137,233
Endowments		
Station Road (Curate Hsg)	76,339	76,339
Charifund (Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Ltd)	87,253	87,253
Rookery	240	263
Church Estate (Blk Bond + Equity / V&C Lloyds)	6,387	6,764
	170,219	170,619
Total assets	353,742	307,852

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THATCHAM TEAM MINISTRY CHARITY**

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity, and a comparison on the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act, and to prepare accounts in accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Mtabat

Mrs Monika Tabatabaian ATT MAAT
Tax Avenue
Turnfields Gate, Turnfields
Thatcham, Berkshire
RG19 4PT

Date: 19 June 2023

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THATCHAM TEAM MINISTRY CHARITY**

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity, and a comparison on the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act, and to prepare accounts in accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Mtabat

Mrs Monika Tabatabaian ATT MAAT
Tax Avenue
Turnfields Gate, Turnfields
Thatcham, Berkshire
RG19 4PT

Date: 19 June 2023

Accounts



2021

Thatcham Annual Parish Meeting Annual Report APCM 29 May 2022

Parish Office
St Mary's Church
Churchgate
Thatcham
RG19 3PN

Contents	page
Parochial Church Council 2021/22.....	2
Team Rector's Report.....	2
Personal Testimony.....	4
Report of the proceedings of the PCC	4
Membership.....	5
Committees.....	5
Finance -Report to the accounts.....	5
Stewardship Secretary's Report.....	7
Safeguarding Report.....	7
ABCs.....	8
Children and Young People	9
Music at St Mary's.....	9
St Barnabas Church.....	11
Newbury Deanery Synod.....	12
Bellringers' Report	13
Churchwardens	15
Fabric.....	16
Inventory.....	16
Flowers – Sewing Group.....	17
Little Churches, Home Communion, West Berks Community Hospital	17
C.A.M.E.O	18
Thatcham Parochial Charities.....	18
House Groups	18
Prayer Ministry.....	20
Missions – Christian Aid – Children's Society – USPG -Fairtrade & Traidcraft West Berks Foodbank	20
Rainbows and Rangers.....	23
Connect	23
Service Teams.....	23
St Mary's Website.....	24
Appendix 1 Minutes of the Annual Meetings 20 October 2020	
Appendix 2 Summary of Accounts 2020	

Thatcham Parochial Church Council 2021/22

Ex Officio Revd. Mark Bennet Revd Nicola Hulks Revd Brenda Harland Revd Angela Brennan Churchwardens Paul Bullock (2020) Colin Waters (2020) Christine Rice (2021) Deanery Synod Representatives (to 2023) Mary Stagg Chris Watts Tony Collie Catherine Forbes	Elected Lay Members John Hicks (St Barnabas) Bernadette Ellison (St Barnabas) Leanne Fowler (St Barnabas) Alison Dean (St Barnabas) Lourdes Cottam (St Barnabas) Simon Stagg (2021) Chris Druce (2021) Kevin Dunwell (2020) Ann Watts (2020) Viv Druce (2020) Emma Watts (2020) Co-options Mark Backhouse (Tower Bells) Mike Stevenson (PCC Secretary) Ann Dibble (Safeguarding) <i>Leanne Cox (Safeguarding)</i> <i>(until July 2021)</i>

Team Rectors Report

So what of 2021? I find myself having to think very hard, because two years seem to have melded into one, and memory seems so unreliable. Consulting my diary, I see that we had our trail of crosses outside the Church during Holy Week: we were continually on the lookout for things we could do.

I remember taking time on Zoom to show the making of the Ash Wednesday ash from palm crosses – and a zoom service for Easter on my own, bringing the Paschal Candle into St Mary's in the dark and sharing prayers – and how the internet connection didn't really reach beyond the door of the Church. We did more than the previous year, but were still improvising and trying new things out. And the ChristmasNativity in Thatcham Park school field.

I remember Leonard's final farewell – what a curious time he had with us ... and sending him on his way to serve the people of Finchampstead and California (where I grew up).

I remember Angela's first celebration of Holy Communion in "the cathedral of the great outdoors" following her ordination as a priest in an almost deserted Reading Minster.

I remember hoping that we would be able to have a positive and confident re-opening and the dent that "the delta variant" put in those plans – and simply the need to have three plans and a backup for every occasion.

I remember a glorious celebration of harvest, and supporting the Food Bank and the increasing patterns of need and a Christmas perhaps tentative, but with people joining our services from around the world.

I remember my colleagues on social media and in the outdoor spaces. I remember noticing growing and changing patterns of need for young people and families, and how the Baby Café and Muddy Church were starting to meet these needs. And the conversations about whether CAMEO could re-open.

I remember the first opportunity to get together as a team after working alone and in pairs for so much of the time. The support of Nicola and Brenda – and their dedication and skill.

I remember starting to do weddings again, and baptisms, and how different it felt from before as people came with their experiences of COVID times and their own rearranged plans and hopes.

And I remember the practical support given by so many, including the inevitable Marion, with John Coombs and Michael Harley stepping in to support and also add a richness and diversity to our worship.

I remember working with schools and changing arrangements at short notice – and different schools doing different things.

I remember live music back at St Mary's – one of the joys of life in Thatcham – and having the choir back singing.

I remember some challenging times – both personally and for others in the church, and times when it was not obvious what had to be done for the best.

I remember the support of Churchwardens and others.

I remember funerals and departures, some harder to bear than others. And I notice how – with social distancing and less meeting together – departures have been less noticed. We marked the deaths of regulars such as Flo Rye, Pam Broad. Bill Butler and familiar faces like former mayor Bob Judge – who leave significant gaps in our community. And amongst those who have moved away are former treasurer, Peter Harvey-Di-Gioia, our safeguarding lead Leanne Cox, Clare and Rhelan Clarke and Margaret Barker. And with lockdown and distancing, there have also been fewer new joiners – though encouragingly, some new faces.

And thinking about signs for the future, both Leanne Fowler and Alison Dean have been recommended for ordination and have embarked on ordination training – and rich conversations about healing and new services for new people and how Marcia, in her unusual placement with us, has been gently encouraging and supporting and enabling behind the scenes.

I remember more hard work in the hidden world of safeguarding – both in new administration requirements and in dealing with particular cases of which most people reading this will know nothing. And being thankful for Leanne's quietly confident and well organised administration and challenge, and for Ann Dibble taking on new central church systems and requirements.

I remember how our finances have held up – even though they feel more stretched than ever, we got through the year: and I notice the daunting challenge of energising ourselves to raise money for the organ, meeting room and roof alongside keeping the show on the road.

I remember a year as mixed as any other, therefore – but with more intensity and less structure, a hard and tiring year – I spent the Autumn exhausted (was it a mild version of long COVID – I'll never know). And a year in which our Church pulled together and held together, somehow, and how somehow, by the grace of God we find ourselves in shape to face the future. And I remember that prayer has continued and that God has always been there – and I give thanks for what has been

Mark Bennet

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

From Marcia Wadham

This time last year, I wrote about the experience of joining the community of St Mary's with various forms of lockdown in place. Remarkably, as I write now, it is in the knowledge that I have only a few weeks left with you before I head off for ordination and the start of my curacy in Oxford.

It has been a joy to actually meet with you all in person over the last year, after so many months of only seeing you from the shoulders upwards online! I am grateful for all the support and encouragement I've received, and the opportunities I have had to work and serve alongside you, although lockdowns have made it feel as though my time with you has been ridiculously short.

One of the highlights of the last year has been seeing 'Come and Be' develop into something completely different to what we had originally anticipated. Rather than a contemporary service, it has instead become a service focusing on prayer and reflection, and a chance to explore some more creative ways of entering into God's presence, especially since combining it with the healing service.

Other highlights have included getting to know the Mums, Dads, carers and grandparents who come along to ABC every week, finding signs of spring and new life as early as February at Muddy Church, and seeing the A4 closed off and full of people on Remembrance Sunday.

I am so thankful for all I have been able to learn in my time with you, and for the opportunities to get involved in so many areas of ministry.

Marcia Wadham

Parochial Church Council – Background and Proceedings

Thatcham PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector and the Team Vicar in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church – spiritual, pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical.

The PCC met at St Mary's Church four times during 2021. The Standing Committee met twice.

Arrangements were made during 2021 for 41 baptisms (9 in 2020) and 7 (3) weddings. In addition there were 55 (59) funerals (23 with a service at St Mary's, 32 with services at a crematorium or cemetery)

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex officio, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. St Barnabas Church is represented on the PCC by up to 5 members elected by their own church meeting.

Committees

The PCC operates through a Standing Committee and working groups, which meet between full meetings of the Council. The Standing Committee is the only Committee required by law; it has power to transact business of the Council between meetings, subject to any decisions made by the PCC.

FINANCE REPORT

Report to the Accounts December 2021

St Mary's General Account (day to day running of church activities) shows a surplus of expenditure over income of £8,289. Regular giving through Standing Orders and The Parish Giving Scheme has been most welcome together with a number of significant donations but the need to attract new givers to replace those who have died or moved away is a challenge.

The St Barnabas General Account shows a positive balance of £1,909 at the end of the year.

We again managed to pay the Parish Share (our contribution to the diocese for clergy stipends, housing and pensions) in full (£94,423). However not all parishes were able to pay the full amount and this reduces the level of Diocesan rebate payable to the Newbury Deanery in 2022. The Parish Share was set at £88,869 in 2022 as the number of full time paid clergy has had to be reduced. The monthly payment due from Thatcham Parish is £7,406.

The ongoing pandemic continued to affect our ability to raise funds but income from Services and other activities improved gradually through the autumn. Work has begun on fundraising initiatives for essential building repairs and organ restoration.

Expenditure on utilities fell significantly in 2021 following reduction in the use of St Mary's because of the pandemic, warmer weather and replacement of lighting with more economic LED lighting. Resumption of pre-pandemic levels of use of St Mary's and the dramatic increases in costs of gas and electricity will increase pressure on finances in 2022 and 2023.

The need to increase Stewardship giving is critical, especially if we are to meet the running costs of both churches and pay the Parish Share again in full in 2022. If anyone is thinking of increasing their Stewardship payments during 2022 or joining the Scheme, please speak to the Treasurer or any of the Churchwardens.

A particular vote of thanks is due to the small team maintaining the books and banking the cash - Ann Watts at St Mary's and Bernie Ellison at St Barnabas – and to all who so generously support the work of the Church in this parish.

Investments and Fund Structure

There were no changes to the structure of the St Mary's PCC investment funds during 2021.

There follows a brief description of the history, management and restrictions of each of these PCC managed funds.

Curates Housing and Expenses (formerly known as the Hatherley) Fund

The capital arose from the sale of a house given to the Church in 1935 for a succession of curates to live in. The PCC has a 29.4% share of the rent after deduction of expenses on a property in Station Road which continued to be let by the Diocese as it was not required to house a curate. The income is applied for general parish purposes and so is **unrestricted**. The first call on any surplus income is the payment of curate / clergy expenses.

Thatcham Church of England Charity

The original capital arose from two-thirds of the sale proceeds of the Old Infant School in the Broadway; one-third is administered separately by the Diocesan Board of Education.

This charity is governed by a Charity Commission Scheme sealed on the 21st May 1980; the clear income from the permanent endowment is for furthering the religious and other charitable work of the Church of England in the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary's Thatcham and is therefore an **unrestricted** fund. All the income is applied in the parish.

The Church Estate Charity

Charity Commission ref – 00436

This is an ancient charity referred to in the Charity Commissioners Report of 1907; the income is to be applied to the upkeep of the church and the churchyard so this is a **restricted** fund.

Income is derived partly from investments and partly from 6/16ths of the income from Moor Meadow Charity, administered by Thatcham Parochial Charities.

The Rookery Church Fund

The small amount of income arising from the legacy by Mrs Hall who died in 1916, subject to the income being **restricted** to the fostering of the Sunday school. The Rookery was the name of the house.

Bankers: St Mary's PCC - Lloyds Bank plc & St Barnabas - HSBC

Independent Examiners: Tax Avenue, Turnfields Court,

Thatcham Investment Managers:

BlackRock Investment Managers, 12 Throgmorton Avenue London

EC2N 2DL

CCLA, Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4ET

A summary of the Accounts together with the Independent Examiner's Report is attached at Appendix 2.

Stewardship Secretary's Report – St Mary's.

A total of £69,553 was given through the Stewardship Scheme in 2021 (£66,606 in 2020). This included £23,455 through the Parish Giving Scheme introduced in September 2018. Giving through weekly envelopes was 6,369 and standing order payments were £24,060. In addition £15,669 was reclaimed from HMRC (£14,661 in 2020).

By the end of 2021 there were 21 donors paying by Direct Debits through the Parish Giving Scheme. 20 donors were supplied with weekly envelopes. However whilst some of the givers using envelopes continued to find ways of using them many found the lack of regular services broke the routine of regular giving. 32 donors gave through Standing Orders (a reduction of 6 since 2020).

Great thanks are due to the faithful members of the Stewardship Scheme who by regular and sacrificial levels of giving keep St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches going.

Please continue to review your giving at least annually – index linking is a principle worth considering. Occasional donations are greatly welcomed, but commitment to regular giving is essential if we are to budget for paying for our priests through the Parish Share, maintain the fabric and support sustainable growth of the church in Thatcham.

'Donate' facilities have been incorporated into the website for St Mary's.

I continue to positively recommend the Parish Giving Scheme to all regular givers. Over half the Dioceses in England have joined and together they cover the costs of the small administrative team based at Gloucester Diocese. All the remainder is paid direct to the relevant parishes by the 10th of each month and income tax is reclaimed through the GIFT AID scheme from HMRC and distributed to parishes about five days later. This significantly reduces costs and administration at the local level. Other bonuses are

- the donations can be index linked if the donors so choose, and
- the donations are paid as a single sum to the parish bank account thus avoiding the checking of multiple pages on Bank Statement entries, and
- it reduces the bank charges (currently about £28 per month) for handling cheque or cash donations.

I would again encourage everyone to make a will and to consider making a bequest to St Mary's. It is not difficult to arrange and can make a significant difference to the future of a growing church in Thatcham.

Chris Watts
Stewardship Secretary

Child Protection/Safeguarding report

This has been a short and challenging time for the Parish safeguarding team. There have been many changes within the Diocesan Safeguarding structure including the appointment of a new Head of Safeguarding at the end of January 2022. The ramifications of that are still filtering through.

At St Mary's and St Barnabas, we are fortunate in that we have a team of people prepared to take on these challenges:

- Ann Dibble is the Parish Safeguarding officer and the safeguarding training administrator.
- Sue Ball manages the safer recruitment process and maintains the records of DBS checks and other documentation associated with appointments of volunteers to specific posts of responsibility.
- Steve Rice is the ID verifier for the DBS checks.
- Cath Forbes is the children's advocate for St Barnabas
- Colin Waters provides the lay link for the safeguarding team with St Barnabas
- Brenda Harland attends our meetings and is an invaluable link with the clergy team.

The team have established a practice of meeting three times a year. At one meeting we welcomed Kathy Winrow, from St George's Newbury. She is a very experienced Safeguarding officer and was able to offer us some insight. It was interesting that her top tip was to remember that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that we need to spread the tasks.

The Diocese has instigated a system of Parish Dashboards which aims to streamline safeguarding administration and governance. There are three levels of tasks that should be completed, and we can celebrate the fact that we are already on level 2. The foundations have been laid by previous good management of safeguarding within the parish. The dashboard shows us quite clearly the areas where we still need to make improvements. Many of these actions are for the PCC to complete. Despite having safeguarding as an agenda item at every PCC meeting, the safeguarding officer has only been able to attend one meeting during this shortened year.

There have been three safeguarding cases during the year. All have been awarded the appropriate level of confidentiality and we have received support and advice from the Diocese.

It is brilliant that we are an inclusive and welcoming parish so that people can feel comfortable entering our doors. They bring their problems with them, and we need to make sure that they receive the appropriate response while maintaining as safe an environment for everyone as we can. The safeguarding team continue to need your support in making this happen.

Ann Dibble

ABC during a pandemic!

We were delighted to get back to face to face meetings in September of 2021. We started with quite a small number of people but are now really busy. We enjoy a friendly time to chat and play and have refreshments which is followed by a short service that consists of an interactive story, singing and prayers with a blessing at the end. Jason the sheep is a great favourite of the children as he helps to tell the stories and joins in with the action songs.

Our growing team of helpers enable us to function well and they are always ready with a smile of encouragement and a hot drink. Grateful thanks to everyone who contributes to this vital ministry. Towards the end of the summer term, we hold a leavers ceremony to say goodbye to those who are going off to Primary School. They are presented with a certificate and a Scripture union book entitled 'It's your next step' which is all about going to big school for the first time. Of course, they can come to visit us during the school holidays so we do not lose touch. It was sad not to be able to hold this ceremony over past 2 years.

Here are some comments from people who currently attend the group:

ABC is a very friendly and welcoming group. The church environment allows my children the chance to explore and have fun in a safe but exciting space. All of the helpers and volunteers are very kind and helpful. I'll be sad when the boys start school and we can't come anymore!

We really enjoy coming to ABC, the staff are brilliant!

We like coming to ABC because the Church is such a wonderful place to explore and we are always made to feel so welcome, it's our favourite group of the week!

The group is held on Wednesday mornings from 10.30am until 12 noon. If you have preschool children, come and pay us a visit.

Brenda and the ABC team

Children and Young People @ St Mary's 2019

We meet on 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of the month, in the meeting room, during the 10.00am service.

We were delighted to welcome young people back to church in May, and although our numbers have not returned to pre Covid, that has not been reflected in the enthusiasm of our children or leaders.

Our aim is to provide an enjoyable atmosphere where young people can discover the teachings of the bible through a mix of craft, prayer, and games. We encourage them to develop their relationship with God at their own pace.

Going forward, we recognise the challenges ahead, and pray that more families will join us, in sharing the amazing love and grace of God.

Helen Holman

Music at St. Mary's

It's been a tricky couple of years for choir. When the Churches closed, choir didn't sing for 6 months, we had a brief hiatus in the Autumn of 2020 when we came back in small groups mainly to record hymns. Then we went into another lockdown culminating in Christmas where we were privileged to be able to sing in Church on Christmas Day.

The beginning of 2021 was a time of another national lockdown but as we came out of that it begun to look possible that we could begin again.

At this point Viv who had led us faithfully and well for many years, decided it was time to hand over the (metaphorical) baton and Chris Watts and I were told we were now leading choir. Our first service was Pentecost and it felt very good. Since then we have sung at every Sunday service apart from the low Sundays after Christmas and Easter.

At the end of September, we tried a new venture – Hymns and Pimms. This was reasonably well supported both by Church members and the community.

Christmas 2021 was as near normal as anything.

We kicked Advent off with an Advent carol service , which although not well attended, was favourably received by those who came. We sang at several Carol services including the Town Mayor's Carol Service, and 'Hymms and Pimms', a new venture . This community carol service (obviously we couldn't think of a snappy title for this one!) included the choir of Thatcham Park Primary School and ended in a spirited rendition of the 12 days of Christmas. Popular carols and some favourite Christmas anthems were sung by the choir. It was very special to sing at Midnight Mass again on Christmas Eve.

Easter seemed to come very early and we had a Service of reflection for Passiontide which, again although not well attended, was well received by those who came. This Service and the Advent carol service will stay in the calendar and I urge everyone to put dates in their diary for these.

We remain a small choir. We lost Lesley from the sopranos who decided it was time after many years to leave. She is greatly missed for her musicianship and her sense of humour but we have gained Angela in the soprano line and Mary has rejoined in the alto line. We are blessed to have excellent singers in all parts and particularly strong large bass line. We have, as always, room for more singers. It doesn't matter if you sang at school and haven't sung since, if you sung only in the bath or if you are a classically trained opera singer. If you would like to give the choir a go come along. We will welcome you with open arms! There is no requirement to read music.

I have made many mistakes in my first year of leading the choir so my first thanks must go to the choir for being so forgiving and going with the flow. I must also thank Mary Baker who stepped in to play for rehearsals for a while and Iain Davies who is playing for us now on Fridays. Massive thanks go to Tim who played for rehearsals and recordings all the way through closures and when we got back together until the end of the year, and now of course plays most Sundays. He's very good at putting me right when I have made a mistake. Massive thanks also go to Chris Watts who is always happy to step in when I have to miss a rehearsal and is a fount of wisdom. Biggest thanks must go to my friend and mentor Viv who is never backward in letting me know where I've gone wrong but also where it has been right. I have relied on her extensive knowledge of choir procedure.

Choir is in a good place and we are very much looking forward to the next year of being part of your worship.

Mary Stagg

St Barnabas Church

As we have emerged this year from the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been a pleasure to return to many of the usual activities that make St B's what it is as well as launch some new activities our community.

Services

We have continued to meet mainly at 10am at Thatcham Park School and remain hugely grateful for the warm hospitality that the school offers our community.

One of our greatest pleasure this year has been the return of the groups from the supported living communities, Kestrels and Chaffinches. We have missed them very much, their energy and joy transform our services. We are so grateful to have them back.

We have also launched a new monthly service down at Thatcham Lakes called Muddy Church. Aimed at families, we share a Bible story together and then explore it's meaning for us through play and activities in the natural world.

Our aim with Muddy Church is to give children and families some much needed time in nature and through this to draw closer to God and each other. The launch of Muddy Church has been a major highlight and joy of this past year.

Community Activities

In our report last year, we spoke of our intention to launch a Baby Café for new parents. We're pleased to announce that this group is now well established under Reverend Angela's excellent leadership. Baby café has been a place where relationships have flourished and people seem to have found genuine support and friendship. When we opened some of the babies had never met with another baby before due to the COVID-19 restrictions and parents spoke openly of their feelings of isolation. We have been proud to create a place where parents can encourage each other in all the joys and challenges of parenthood.

ABC has also reopened this year and has been extremely busy! Once more this group has offered an important place of play, meeting and family friendly worship ably led, as ever, by Reverend Brenda.

Small Group

Our online small group that formed during the pandemic has also continued to meet this year. They found that the online format made the group so accessible that they decided to simply stick with it! This year, led by Ben, the group have been studying Mark's gospel and the group remains a place for those new to faith, as well as those who want to wrestle with what faith means to them, to have fruitful and encouraging conversations.

Supporting the School

Our strong links with Thatcham Park School have also continued this year. As the school begun to open up, I have enjoyed the opportunity to return to 'in person' sessions. I have also provided weekly online assemblies for the whole school which we will continue to do until we are able to meet safely as a whole school again.

We also enjoyed our first Easter service at St Marys with the school, which was ably led by year 4 and Zoomed back to the rest of the school. We hope that before long the whole school will be able to gather back at St Marys for worship.

Looking ahead into the coming year, there is much to look forward to! It has always been the vision of St B's to serve our community and this year has been a fruitful year for us as we have built new relationships in our community.

In the coming year we will continue to be alert to God's call to go out and serve our community in Thatcham. We can't wait to see what's next!

Reverend Nicola

Deanery Synod Report

Thatcham Parish is part of the Newbury Deanery – a group of parishes in West Berkshire running as far as Hungerford and Lambourn and up to Compton and The Ridgeway. In some recent documents the Deanery has described itself briefly as follows:

Newbury Deanery covers some 105 square miles of the western part of West Berkshire. It includes the urban centres of Newbury and Thatcham, the market town of Hungerford and an extensive rural hinterland. The eleven benefices (roughly speaking groups of churches overseen by a single priest) encompass 36 parishes ranging in population from over 25,000 to under 100, together with 42 church buildings, and one church which has no building of its own.

The Deanery is an administrative unit of the Church of England which is part of its structure of "synodical government" – the way the Church makes decisions about its internal workings where they affect more than a single parish. Traditionally the Deanery has had two functions – (the money function) allocating the parish share which pays for the clergy and support costs (just under £1million for Newbury Deanery) and then collecting it; and (the people function) negotiating the deployment of clergy at a time when clergy numbers nationally have been declining. More recently the people function has been developed into a more positive mode of mission planning (The Mission Action Plan) – actively supporting parishes and their people to meet the common challenges we face.

The effects of the pandemic had meant progress on the plan had slowed. Bruce Laurie Lay Chair of Synod having reviewed the plan in 2021 found it was still wholly relevant to today's needs. It was stressed that this is the Deanery's plan to support and encourage benefices and parishes rather than to direct or impose requirements from the Diocese. Synod identified four action groups and started to put these into being. These are:

- Finance
- Schools and Education
- Lay Training
- Environment

(Consideration on new housing developments and also communities will be incorporated in due course.)

The Newbury Deanery Synod also maintains a link with the South African parish of Batlharos in the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman.

Deanery Synod elects representatives to Diocesan Synod – notably in 2021 our own Team Rector.

The Deanery is run by the Deanery Synod. Like the PCC this is a mixture of clergy and elected lay members, but in the Deanery case the members represent the different parishes. The Deanery Synod elects a standing committee and appoints officers to act as an executive, and to progress the various aspects of its work. It may

also receive requests from the Diocese of Oxford or from the National Church to respond to matters of interest – this happened with the legislation on women becoming bishops. The Deanery Synod can also raise matters of concern and ask for these to be addressed at a Diocesan or national level.

In aggregate the Deanery paid 91.7% of the total 'Share' requested by the diocese in 2021 - a shortfall of £78,354. This compares to the payment of 93.6% of the total requested by the diocese in 2020 a shortfall of £61,635.

22 parishes paid their share in full, and 12 parishes managed to pay part of their allocation. Unfortunately two parishes made no payments to the diocese during 2021. A consequence is that for the second year in succession, the Deanery did not qualify for the full 3% rebate on meeting its allocation in full. We did however meet 50% of our allocation in aggregate by 31st July 2021 and so qualified for rebate of 1% of payments made during the year.

The treasurer sincerely thanked all parishes that did their best to meet their 2021 share allocation.

Thank you for your support for our clergy members of Synod and our lay members Mary, Tony, Cath and myself.

Chris Watts

St. Mary's Church Bellringers

The year started with the bells not being rung due to the continuing covid restrictions. However there was a relaxation, to allow one bell to be rung half muffled following the death of HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, when the tenor bell was tolled 99 times by Mark Backhouse on Saturday 10 April and again on Saturday 17 April, the day of his funeral, both in accordance with national arrangements.

In May with a slight reduction in the Covid regulations we started ringing with six of our band wearing masks, taking lateral flow tests and ringing socially distanced bells 1,3,5 7 8,10 on Sunday mornings only. As the rules became increasingly relaxed, we eventually returned to ringing eight or ten bells for the Sunday Morning Service and on practice nights. However the number of our ringers decreased. Margaret Robinson has not returned following a fall in the summer. Her husband John has not yet returned. I thank them both for their considerable contribution to the tower over many years. Then in October Bill Butler died.

We held a socially distanced, mask wearing, delayed AGM in the Church on 3 August, chaired by Revd Mark Bennet. Our Secretary/Treasurer, Janet John, did not seek re-election. She was presented with some flowers as a small token of thanks for the efficient way she had conducted her duties for the previous six years. John Kape was elected as the new Secretary/Treasurer. All other positions remain unchanged.



Presentation to Janet John

The meeting opened with prayers remembering ringer, Di Bridle, who died on 4 August 2020. Mark said it was sad that we had not yet been able to ring the bells in her memory and that we should when restrictions to ringing have been lifted. Encouraged by Mark, we arranged to ring a half muffled quarter peal, prior to the Time to Remember Service on 31 October where all the names of those who died during lockdown would be remembered, and dedicate it to Di's Memory. Soon after arranging it Bill Butler and Eddie Bennet died and we were pleased to include them in the dedication.

We were all saddened to learn of Bill Butler's death on 21 October. Bill had been an active member of the congregation and a tower member here for many years and Tower Captain for most of that time. Past and present members of the Tower met on the following evening, where Revd. Mark led us in prayer prior to us ringing half muffled touches in his memory. Bill's funeral on 11 November was attended by a large number of people including many ringers, some of whom had travelled long distances. The bells were half muffled and rung before and after the Service by our ringers and by Bill's peal ringing friends and Oxford Diocesan Guild Officers. All the ringing was of a very high standard and a fitting tribute to someone who had contributed so much to ringing here and to the Guild.



Ringing in memory of Bill Butler

Left to right : Joanne Waller, Rosemary Evans, Adrian Moon, John Durham, Richard Marshall, John Collins, Tony Smith, Sue Smith, Ben Waller, Ron Christopher, John Kape, Ros Durham

With the number of Covid 19 infections rising rapidly in December we reverted to ringing with masks, which meant that our numbers available to ring reduced again, as not all our ringers wished to ring with masks. With all restrictions lifted in 2022, we are now very short of ringers and will be seeking new recruits.

Our ringing room, like many other ringing rooms is poorly ventilated. Having followed the articles in our journal, The Ringing World, we purchased an Aranet 4 monitor to check the carbon dioxide (CO2) levels when ringing. By having the ringing room door, tower door and window open with a desk fan in the window, we have mostly achieved levels of CO2 below the recommended level of 800 ppm. This is not a long term solution and the PCC have applied for a Faculty to install permanent mechanical ventilation. The preferred contractor has since dropped out and we will be seeking a new proposal and quotation.

Our longest serving member, Ron Christopher was diagnosed with colon cancer at the beginning of November. He was fast tracked for an operation in early December. He spent a week in hospital and is now back home convalescing after a successful operation. We look forward to welcoming him back to ringing in the Spring this year.

I thank our ringers for their continuing efforts during the last difficult year and Revd Mark for conducting belfry prayers and his support and encouragement, which is appreciated by us all.

Tony Smith
(Tower Captain)

Churchwardens

If you are new to the Anglican Church you may not know that the wardens are the eyes and ears of the Bishop in the parish. They have an obligation to ensure that the Rector and Clergy are doing as they ought (and they most certainly are), that the business of the church is running satisfactorily (better than might be expected under the circumstances) and that the fabric is in good order (oh dear !). They are also tasked to keep the congregation in order !

All three of the wardens with Mark are trustees for the Thatcham Almshouse and Thatcham Relief in Need Charities, working with other agencies to help those people in our community who have fallen on hard times or with health and disability issues.

We have a faithful band of people working in the background (and in a few cases obliged to remain in post during the pandemic) as cleaners, servers, gardeners, sidespeople, coffee makers, pew removal and replacement, assisting at services, singers, little church providers, providers of home communions, hospital visitors....and many more jobs. The church would not function without them. If you feel that you would like to contribute to God's work in any way, all help is welcome regardless of how little you are able to do. Please get in touch with your Churchwardens or Ann the

Parish Administrator or indeed Sue Stevenson who maintains the rota.

Fabric

In summary the log of work by contractors and volunteers to the fabric of St Mary's includes:

- Spring and autumn clean and clear
- Monitor water/tree damaged areas to north nave wall and Pathfinders Room and the south west corner of the Meeting Room
- Test lightning conductor
- Test and service Fire Extinguishers
- Service heating boilers
- Tune and minor repairs to organ (noting the Choir manual is not operational)
- Replacement of four floodlights on the porch and nave roofs with LED lamps
- Clearing block drains and soakaways

The Revd Angela Brennan has established a small working group – Richard Foster, Christine Rice and Chris Watts and discussion has restarted with Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and contractors for repair of the organ and blower and removal of asbestos. Potential sources of grant have also been contacted.

The PCC's architect, Christian Randall of Wantage submitted his first five yearly report on the state of the fabric in 2018. He listed the regular concerns of clearing gutters and repairs to rainwater downpipes, repairs to stonework and flint facing and ivy on the tower. In addition he noted:

- the need to address the repair of the roof and valley gutter to the western end of the north aisle and above the Pathfinders Room
- significant dampness and deterioration to the plaster on the external walls to north and south aisles,
- damaged floor tiles and 'subsidence' to the central and northern aisles
- rotting of timber thresholds to both north doors.
- a series of minor repairs to stonework

Attention to these items was recommended within 18 months. In addition improvements are required to the Meeting Room and kitchen. A specification for these works is in preparation and this will lead to applications for permissions (faculties) from the Diocese and to an Appeal for funds to cover the costs.

Thanks are again due to Chris Druce, Paul Bullock and also to Mark Backhouse for help with general repairs and lower level lamp replacements, to Marion and a team of dedicated gardeners for work on the flower borders, to Rita for polishing the brass and to all who regularly clean, arrange the flowers and maintain the equipment.

Chris Watts

Inventory

The four panels depicting the Nativity, prepared by Thatcham Park School and St Barnabas in 2020 were again displayed in a Churchyard Trail over Christmas 2021. The panels are stored on the gallery.

24 of the wooden chairs in the gallery have been sold through ebay raising a total so far of £925. Sales of a further 8 chairs are pending.

8 metal mobile storage cabinets have been donated, being redundant in their former office location, and are in use in the 'Tower Room'.

Thanks go to Paul Bullock for organising both sales of chairs and securing and installing the storage cabinets

Chris Watts

Sewing group and Flowers.

The Sewing Group has not met but continues to sew as required. As well as making linen items for use at communion we also repair items and alter the length of choir robes when the user changes or grows. We have been given lots of fabrics, lace, and other sewing items and these we use to create items for the craft sale and raffle usually in November but in 2021 at the Annual Meeting. Please feel free to visit us in the chapel at 2pm when we can get back to normal, and join in if you wish even if all you can do is tacking!

Marion and friends.

There are now a lovely group of flower arrangers with many differing talents all of which are welcomed and encouraged. Displays were created for Christmas and Easter and the rota for Sundays will restart soon.

Marion and team.

Little Churches, Home Communions.

'Little Churches'

These services have now resumed after an absence of more than a year due to Covid-19.

Faithful members of St. Mary's congregation volunteer to bring God's message of love and hope to those who, for one reason or another, do not attend the usual Sunday service.

After the requisite cuppa to get our pipes in tune, we embark on an intimate service of Holy Communion, sing hymns, read scripture, pray and generally enjoy ourselves!

My thanks to Paul Bullock who runs the Nevil Court service and is assisted by Margaret Holmes and who also provides valuable support to me at Ferndale Court in this ministry for those outside the church walls.

The service last for about 45 minutes.

Steve Rice

West Berkshire Community Hospital

This service has also recommenced after a long period of not being able to meet because of the dreaded 'C' and other infections such as Norovirus. This vital outreach means that patients can see a different face and enjoy fellowship as part of a communion service.

I would like to offer my thanks to Margaret Holmes for her previous attendance and

give thanks and welcome two new helpers – Barbara Carwardine and Margaret Goodhead, both of whom have settled in very quickly as part of the team and bolstered the presence of helpers from St. Marys.

I couldn't finish this piece without direct reference to Joan Collins who has been an amazing stalwart giving up virtually all of her Sundays to bring a smile to patients and helpers alike and who reads the message most beautifully.

This service last for about 30 minutes and is attended by up to a dozen people made up of patients and visitors.

Steve Rice

C.A.M.E.O. Come and Meet Each Other

CAMEO started in January 2014 with the aim of a weekly meeting place to bring together people in Thatcham who live on their own, who feel lonely after bereavement, or are unable to get out, to come together to make friends, and chat over homemade cake and a cuppa.

Since those early days the group grew substantially and was self funded with the introduction of a weekly raffle. Joan, Viv, Ann and myself, along with three drivers volunteered to serve the group and our reward was to see CAMEO flourish. The number of people coming rose to over 40, but they did not come every week. Cakes and tea were served during the afternoon, mostly home baked cakes, although on special occasions we buy doughnuts and they go down very well!

An appeal was launched for more drivers.

CAMEO restarted on 25th April 2022 following the lifting of pandemic restrictions

Meanwhile we continue to collect milk bottle tops for The Thames Valley Air Ambulance charity with bags of tops appearing in church from around the parish! Over £110 has been raised from milk bottle tops. **Only milk bottle tops please.**

pp Theresa Lucas

The Thatcham Parochial Charities

I wrote a report on the Charities last year, to show another way in which the church interacts with the community in Thatcham. The Thatcham Parochial Charities continued to play a significant role, both in the life of our churches and in support of those in need, last year. The rector and our three churchwardens are ex officio members of the Board of Trustees and I (Chris Druce) am currently a representative of Thatcham Town Council and Chairman of Trustees. Other members of the Board are drawn from representatives of other local councils. Covid continued to impinge on everyone's life last year and we had to tailor our responses especially in that area, in support of our local residents.

There are 2 principal charities – the 'Thatcham Parochial Almshouse Charity' and 'Thatcham Relief in Need Charity'. We cover the area of the 'Ancient Borough of Thatcham', encompassing modern Thatcham, together with Cold Ash, Midgham and

Greenham. The trustees have a wide remit of responsibility, covering various needs of our local community

The Almshouses – The first almshouses in Thatcham were established by Thomas Loundyes, in 1446 AD. Some of the present almshouse flats, in Chapel Street, are named after him. To qualify for accommodation, applicants should be 'of a certain age', a resident in the Ancient Borough and can demonstrate a housing need. All flats are currently occupied. This year has continued to call for special attention, to ensure the continuing health and well-being of all our residents. With all residents being fully vaccinated, more regular visits are now possible, but maintenance work continues to be reduced to the more essential work, with contractors continuing to wear the necessary PPE and any non-essential work put on hold. Hand sanitizer stations and additional cleaning in communal areas are still in use. Fortunately, there has been no major outbreak of virus in any of the properties.

Relief in Need Charity –

The object of this charity is to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the Ancient Borough, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress, by making grants of money or providing items or services to reduce that need.

As with the Almshouse Charity, this year had very special needs for our local community and Relief in Need was very much 'Open for Business'.

During the year, the charity made grants in excess of £10,500. Grants included a donation of £1,000 to the local 'Laptops for Learning' appeal fund which was fund matched and managed by The Good Exchange. Local schools within the charity scheme area were then able to purchase & loan laptops to some of their pupils to enable home study during enforced pandemic lockdowns. Other grants included the purchase of specialist equipment for a hearing-impaired local resident, substantial garden renovations to enable a disabled young person to access the garden & be included in outdoor family times. Working in conjunction with 2 other local charities afforded the purchase of a mobility scooter for a disabled person giving them greater independence. The more standard requests for white goods, flooring and specialist equipment continued to be received and granted.

So, you can see, it has been another eventful year.

If you know of anyone who may need a helping hand, a piece of equipment otherwise unaffordable, do, please, have a word with me, Mark, or one of the churchwardens.

Thankyou – Chris Druce

House Groups

Thursday group has not been meeting over the past year, but I think we all miss our weekly natter and look forward to meeting 'Face to Face' when we can. The dynamics of the group will change when we get back together so we will be at a good point to welcome new people who would like to give 'House Group' a go.

Julie Dunwell

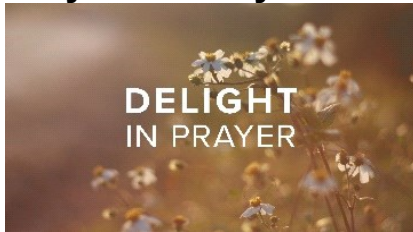
Wednesday house group has attempted a mixture of approaches, over the last months and we are hoping to return to some kind of structured learning, in May; at home or at St. Mary's.

During the last lock down we met via Zoom for informal chats and support. We had a new adventure lead by Ben Hulks, who was part of Wednesday house group. It takes place on Tuesdays at 7.30 and has all along been a structured learning/discussion time. A different day and Zoom has worked really well for this group!

Lourdes Cottam

Further details on the website or from the Parish Office

Prayer Ministry at St. Mary's



This year we have been praying in our homes, on our walks, on the phone and video calls, in fact wherever we have safely been whilst we haven't been able to pray with people in person.

Sue Stevenson.

MISSIONS



Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

In 2020-21 (our accounting year runs from October to September), despite continued difficulties with the pandemic and limited fund-raising, we managed to raise a magnificent £2487. Although this is still down from the £4000 raised in 2018/19, it does show a start in recovering from the pandemic.

As I write this (in April) we have also raised £910 since September. Much of this was from generous donations from St Mary's folk, including a very successful Good Friday Lent Lunch, so I would like to thank you all very much.

By the time of the Church Annual Meeting we will also have had this year's Christian Aid Week (May 15 th to 21 st), which hopefully will raise even more. This is obviously vitally necessary at the moment. Christian Aid has raised £2 million itself for Ukraine, and will also get about £14 million from the DEC Appeal. It's been spending this through local church partners, providing immediate food aid and shelter to refugees crossing the border into Hungary and Romania, and giving Trauma First Aid Emergency Kits directly to the Ukrainian Ministry of Health.

In future it plans to work with the Lutheran World Foundation and World Jewish Relief (supporting elderly refugees), and also Habitat for Humanity (rebuilding housing). It is also, most crucially, lobbying the government not to divert money from other humanitarian crises and long-term development funding. There are strong signs that Ukraine is 'sucking the oxygen out of the room' for other appeals, although the rest of the world is struggling even more as a result of the war in Ukraine.

The Christian Aid Week campaign this year focussed on Zimbabwean agriculture, to build earth dams to store water and storage barns to store the harvest, plus giving out drought-resistant seeds. Before climate change led to drought and famine, and before Mugabe's depredations, Zimbabwe was known as the breadbasket of Southern Africa. Now it is struggling to feed its own people.

Given that Ukraine and Russia normally grow 30% of the world's wheat, and nearly half of Ukraine's harvest was exported to Africa, it isn't hard to see what the outcome will be if we do nothing. It is expected that global wheat prices will increase by at least 10% next year, and the poorest in Africa will simply not be able to pay that.

Can I as ever urge you to give what you can, and above all to pray.
With many thanks for your generous giving to Christian Aid throughout the year.

Sarah Bennet
Chair, Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

Fairtrade and Traidcraft

Activities involving Fairtrade and Traidcraft have remained suspended since the start of the pandemic and following the departure of Clare and Relan Clarke to live in Basingstoke. Efforts are being made to recruit a successor and reinstate the Fairtrade stall after Parish Communion on one Sunday each month. Any volunteers?

The aim of FAIRTRADE is to secure a better deal for farmers and traders in 74 countries around the world. FAIRTRADE was founded by CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Traidcraft, The World Development Movement and The National Federation of Women's Institutes. The Headquarters is in Bonn, Germany.

The key areas of activity are to:

- Provide independent certification of the trade chain for products and licensing of the FAIRTRADE mark on products
- Help in growing demand for FAIRTRADE products and empowering producers to sell to traders and retailers.
- Work with their partners to support producer organisations and their networks.
- Raise awareness of the need for FAIRTRADE with the public.

The organisation has 1,5 million farmers/workers and 1210 FAIRTRADE certified producer organisations. 25% of all FAIRTRADE workers are women. Products are sold by all 5 of major UK supermarkets and over £23 FAIRTRADE premium is generated from sales in the UK.

FACTS:

- A typical poor family in a poor country spend 70% of its income on food.
- Small holder farmers grow 70% of the world's food but make up half of the world's hungriest people.
- 1.4 billion people in the developing world live in poverty, 300 million children go to bed hungry every day.

- The richest 85 people in the world have more wealth than the poorest half of the world
- FAIRTRADE promote better education and healthcare.

Typical products include: tea, coffee, sugar, sweets, pasta, biscuits, cleaning products, home products, fashion products, toys and stationery.

Children's Society

Collecting boxes at St Mary's and St Barnabas are used to support the Children's Society in this parish. £600.28 was sent to the Society in 2021. Collecting boxes are available for anyone wanting to support the Society in its work with children.

The money goes to help the Society and its network of centres and projects to deliver specialist services for children who face disaster and danger in their daily lives; children who are unable to find the support they need elsewhere.

If anyone would like to take on the organisation of events for the Society, please speak to Ann Watts or any of the Churchwardens

Ann Watts

USPG

USPG is working with the Anglican Church in Zambia to develop healthcare and leadership programmes that will have an impact on the life and outreach of the church and community. Support was given for training of specialists at the Hospital of St Francis at Katete and other health projects in Zambia.

£1066.11 was given to US in 2021 thanks largely to Cream Teas and raffle in St Mary's.

If you would like to help, please speak to Ann Watts (864567) to arrange for a collecting Globe.

Ann Watts

West Berks Foodbank



The continuing pandemic and then cost of living increases have meant that a significant number of people used West Berks Foodbank (WBFB) during 2021 and 2022. Single adults, couples and families contacted the Crisis FoodLine for help and support.

Members of St Mary's and St Barnabas churches have continued to donate much needed basic food items to help those in food poverty. Most churches and community organisations, this church included, have seen their donations to the Foodbank reduced as both the pandemic and rising prices have affected their ability to give as they used to. However we responded generously to the Foodbank's Harvest Appeal and Reverse Advent Calendar scheme. All our efforts have been welcomed and appreciated.

As Covid restrictions have eased WBFB's Foodbank Centres have opened in Thatcham, Hungerford and Burghfield and Mortimer although a hybrid operational model is working well with food deliveries being made to clients unable to get to a Foodbank Centre.

Thank you for supporting the Foodbank – please continue to donate when you can.

Sue Stevenson

Rainbows and Rangers (Girlguiding at St. Mary's)



Both of the Girlguiding groups have begun again to meet each week at the back of St. Mary's. The Rainbows (5-7 year olds) and Rangers (14-18 year olds) continue to do all sorts of things from game and crafts to pamper evenings and escape rooms. 'Goody bags' have been sent out to the girls each term with all the craft and activity materials that they need for the online evenings.

Problems of storage of equipment and materials in the Tower Room have been eased by the installation of mobile cupboard units thanks to Paul Bullock.

If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to help with the Rainbows or Rangers please contact Julie, julie@dunwell.org or if you would like for information www.girlguiding.org.uk/

Connect

Connect, our parish magazine, is published ten times a year, double issues being December/January and July/August. Particular emphasis was made of circulating the magazine on the website and hand delivery on request. The magazine includes news, information and illustrations about services and events in St. Mary's and St. Barnabas. All of our clergy team provide a regular article but more contributors are always welcome. Any articles or adverts to be published can be sent to Steve Rice, steverice1@virginmedia.com, or Julie Dunwell, julie@dunwell.org.

Julie Dunwell

Service Rota Teams

A scaled down version of the rota has been operating during this year as we continued to negotiate what churches and their congregations were allowed to do.

Thank you to everyone who supported Sunday services, baptisms, weddings and funerals by reading, leading prayers, handing out books, making people welcome, operating IT equipment to enable those at home to participate in worship.

If you would like to join in and help, please contact me.

Sue Stevenson

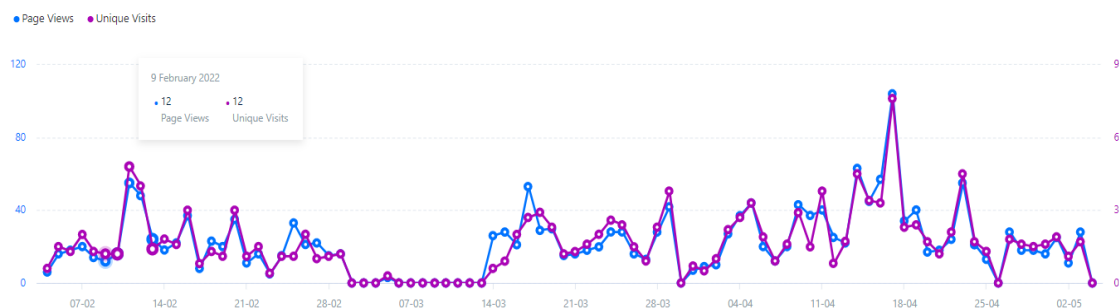
St Mary's Church Website

The interest on the web site peaked over Easter and dropped back to normal levels quite quickly. There was an instance where the web site was off-line for about a week. FastHosts who provide the domain and associated email addresses had sent an email reminding that the renewal subscription was due. Unfortunately, the administration email address that the message was destined for was no longer in use and was not monitored or forwarded. The due date for the renewal passed and the domain name was taken down. This meant that the web site although still accessible by the web master was off-line to the rest of the world. Restoring the domain name took a while as a new account had to be created and the information transferred from the old, closed domain name account to the new one.

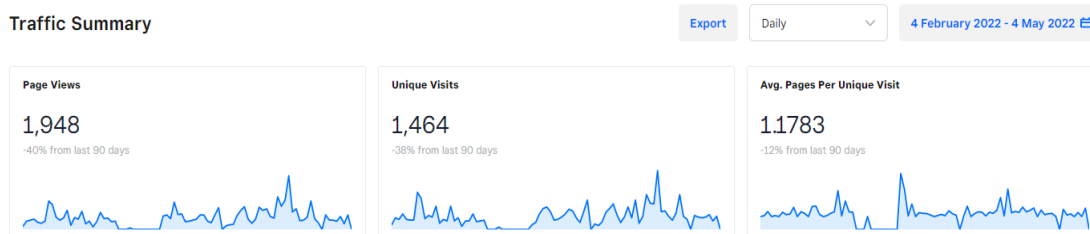
To avoid this in the future, it has been suggested that St. Mary's has a PayPal account to allow FastHosts and similar organisations to collect payments automatically. PayPal is needed because FastHosts and many similar organisations use only debit or credit cards and PayPal. Cards are associated with an individual and these expire. PayPal does not have these restrictions.

A separate document has been produced giving the benefits, security approach and operational considerations to using PayPal.

The following chart shows the number of unique visits and the number of page views. The information that is shown seems to suggest that many visitors know what they need and go straight to the required page.



The diagram below shows the site traffic for the period of February to May 2022.



The web site is wholly reliant on its content from all participants who are directly and indirectly involved with St. Mary's and who produce information for general consumption and who organise events. The timely provision of such notices is greatly appreciated and helps to promote the church activities and as can be seen from the charts above, keeps a very wide audience well informed.

If there is an announcement to make, then it should be on the web site. Please keep the information flowing.



**Minutes of the Thatcham Annual Parish Meeting at St Mary's Church on Sunday 18th July 2021
commencing at 4.00 pm**

Attendance: Revd Mark Bennet (in Chair), Revd Nicola Hulks, Revd Brenda Harland, Revd Angela Brennan, Revd Marion Fontaine, Marcia Wadham and 30 residents of Thatcham (including 7 on ZOOM)

Apologies received from: John Hicks, John Harland, Ann and Roger Dykes

The Revd Mark Bennet opened the meeting with prayer.

- 01 Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2020 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- 02 Election of Churchwardens
Paul Bullock, Colin Waters and Christine Rice were proposed and seconded and elected to serve as Churchwardens for the year 2021/2022

Mark thanked the wardens for their work in the past year and Chris Watts for his service over many years.

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm

.....Chairman

.....date

Minutes of the Thatcham Annual Parochial Church Meeting at St Mary's Church on Sunday 18th July 2021 commencing at 4.05 pm

Attendance: Revd Mark Bennet (in Chair), Revd Nicola Hulks, Revd Brenda Harland, Revd Angela Brennan, Revd Marion Fontaine, Marcia Wadham and 30 residents of Thatcham (including 7 on ZOOM)

Apologies received from: John Hicks, John Harland, Ann and Roger Dykes

Minutes of the APCM on 20th October 2020 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Matters arising

None

Annual Report

Proceedings of the PCC as summarised in the Report were noted.

Fabric of St Mary's and the Log Book. It was agreed that the logbook for 2020/1 and the amended Inventory be agreed and placed in the records of St Mary's.

Inventory. It was noted that 5 ground level floodlights had been replaced with LED floodlights.

The report of the activities of St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches in the past year was presented to the meeting. Clarification was sought on the term 'gaslighting' in the Safeguarding report on page 11. (see footnote 1). Following a proposal from Mark Bennet, seconded by Chris Druce, it was adopted unanimously.. Thanks were expressed to all those who contribute to the work in the parish.

It was reported that there were currently 189 names on the Electoral Roll as revised 1st July 2021.

Mark expressed thanks for the work of all those groups and the individuals responsible for the wide and varied activities recorded in the Annual Report.

In particular, he referred to the work of the Safeguarding team in dealing with the constant stream of requirements, revision to policies and guidance and in keeping up to date the certification people working with children and vulnerable adults. In particular he thanked Leanne Cox and expressed the best wishes of the congregation following her decision to move to Kent in the summer. Mark thanked Ann Dibble for taking on the Safeguarding Officer role for both Children and Young people and Vulnerable Adults.

Presentation of Accounts

Chris Watts presented the accounts as approved by the PCC and as amended following examination by the Independent Examiner, Monika Tabat of Tax Avenue. He expressed thanks for help received over the year from Peter Harvey Di Gioia, Bernadette Ellison and Ann Watts.

The financial report recorded that the Parish Share had again been paid in full and within the required timetable thus qualifying for the maximum available rebate. The General Account for St Mary's had shown a deficit of £5,800 on the General Fund in 2020 and an overall deficit of £14,140 largely as result of loss of income from collections and impact on the value of investment in what had been an extraordinary year without regular services. Income from Standing Orders and the Parish Giving Scheme had held up well together with some income from donors using envelopes and a significant response to an appeal for donations.

The change in preparation of the accounts to QuickBooks had been a challenge, particularly following the departure of the Hon Treasurer, Peter Harvey Di Gioia, to Newark.

Proposed by Mark Bennet, seconded by Mary Baker and agreed unanimously that the Accounts for 2020 be approved. The meeting thanked Bernie, Ann and Chris for their work on the Accounts.

Appointment of Independent Examiners

The Meeting accepted the recommendation that Tax Avenue Accountants of Turnfields Gate, Thatcham be appointed to examine the accounts for 2021

Election of PCC 2021

John Hicks, Leanne Fowler, Bernadette Ellison, Alison Dean and Lourdes Cottam were elected to PCC to represent St Barnabas.

The meeting accepted the nomination of Chris Druce and Simon Stagg to membership of the PCC.

In summary the PCC includes

Ex officio members,

The clergy:

Revd Mark Bennet, Revd Nicola Hulks, Revd Brenda Harland and Revd Angela Brennan

Churchwardens:

Paul Bullock, Colin Waters and Christine Rice.

Deanery Synod Representatives for the period to 2020/4.

Tony Collie, Catherine Forbes, Mary Stagg and Chris Watts

Elected Lay Members:

Viv Druce (2020), Kevin Dunwell (2020), Ann Watts (2020) and Emma Watts (2020).

Appointed by St Barnabas:

John Hicks, Leanne Fowler, Bernadette Ellison, Alison Dean and Lourdes Cottam

Co-opted members to be as agreed by PCC

Mark thanked all those who have agreed to serve on the PCC from 2021 and expressed thanks to all who had served over the last year.

Chairman's remarks:

Mark expressed his appreciation for the remarkable Ministry of the Revd Leonard Onugha during his all-too-brief period at Thatcham, his pastoral challenges at Emmer Green and his appointment as Rector of St James, Finchampstead commencing the following day 19th July 2021. He commended Leonard and his family to our prayers.

The meeting with the Grace at 4.40 pm

..... Chairman

..... Date

¹ Gaslighting is a tactic in which a person or entity, in order to gain more power, makes a victim question their reality. ... For example, in the movie Gaslight (1944), a man manipulates his wife to the point where she thinks she is losing her mind.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY'S, THATCHAM, BERKSHIRE**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2021**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from donors	97,742	0	0	97,742	97,391
Other voluntary incoming resources	15,432	0	0	15,432	11,059
Income from investments	2,725	0	0	2,725	2,419
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	20,882	0	0	20,882	20,957
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	136,780	0	0	136,780	131,826
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Grants and Special Collections	2,076	0	0	2,076	2,543
Activities relating to the work of the Church	130,695	589	0	131,284	136,459
Church Management and administration	6,312	66	0	6,378	2,155
Transfers			0	0	0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	139,083	655	0	139,738	141,157
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(2,303)	(655)	0	(2,958)	(9,331)
Gains on investment assets:					
on disposal	0	0	0		0
on revaluation	(1,216)	13,161	5,470	17,415	(4,851)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(3,519)	12,506	5,470	14,457	(14,182)
BALANCES B/FWD 1 JANUARY	24,657	101,595	164,065	290,319	304,501
BALANCES C/FWD 31 DECEMBER	21,138	114,101	169,535	304,776	290,319

Thatcham Team Ministry
Balance Sheet
As of 31 December 2021

4:38 PM
12/05/2022
Accrual Basis

	31 Dec 21	31 Dec 20
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand		
1001 · PCC Thatcham		
1002 · General Fund	(8,289)	(2,496)
1003 · Fabric	34,240	35,490
1004 · Organ (Designated)	513	(1,206)
1005 · Organ (Restricted)	140	140
1006 · Choir	(49)	61
1007 · Youth work	(495)	(495)
1008 · Curate (Hsg/Expenses)	3,809	615
1009 · Bell Maintenance	2,259	2,848
1001 · PCC Thatcham - Other	(281)	(281)
Total 1001 · PCC Thatcham	31,847	34,676
1050 · St Barnabas	1,909	541
1052 · St Barnabas - Set Up	90	90
2101 · Vicar & Churchwardens Treasurer	2,598	2,238
2102 · Vicar & Churchwardens Instant	1,010	867
Total Cash at bank and in hand	37,454	38,412
Other Current Assets		
2001 · Investment		
2005 · 47a Station Road	76,339	76,339
2010 · CBF Bell Maintenance 3	29,193	24,836
2020 · CBF Bell Maintenance 2	231	231
2030 · BLK C of E Charity COIF Perp	28,562	24,990
2050 · BLK Organ Fund (Designated)	3,493	4,901
2060 · BLK Organ Fund (Restricted)	41,908	36,668
2070 · Rookery Church Fund	114	122
2071 · Rookery Fund (Lloyds)	149	149
2090 · Thatcham Church Estate	3,156	2,964
2093 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Bond	18,085	19,815
2094 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Equity	69,168	61,968
Total 2001 · Investment	270,398	252,983
Total Other Current Assets	270,398	252,983
Total Current Assets	307,852	291,395
TOTAL ASSETS	307,852	291,395
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Capital and Reserves		
1010 · Share Capital Account	304,730	304,730
3200 · Unrestricted Net Assets	(13,335)	126
Profit for the Year	16,456	(13,461)
Shareholder funds	307,851	291,395
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	307,851	291,395

Thatcham Team Ministry
Profit & Loss
January through December 2021

3:41 PM
16/02/21
Accrual Basis
Jan - Dec 21

Accrual Basis
Jan - Dec 20

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

3000 · General Income

3100 · Donor income

3110 · Service Collections

3111 · Easyfundraising

3112 · Goodbox

3113 · Petty Cash

3110 · Service Collections - Other

Total 3110 · Service Collections

3120 · Stewardship

3121 · Envelopes

3122 · PGS

3123 · Standing Orders

3124 · Tax reclaimed

3125 · Donations

3127 · Share Rebate

Total 3120 · Stewardship

Total 3100 · Donor income

3210 · Other voluntary Income

3220 · Mission

3221 · Childrens' Society

3222 · Christian Aid

3223 · USPG

Total 3220 · Mission

3230 · St Barnabas - Share

3240 · Gifts/Presentations

3250 · Grants Youth Work

3251 · Grants general

3260 · Curates Hsg Rent

Total 3210 · Other voluntary Income

3310 · Investment Income

3315 · Investment Income

3310 · Investment Income - Other

Total 3310 · Investment Income

3410 · Charity and Trading

3415 · BRF income

3420 · Fees

3421 · Memorial

3422 · Funerals

3423 · Registrar

3425 · Wedding 2020

3426 · Wedding 2021

Total 3420 · Fees

3427 · Advertisements

3428 · Printing/Photocopying

3440 · Functions/Activities

3440 · Mast Rental

3450 · Altar Books

Total 3410 · Charity and Trading

3510 · Building / Equipment Income

3520 · Hall Hire

3530 · Other B/E Income

3536 · Organ Appeal

Total 3510 · Building / Equipment Income

3610 · Choir Income

3620 · Choir Fees

3610 · Choir Income - other

Total 3610 · Choir Income

3710 · St Barnabas income

Total 3000 · General Income

	3:41 PM 16/02/21 Accrual Basis Jan - Dec 21	Accrual Basis Jan - Dec 20
3111 · Easyfundraising	0	31
3112 · Goodbox	518	549
3113 · Petty Cash	-26	-28
3110 · Service Collections - Other	4,586	1,895
Total 3110 · Service Collections	5,079	2,447
3121 · Envelopes	6,369	9,069
3122 · PGS	23,455	21,863
3123 · Standing Orders	24,060	24,380
3124 · Tax reclaimed	15,669	14,661
3125 · Donations	9,454	11,294
3127 · Share Rebate	642	1,917
Total 3120 · Stewardship	79,650	83,184
Total 3100 · Donor income	84,729	85,632
3221 · Childrens' Society	600	40
3222 · Christian Aid	0	0
3223 · USPG	1,066	719
Total 3220 · Mission	1,666	759
3230 · St Barnabas - Share	9,600	10,300
3240 · Gifts/Presentations	405	0
3250 · Grants Youth Work	762	556
3251 · Grants general	501	360
3260 · Curates Hsg Rent	3,260	3,781
Total 3210 · Other voluntary Income	16,194	15,756
3315 · Investment Income	2,725	484
3310 · Investment Income - Other	0	1,962
Total 3310 · Investment Income	2,725	2,446
3415 · BRF income	227	198
3421 · Memorial	400	0
3422 · Funerals	12,203	11,779
3423 · Registrar	6	16
3425 · Wedding 2020	0	2,297
3426 · Wedding 2021	2,484	1,213
Total 3420 · Fees	15,093	15,305
3427 · Advertisements	80	337
3428 · Printing/Photocopying	82	0
3440 · Functions/Activities	295	0
3440 · Mast Rental	5,105	5,100
3450 · Altar Books	0	18
Total 3410 · Charity and Trading	20,882	20,957
3520 · Hall Hire	650	970
3530 · Other B/E Income	606	0
3536 · Organ Appeal	5	0
Total 3510 · Building / Equipment Income	1,261	970
3620 · Choir Fees	80	160
3610 · Choir Income - other	40	0
Total 3610 · Choir Income	120	160
3710 · St Barnabas income	10,870	10,073
Total 3000 · General Income	136,780	135,993

Total Income	136,780	135,993
--------------	---------	---------

Expense

4001 · General Expense

4010 · Grants & Special Collection

4011 · Missions

401 Berkshire Churches Trust	10	10
4013 · Childrens' Society	600	40
4014 · USPG	1,066	719
4015 · Foodbank	0	120
4016 · Christian Aid	0	0
4017 · Bathlaros	0	100
4019 · Other grants	0	402

Total 4011 · Missions	1,676	1,391
-----------------------	-------	-------

4201 · Presentations	400	
----------------------	-----	--

Total 4010 · Grants & Special Collection	2,076	1,391
--	-------	-------

4030 · Work of the Church

4031 · Ministry

4032 · Parish Share	94,423	95,377
4033 · Clergy Expenses	217	71
4034 · Youth work	782	727
4035 · Function & Activities	40	349
4036 · Fees (ODBF)	10,395	8,426
4037 · Bank Account Charges	330	371
4038 · BRF expenses	235	233

4041 · Curate Training		
------------------------	--	--

4042 · Curate expenses	0	1,322
------------------------	---	-------

4043 · Curate Housing	66	530
-----------------------	----	-----

Total 4041 · Curate Training	66	1,852
------------------------------	----	-------

4031 Ministry other	100	0
---------------------	-----	---

Total 4031 · Ministry	106,588	107,406
-----------------------	---------	---------

4051 · Church running costs

4052 · Utilities

4053 · Electricity	1,338	1,530
--------------------	-------	-------

4054 · Gas	820	2,644
------------	-----	-------

4055 · Water	16	109
--------------	----	-----

4056 · Telephone / Broadband	720	799
------------------------------	-----	-----

Total 4052 · Utilities	2,895	5,083
------------------------	-------	-------

4057 · Insurance	4,889	5,096
------------------	-------	-------

4058 · Professional Fees	4,400	3,820
--------------------------	-------	-------

Total 4051 · Church running costs	12,183	13,999
-----------------------------------	--------	--------

4061 · Upkeep of Services

4062 · Altar	359	52
--------------	-----	----

Total 4061 · Upkeep of Services	359	52
---------------------------------	-----	----

6510 · Choir expenses

6524 · RSCM	110	107
-------------	-----	-----

6526 · CCLA Copyright	220	212
-----------------------	-----	-----

6527 · Events	54	0
---------------	----	---

Total 6510 · Choir expenses	384	319
-----------------------------	-----	-----

Total 4030 · Work of the Church	119,514	121,776
---------------------------------	---------	---------

4070 · Administration

4072 · Copier	836	702
---------------	-----	-----

4073 · Stationery	61	145
-------------------	----	-----

4074 · Subscriptions	0	0
----------------------	---	---

4076 · Audit	864	231
--------------	-----	-----

4077 · Administrator	3,675	2,025
----------------------	-------	-------

4078 · General Admin	211	67
----------------------	-----	----

Total 4070 · Administration	5,647	3,171
-----------------------------	-------	-------

Total 4001 · General Expense	127,237	126,337
------------------------------	---------	---------

5001 · Building Expense

5010 · Repairs	90	
----------------	----	--

5020 · Fixed Equipment

4025 · Organ tuning & minor repair	281	272
------------------------------------	-----	-----

4026 · Organ Appeal & Major Repair	0	312
------------------------------------	---	-----

Total 5020 · Fixed Equipment	281	584
------------------------------	-----	-----

5040 · Equipment repair & replacement	835	1,409
5070 · Projects		
5072 · Electrical - Lights	1,203	150
Total 5070 · Projects	<u>1,203</u>	<u>150</u>
Total 5001 · Building Expense	<u>2,409</u>	<u>2,144</u>
7010 · Bells		
7020 · Projects		
7021 · Air Conditioning	189	-773
7022 · Bell repair	0	3,943
Total 7020 · Projects	<u>400</u>	<u>3,169</u>
Total 7010 · Bells	<u>589</u>	<u>3,169</u>
8001 - St Barnabas payments	9,503	12,125
Total Expense	139,738	143,775
Net Ordinary Income	-2,958	-7,782
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
9000 · Unrealised revaluation		
2010 · CBF Bell Maintenance 3	4,357	
2020 · CBF Bell Maintenance 2	0	
9005 · BLK C of E Charity COIF Perp	3,572	
9002 · BLK Organ Fund (Designated)	-1,408	
9001 · BLK Organ Fund (Restricted)	5,240	
9004 · Rookery Church Fund	-8	
2080 · Rookery Fund (Lloyds)	0	
9003 · Thatcham Church Estate	192	
9006 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Bond	-1,730	
9007 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Equity	7,200	
Total 9000 · Unrealised revaluation	17415	
8002 - St B account correction	0	
Profit for the year	14457	

THATCHAM PCC
Year ended 31 December 2021

Unrestricted funds	Total	General	Organ	Fabric	Youth	Choir	St B
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES							
Incoming resources from donors	97,742	84,729		1,261	762	120	10,870
Other voluntary incoming resources	15,432	15,432					
Income from investments	2,725	2,725					
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	20,882	20,882					
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	136,780	123,767	0	1,261	762	120	10,870
RESOURCES EXPENDED							
Grants and Special Collections	2,076	2,076					0
Activities relating to the work of the Church	130,695	118,282		2,128	782		9,503
Church Management and administration	6,312	5,647	281			384	
Transfers	0						
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	139,083	126,005	281	2,128	782	384	9,503
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(2,303)	(2,238)	(281)	(867)	(20)	(264)	1,367

Restricted funds	Total	Bells	Hatherley
INCOMING RESOURCES			
Incoming resources from donors	0		
Other voluntary incoming resources	0		
Income from investments	0		
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	0		
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	0	0	0
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Grants and Special Collections	0		
Activities relating to the work of the Church	589		589
Church Management and administration	66		66
Transfers	0		
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	655	0	655
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(655)	0	(655)
TOTAL	(2,958)		

THATCHAM PCC
Year ended 31 December 2021

Assets	2,021	2020
Analysis of current account (Lloyds Bank)		
General fund	-8,289	-2,496
Organ (Designated)	34,240	35,490
Organ (Restricted)	513	-1,206
Fabric	140	140
Choir	-49	61
Youth	-495	61
Bell Maintenance	3,809	615
Curates Hsg/Expenses (formerly Hatherley)	2,259	2,848
other	-281	-281
total	31,847	35,232
St Barnabas (HSBC Acc)	1,909	541
St Barnabas (Set up - HSBC Acc)	90	90
	33,846	35,863
Assets of general funds		
Current accounts (Lloyds + HSBC)	33,846	35,863
Charishare (CBF Organ Funds)	45,401	41,568
Charishare (Blk Bell Maintenance)	28,562	24,900
CBF (Bell Maintenance 2+ 3)	29,424	25,067
Total	137,233	127,398
Endowments		
Station Road (Curate Hsg)	76,339	76,339
Charifund (Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Ltd)	87,253	81,783
Rookery	263	271
Church Estate (Blk Bond + Equity / V&C Lloyds)	6,764	6,070
	170,619	164,463
Total assets	307,852	291,861

Reconciliation PCC Thatcham Acc at Lloyds		
QB 31/12/2021		31,847.00
less o/s credits		
cash credit 520	2,388.00	
HMRC tax reclaim	3,383.49	
Cellnex	1,275.00	
		7,046.49
plus o/s debits		
ODBF Fees	2,961.00	
Children's Society	600.28	
USPG	1,066.11	
		4,627.39
		29,427.90
Lloyds Statement 31/12/2021		29,429.24
check		1.34

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THATCHAM TEAM MINISTRY CHARITY**

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2021.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity, and a comparison on the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act, and to prepare accounts in accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Mtabat

Mrs Monika Tabatabaian ATT MAAT
Tax Avenue
Turnfields Gate, Turnfields
Thatcham, Berkshire
RG19 4PT

Date: 6 May 2022

Accounts

Contents	page
Parochial Church Council 2020/21.....	2
Team Rector's Report.....	2
Personal Testimonies	5
Report of the proceedings of the PCC	8
Membership... ..	8
Committees.....	8
Finance -Report to the accounts.....	9
Stewardship Secretary's Report.....	10
Safeguarding Report.....	11
ABCs... ..	11
Children and Young People - Pathfinders.....	12
Music at St Mary's.....	12
St Barnabas Church.....	14
Newbury Deanery Synod.....	15
Bellringers' Report	16
Churchwardens	17
Fabric.....	18
Inventory.....	19
Flowers – Sewing Group... ..	18
Little Churches, Home Communion, ...	18
C.A.M.E.O –... ..	19
Thatcham Parochial Charities... ..	20
House Groups	21
Prayer Ministry... ..	22
Missions – Christian Aid – Children's Society – USPG -Fairtrade & Traidcraft- West Berks Foodbank –.....	22
Rainbows and Rangers... ..	25
Connect	25
Service Teams.....	25
St Mary's Website.... ..	26
Appendix 1 Minutes of the Annual Meetings 20 October 2020	30
Appendix 2 Summary of Accounts 2020	Part 2

Thatcham Parochial Church Council 2020/21

Ex Officio Revd. Mark Bennet Revd Nicola Hulks Revd Brenda Harland Revd Angela Brennan (from Sept 2020) Revd Leonard Onugha (on placement at Emmer Green from Nov 2020) Churchwardens Paul Bullock (2020) Colin Waters (2020) Chris Watts (2016) Deanery Synod Representatives (to 2023) Mary Stagg Chris Watts Tony Collie Catherine Forbes	Elected Lay Members John Hicks (St Barnabas) Bernadette Ellison (St Barnabas) Leanne Fowler (St Barnabas) + 2 vacancies Christine Rice (2019) Viv Druce (2020) Emma Watts (2020) Co-options Mark Backhouse (Tower Bells) Peter Harvey De-Gioia (Treasurer to February 2020) Mike Stevenson (PCC Secretary) Leanne Cox (Safeguarding) Ann Dibble (Safeguarding) Chris Druce (Social)

Team Rectors Report

What a year that was! With Nicola on board as Team Vicar and looking forward to the year ahead, working closely with Thatcham Park School on their SIAMS (church school inspection) preparation, the year began hopefully. We had Alison Dean and Leanne Fowler starting to test possible vocations to ordained ministry, Leonard continuing to grow as our curate and doing some outstanding work – but still waiting to conduct his first wedding – we were heading into 2020 with energy, passion, prayer and hope: still reminding ourselves that we are called to be a Christlike church – more contemplative, more courageous, more compassionate. My five years as Area Dean came to an end and I was looking forward to a fresh challenge –

And then COVID. The most abrupt change was the postponement of the SIAMS inspection at Thatcham Park School, which had been announced and was to have taken place in the week of the first lockdown: such disappointment for everyone who had been looking forward to showing off all the things we'd achieved together. And poor Leonard found his planned weddings postponed, and Holy Week services were cancelled and we started to learn some completely new ways of doing things. The Paschal Candle was lit in my back garden and streamed live on Facebook. There were Podcast services from St Barnabas (and material for Thatcham Park School too). We struggled to make sense of what was going on, and so many of us missed the music. I remember I started a series of daily reflections at 8:00am on Facebook on a whole range of subjects. They are still there, I think. And we gradually got used (at least some of us did) to services on Zoom.

As well as weddings (even those who wanted to get married, couldn't – we did, though, have one couple we could marry when their original church was locked down: the three weddings we did do were hugely joyful occasions), our most significant ministry – that of Baptism – also came to a virtual halt. 2020 is probably the first year since records began that the number of Baptisms in Thatcham was in single figures.

Then there were joys – we discovered the churchyard as a venue for services, and worship outside lifted our spirits. We managed a version of cream teas too, and when the choir could sing, they recorded music which we could use in our services – including a recording which was used for the socially-distanced Remembrance Sunday Act of Remembrance – where lone representatives of all our uniformed groups laid wreaths: so very different from the thousands of people spilling out across the A4 in previous years.

There were some big changes in the team too – Angela Brennan came as curate to Nicola: not quite what we'd expected, as we'd not applied for anyone, and then Marcia Wadham as ministry apprentice (before being ordained as curate). Angela's ordination was delayed, and then hardly anyone could attend, so I saw it online rather than being there. I had recommended that Leonard should have a placement before his curacy ended, and a suitable opportunity arose for him before Christmas. All the comings and goings felt rather inadequately marked, and when we do get back together we'll have some catching up to do.

Catching up also on grief and loss. So many people have been inadequately mourned – at Peter Ellison's funeral at the crematorium the driveway was lined with a socially distanced crowd of civic dignitaries, remembering his contribution to our community. The funeral for Clifford Willis – one of our longest standing members, and another pillar of Thatcham and St Mary's life in his prime – marked his passing for those closest to him, but did no real justice to his contribution to St Mary's. Others we will miss include Ian Robinson, Vera Setchell, Alf Wheeler and Daphne Jones. Funeral services varied through the year as the rules changed, and some of us took services entirely at a graveside in a variety of weathers. Once we are beyond COVID restrictions, I am sure that we will gain a new ministry around memorial services.

The year ended in style, though not the style we would have anticipated at the beginning. The sense of passion and creativity in the team, including our newest members, overflowed at Christmas. We paired up with Thatcham Park School to produce a nativity trail in the Churchyard – Nicola took a lead on this and Brenda organised families for telling the story and the choir contributed hymns and Paul Bullock and John Harland sorted out the installation – and we linked also with the star initiative from Thatcham Town Council. On Christmas Eve we opened St Mary's with stations for prayer, and a stunning installation of the nativity created by Angela in the chapel. We missed all our carol services and the thousands of people joyfully celebrating – but instead streamed the reading of the prologue to John's Gospel at midnight, and a communion service with the choir singing live was broadcast in Christmas Day (after which the rules changed yet again, and the choir could not practice).

As I write, it seems that the worst is over and we can look forward with a little more confidence and hope – hope especially that the weary times are behind us, for most of us have felt exhausted sometime during the last year. We will be back, but when we come back, it won't be the same as before. We'll be taking some of our services outside, and thinking about the way we do displays and trails and installations. We'll be catching up with weddings and baptisms, learning about memorial services, reconnecting with friends in the community and civic life. We will be using what we have learned to be a more Christlike church – more contemplative, more compassionate, more courageous and almost certainly more creative.

Huge thanks to everyone who has contributed to the richness of this challenging year. Here's praying for God's blessing on our community and our town for 2021 and beyond.

Mark Bennet

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES

From Marcia Wadham

It's strange to think that this time last year, I was waiting to find out when my ordination selection interviews would take place, and what they would look like in a world which had gone almost entirely online. I had no idea whether or not I would be accepted for ordination training, so had no idea what my life would look like after the summer.

As it happened, I was accepted for training and life brought me to join you at St Mary's for a couple of years. It was a real joy to be able to join in a few weeks' worth of outdoor services in the churchyard before both the weather and the November lockdown stopped them from happening. Since then, it's been a huge privilege to see so many friendly faces on Zoom each week, and to be able to join with in-person activities wherever that has been possible.

As will have been reported elsewhere, it has been a strange time to be doing ministry, and even stranger to be doing ministry somewhere new, where opportunities for in-person activities have been so few and far between. Six months in, and I still have no concept of what a 'normal' Sunday looks like at St Mary's, much less what a 'normal' week looks like.

Despite these challenges, though, it has been a time of real blessing. I've been struck by the creativity that has been evident, enabling the church to focus on the things we have been able to do rather than the things we haven't. I've also sensed a real and unshakeable hope in a future where we will once again be able to meet together as God's people, to sing praise to God together, to share in communion (in both kinds) together and to chat together in fellowship over a cup of coffee.

I look forward to being able to share in all those things with you, but I am also thankful for the very different type of community I've been able to share with you over the last few months, and for the incredibly warm welcome I've received.

Lamentations 3: 22 -23

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

Marcia Wadham

From Revd Angela Brennan

If ink costs were no object I'd be submitting a photo diary — no words, just images, as it's hard putting to words what beginning curacy at such a time has been like. When people have commiserated me on the misfortune of being ordained in the middle of a global pandemic, my standard reply is that, not having been ordained before, I have nothing to compare it with! So in the absence of a 'proper' report (or a photo diary) let me share a few highlights of a lockdown curacy.



Outdoor services have been one of the great joys of lockdown for me — I love being outside, being a church without walls — it's how I think we are really called to be as a worshipping community. We were just emerging from the first lockdown when I went to my first 'in person' service, and when we all broke our bread I really felt like I could have been in a crowd of over 5000, on a windswept hill by Lake Galilee, all of us hoping for good news.



In my first weeks in post, I took my children over to the lakes and while we were there we discovered this quiet space, a little water-side chapel of green. The Celtic Christian tradition talks about 'thin' spaces where heaven seems near enough to

touch the earth. It was quiet at the lakes, if not 'silent' as the sign suggests, but there was a kind of stillness about the place with only the inquisitive buzz of children exploring, and birdsong in the air — in my book, this patch of earth in our own parish, is as 'thin' a space, as any.

That ministry is full of surprises, is one of its great blessings. I'm no kids TV presenter, but I have had more fun than I could have imagined recording school assemblies! Shadrach is my mischievous helper, he has planted seeds to illustrate resurrection, built a Lego house on sand and rock, and played the part of the shepherd who tried not to eat the lost sheep. It's been a steep, but enjoyable learning curve, and whether this translates into 'in person' collective worship remains to be seen...



I give thanks every day for being here with you at St B's and St Mary's. Thatcham Park School, where St B's meets, has up on it's wall the words of Paul to the Thessalonians: 'Encourage and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing'. How lucky am I to be somewhere with such a manifesto?!

I feel very thankful for God's many gifts, for the gift of a warm welcome, of worshipping communities that build each other up, of all the opportunities and connections we have around us, of a team that likes each other, of a wise and down-to-earth training incumbent, of work that doesn't feel like work, and of the privilege of being the person who is asked to say something about the love of God. I dearly hope that in the coming year, I will be able to add to these gifts, the chance to get to know you in person.

Angela Brennan

From Revd Leonard Onugha

It is almost half a year since the Area Dean of Reading informed me in a phone call that I was to start effectively as curate-in-charge of St Barnabas Emmer Green the very next day! That 'green light' was but one in a series of sudden changes that I have experienced and had to get my head around over the last year. Perhaps it is best to *begin at the begin*. As I left for home following a burial at the cemetery on the 18th of March 2020 amidst rising COVID-19 numbers, little did I know that it would be my last physical parochial duty for the best part of four months, but so it proved.

For the first month or thereabout, I fully embraced and enjoyed the solitude. I was mostly grateful for a little room in which to write the required theological reflections and academic essays that is the way of curacy in the diocese. I gladly tackled those alongside finishing off an Alpha course that I was running in conjunction with the Baptists. The relief however lengthened into restlessness as the weeks turned into months, and then the restlessness became boredom. I was most relieved therefore to be able to recommence physical meetings in the parish again later in July. With that experience in mind I was really very grateful to physically be in the parish in Emmer Green when the subsequent lockdowns came about. I could continue to be physically present for the parishioners and congregation, and in fact play a crucial role in providing the community with a focal point for grieving, when a young lad was fatally stabbed in the midst of all that.

Like for most people, the last year has also been very difficult for me, emotionally and mentally, and at times, it has been very bleak. There were periods in which I felt a real sense of isolation which led to feelings of confusion and anxiety about the future. This coupled with economic uncertainty and a fragile job market (even for clergy) led to feelings of despair on occasion, finding myself wondering 'what's the point of persisting in ministry?' Nothing new there, just one that was accentuated by COVID. At the same time I (and I'm sure many others) have been able to reflect more positively and to reassess our lives and priorities. Those positive reflections also enabled personal growth, and led to decisions to make good changes in a number of areas. Some of the changes have created room in my life and schedule, enabling me work on some interesting opportunities for Emmer Green and the diocese as they emerged.

I have worked with the diocese to create a role for a Development Enabler for minority groups within the diocese as well as the framework for a well-led network for ethnic minority groups too. I also became a Vocations Advisor and have so far worked with two candidates in the exploratory phase of their vocations journey. I additionally joined the National Mentors Register of the church in order to help increase the proportion of under-represented groups among the clergy of the Church. In the middle of all that, I also joined the production team for the diocese's Church at Home online services. I have been lead producer on three services to date, including Candlemas and Easter. My day job needs also be added to the above. I led the efforts to (first) regather the congregation at Emmer Green as a worshipping community, and subsequently enabled the transition back into the church building for the first time since March 2020, following a risk assessment. Additionally, I organised a vigil for the community at Emmer Green on the first anniversary of Olly Stephens' death, involving Bishop Olivia and the local MP, Matt Rodda. So, in all, I have had a varied and eventful time over the last year, but full of the blessing of God.

I look forward to the next year with a mix of excitement and trepidation, but as always moving forward toward it prayerfully.

Leonard

Parochial Church Council – Background and Proceedings

Thatcham PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector and the Team Vicar in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church – spiritual, pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical.

The PCC met at St Mary's Church once during the year in February and virtually by ZOOM in October (following APCM) and in February 2021. The Standing Committee met 7 times virtually by ZOOM

Highlights of the year have been the imaginative ways adopted to keep up with the need to maintain contact and fellowship during this year of year of the pandemic.

Arrangements were made during 2020 for 9 baptisms (70 in 2019) and 3 (8) weddings. In addition there were 59 (54) funerals (19 with a service at St Mary's, 40 services at a crematorium)

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex officio, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. St Barnabas Church is represented on the PCC by up to 5 members elected by their own church meeting.

Committees

The PCC operates through a Standing Committee and working groups, which meet between full meetings of the Council. The Standing Committee is the only Committee required by law; it has power to transact business of the Council between meetings, subject to any decisions made by the PCC.

FINANCE REPORT

Report to the Accounts December 2020

St Mary's General Account (day to day running of church activities) shows a surplus of expenditure over income of £9,368 which after taking account of the surplus of £3,567 at the start of the year gives a negative balance of £5,081

The St Barnabas General Account shows a net loss of £2,052 in 2020 and a positive balance of £541 at the end of the year.

Incoming resources from donors to St Mary's (collections/stewardships/tax reclaims & donations) were £13,600 lower in 2020 than in 2019.

We again managed to pay the Parish Share (our contribution to the diocese for clergy stipends, housing and pensions) in full. The Parish Share was set at £95,377 in 2021 the same as in 2020. This means we have to make 12 equal payments of £7,869 each month (after deduction of the 1% rebate for payment by direct debit)

The intention to launch an appeal and attract grants to enable repairs to roof, floor and organ and improvements to the Meeting Room and kitchen had to be put on hold because of the pandemic as priority shifted to meeting the Parish Share. The pandemic also reduced the value of investments by about £5000 (to 252,980) and affected our ability to hold fundraising events for missions.

The need to increase Stewardship giving is now urgent, especially if we are to meet the running costs of both churches and pay the Parish Share again in full in 2021. If

anyone is thinking of increasing their Stewardship payments during 2021, please feel free to come to speak to any of the churchwardens or a member of the clergy.

We have a small team maintaining the books and banking the cash - Ann Watts at St Mary's and Bernie Ellison at St Barnabas. Particular thanks go them and to Peter Harvey Di Gioia who provided invaluable support before moving away to Newark. Appointment of a replacement as Treasurer is a priority for 2021.

Tax Avenue have been appointed to examine the accounts which have been converted to a take advantage of QuickBooks software.

Investments and Fund Structure

There have been no changes to the structure of the St Mary's PCC investment funds during 2020.

There follows a brief description of the history, management and restrictions of each of these PCC managed funds.

Curates Housing and Expenses (formerly known as the Hatherley} Fund

The capital arose from the sale of a house given to the Church in 1935 for a succession of curates to live in. The PCC has a 29.4% share of the rent after deduction of expenses on a property in Station Road which was let by the Diocese as it was not required to house a curate. The income is applied for general parish purposes and so is **unrestricted**. The first call on any surplus income is the payment of curate / clergy expenses.

Thatcham Church of England Charity

The original capital arose from two-thirds of the sale proceeds of the Old Infant School in the Broadway; one-third is administered separately by the Diocesan Board of Education.

This charity is governed by a Charity Commission Scheme sealed on the 21st May 1980; the clear income from the permanent endowment is for furthering the religious and other charitable work of the Church of England in the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary's Thatcham and is therefore an **unrestricted** fund. All the income is applied in the parish.

The Church Estate Charity

Charity Commission ref – 00436

This is an ancient charity referred to in the Charity Commissioners Report of 1907; the income is to be applied to the upkeep of the church and the churchyard so this is a **restricted** fund.

Income is derived partly from investments and partly from 6/16ths of the income from Moor Meadow Charity, administered by Thatcham Parochial Charities.

The Rookery Church Fund

The small amount of income arising from the legacy by Mrs Hall who died in 1916, subject to the income being **restricted** to the fostering of the Sunday school. The Rookery was the name of the house.

Bankers: St Mary's PCC - Lloyds Bank plc & St Barnabas - HSBC

Independent Examiners: Tax Avenue, Turnfields Court,

Thatcham Investment Managers:

BlackRock Investment Managers, 12 Throgmorton Avenue London
EC2N 2DL
CCLA, Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4ET

A summary of the Accounts together with the Independent Examiner's Report is attached at Appendix 2.

Stewardship Secretary's Report – St Mary's.

A total of £ 66,750 was given through the Stewardship Scheme in 2020 (£68,063 in 2019). This included £21,863 through the Parish Giving Scheme following its introduction in September 2018. Giving through weekly envelopes was 9,069 and standing order payments were £24,380. In addition £14,661 was reclaimed from HMRC (£16,587 in 2019).

By the end of 2020 there were 23 donors paying by Direct Debits through the Parish Giving Scheme. 27 donors were supplied with weekly envelopes (4 were not used -2 because of transfers to PGS). However whilst some of the givers using envelopes continued to find ways of using them many found the lack of regular services broke the routine of regular giving. 58 donors gave through Standing Orders.

Great thanks are due to the faithful members of the Stewardship Scheme who by regular and sacrificial levels of giving keep St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches going.

Please continue to review your giving at least annually – index linking is a principle worth considering. Occasional donations are greatly welcomed, but commitment to regular giving is essential if we are to budget for paying for our priests through the Parish Share, maintain the fabric and support sustainable growth of the church in Thatcham.

'Donate' facilities have been incorporated into the website for St Mary's.

I continue to positively recommend the Parish Giving Scheme to all regular givers. Over half the Dioceses in England have joined and together they cover the costs of the small administrative team based at Gloucester Diocese. All the remainder is paid direct to the relevant parishes by the 10th of each month and gift aid is claimed from HMRC and distributed to parishes about three days later. This significantly reduces costs and administration at the local level. Other bonuses are

- the donations can be index linked if the donors so choose, and
- the donations are paid as a single sum to the parish bank account thus avoiding the checking of multiple pages on Bank Statement entries, and
- it reduces the bank charges (currently about £25 per month) for handling cheque or cash donations.

I would again encourage everyone to make a will and to consider making a bequest to St Mary's. It is not difficult to arrange and can make a significant difference to the future of a growing church in Thatcham.

Chris Watts
Stewardship Secretary

Child Protection/Safeguarding report

Know your Safeguarding Team:

Leanne Cox - Safeguarding Lead, Safeguarding Officer for children and young people, Children's Advocate for St Mary's Church and Verifier. I oversee the safeguarding team, report to the PCC, link to the Diocese and keep records of risk assessments.

Ann Dibble – Safeguarding Officer for Vulnerable adults and the Safeguarding Training Administrator. Responsible for recording everyone's completed training and informing them when they need to renew their training.

Sue Ball – Safer Recruitment. Responsible for the appointing process, especially for youth and children workers, making sure they have the correct paperwork. Recording everyone's DBS checks and informing them when they need renewing.

Cath Forbes – Children's Advocate for St Barnabas.

Steve Rice & Leanne Cox – Verifiers – initiates the DBS process and checks documents of applicants.

There has been one safeguarding case this year which was referred to the Oxford Diocese Safeguarding Team. Rev Mark and Leanne Cox know the details, and this is now a closed case.

During lockdown I have been busy on Zoom, meeting other safeguarding officers in the diocese and also meeting the Oxford Diocese Safeguarding Team. It was lovely to come together with other parishes to discuss safeguarding updates, explore new areas of learning and how to respond to safeguarding concerns. I have also completed a Domestic Abuse Course. I have another one in September to discuss some new types of abuse that have just been identified such as Gas Lighting and Spiritual Abuse – training on these will follow in the future.

In every PCC meeting we make sure that safeguarding is on the agenda and ask if anyone has any concerns. I also started to revise signs and symptoms of certain types of abuse to keep it fresh in everyone's minds.

The Safeguarding Policy has been updated to include taking steps to protect children on the online world and using videos safely in lockdown. Risk assessments are currently all being updated for all children's groups.

Hopefully the Safeguarding Team can meet up again in person to review and work through the Safer Church Action Plan to make sure we are providing a safe and caring environment in our places of worship.

Leanne Cox

ABC during a pandemic!

ABC held its last face to face meeting on 11th March 2020. The notice to close to comply with government regulations due to Covid-19 went out on a Tuesday so I thought I had better turn out for ABC the next day just in case people had not heard.

And, sure enough a family turned up, so we had a few minutes together before saying our farewells until we knew not when.

I'm glad I did that because a few people came to church just to sit and pray and think about things. Just at that point we had not heard of social distancing and all the rest of it and certainly had not realised the severity of all that was about to unfold.

Although we haven't met in person for ABC for over a year we've kept in touch via email and Facebook. An email is sent round every week and Helen Cooke puts most of it on our ABC Facebook page – thank you Helen!

The email contains the story we would have shared together if we had been in St Mary's. Attached is a colouring sheet and a link to an online craft coupled with a photograph of Jason our favourite storytelling sheep dressed as a character from the story. He's sometimes helped by his friend Little Tom.

We also send round other relevant church news including Connect when it becomes available. We offer a listening ear and the opportunity to come into St Mary's for a prayer appointment. Several people have been in touch to keep us updated with their news.

The highlight of my daily walks has been when I have bumped into members of ABC past and present so we can catch up and share how we've been feeling – socially distanced of course!

We had the pleasure of seeing one or two ABC families on Christmas Eve as they came into church to light a candle. Many more families enjoyed the Nativity Trail painted by Thatcham Park school children and teachers. There were QR codes attached to the nativity boards which could be accessed using a Smart phone. Several ABC families past and present starred in the nativity videos contained within the codes, along with music and a telling of the Christmas story. Not quite the same as our traditional crib service but a very imaginative way of working within government guidelines – well done Nicola for all your technical expertise, creativity and encouragement!

The nativity boards were placed in the church yard by the site controller at Thatcham Park and a couple of church members, John from St Barnabas and Paul from St Mary's. A real sense of collaboration between both churches and school.

Lockdown has made us all more creative, and I hope we've done our best to help people through it.

We are very much looking forward to being able to meet in person in the meantime we continue via Facebook and email.

Brenda Harland

Children and Young People @ St Mary's 2019

Groups for young people are held on 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month during the school year. We meet during the 10.00 am communion service in the meeting room. We aim to provide an enjoyable atmosphere where young people can learn the teachings of the bible at their own pace.

Our material is aimed at ages 5-11 years and we study the bible through craft,

prayer and games. Time is spent discussing the story and thought given to how the teaching applies to our daily lives.

Pathfinders

(11 – 14+ years)

Due to Covid restrictions young people's groups and Pathfinders have not met since 16th March 2020.

We look forward to seeing our young people in church and welcoming them back to their groups soon.

Helen Holman

Music at St. Mary's

Last year, I reported that our organ was very poorly. Unfortunately, I don't think that the enforced rest this year will have helped with its problems. Like most things, the organ and choir have been redundant for most of the year.

We have tried to keep in touch doing what we love. In July, we made our first foray into the land of digital and virtual choirs (sound only – none of could face the idea of videoing ourselves). The idea was to sing along and record on Zoom, from our own homes, to a backing track supplied by Tim. Some of the choir managed it but most didn't. Recording your own voice part alone at home does not do it justice and in fact it can sound awful. Not good for the ego. However the end result, after some clever electronic linking by John Hicks, was not too bad, but it wasn't good enough to encourage us to repeat the experiment.

Instead, later in the year when we were able to meet in the church in groups of 6, we arranged for two sessions a week to enable us to record as many hymns and anthems as we could to cover services for Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. All the way through October and November five of us plus Tim recorded items on Fridays which were then relayed to a further group of six on the following Wednesday who added their voices to the original recording. A big thankyou to Mat Evans for managing all the recordings and to Tim for his excellent accompaniment.

The donation of a really good amplifier and speaker system (many thanks to the anonymous donor) meant that we could create a reasonable sound in order to support the outside services which took place throughout October. November services were accompanied live by Tim and six choir members. A small group of singers also managed to sing carols live in early December around streets in the town centre. We were part of a Churches Together and Town Council initiative to bring some Christmas cheer to Thatcham residents. This worked well and may be repeated this year.

Our recordings also came in useful for some Civic occasions. We supplied all the hymns for the Remembrance Service live streamed from the Memorial and Christmas carols for the turning on of the lights.

The highlight and real privilege felt by some of the choir and Tim was being able to come together in the church to support the live streamed service on Christmas

morning. That was the last opportunity we had to be together, albeit a small choir and no live congregation and we now really cannot wait to get back to singing for you all.

Viv Druce

St Barnabas Church

What a strange year in the life of our church! At the start of all of this none of us foresaw that one year in we would be celebrating our second Easter apart. There have been big challenges for us all but also moments of real hope. A huge highlight was Angela joining us as curate in July and she, along with her family, have already brought so many good things to our community.

In this report I'd like to highlight a few of these things as we look back and also reflect on all that is to come.

Services

In the last year the majority of our services have been online via either our podcast or on Zoom. Our music group has recorded fresh music for us regularly (they have at least an album's worth of material now!) and our worship together has evolved over this time.

There have been people we have really missed who haven't been able to join us online or in person this year as they seek to keep safe. There have also been new people that have joined us that have encouraged us and brought new life through this difficult time. At times we have been able to be back in person and have been tremendously grateful to the school for allowing us to meet there when restrictions allowed.

For me the spirit of St B's is that we know we are a church and a community wherever we are. Meeting in a community building gives us a sense that we are a community without walls, that we are church wherever we are. Lockdown hasn't changed that but nonetheless, we really do miss each other!

Small Groups

Our small groups have continued to meet this year including a new online study group that looked at the Creeds and now are studying Mark's gospel together. We also produced a series of Podcasts on Christian basics which we have been sharing through our new Instagram feed. Instagram has been a fruitful way for us to connect with others in our community during this time when we are missing the face-to-face interactions that our usual groups and activities bring.

Supporting the School

A huge part of our community life is, of course, that we meet within Thatcham Park School and we always seek to be a blessing to that community. This year we have gone online in our support, initially through weekly videos for home schooling families and later into weekly assembly videos to be used in class. We've also led class sessions via Zoom on topics such as Forgiveness and the Easter story. It is a real delight to see the children, even if only through a screen!

At Christmas we enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with the school in the form of our Nativity Trail. The school created some truly stunning painted boards to tell the Christmas story which were accompanied by a QR code telling the story with actors from our ABC Toddler group past and present. It was encouraging to see that even under big restrictions we can still work together in creative ways.

Supporting Families, Parents and Babies

One of the significant pieces of outreach we have been part of this year, and one that we hope to see grow in the coming year, is our outreach to families and particularly new parents. Over Christmas we launched a campaign to collect supplies for the West Berkshire Baby Bank and had a great response.

In October we led activities for the Baby Loss Awareness Week including the memory tree in St Mary's Churchyard. That week truly showed how far the impact of baby loss goes, through the ribbons on the tree and those who attended our open church evening and lit a candle. We hope to continue to raise awareness and offer support for baby loss this coming year.

Dreaming New Dreams

None of us really know what life will look like, or what our community will be like on the other side of this Pandemic. What we do know is that God has so much more for our community and we have been seeing glimpses of this during this time. In this coming year we have two new projects, dreamed up in lockdown, that we will be embarking upon.

The first of these is to launch a Baby Café to support new parents. Having a baby during this pandemic has been tremendously challenging and isolating for many. The baby café will be a safe space for parents to come with their new baby; find support, friendship and a big slice of cake! We have received full funding for our project from the Diocese of Oxford Development Fund so we will be beginning very soon.

Our second project, dreamed up after seeing how enthusiastically outdoor worship was received during the pandemic, is Muddy Church. In the coming year we will be launching a new monthly service down at the Nature Discover Centre for families to connect with God, with nature and with each other. Every session will feature storytelling and a range of seasonal activities – and, of course, mud! We're very excited for this new opportunity and collaboration with the Nature Discovery Centre.

And so the future may be unknown but we are optimistic and hopeful that this next chapter in the life of St B's will be a great one.

Nicola Hulks

Deanery Synod Report

Thatcham Parish is part of the Newbury Deanery – a group of parishes in West Berkshire running as far as Hungerford and Lambourn and up to Compton and The Ridgeway. In some recent documents the Deanery has described itself briefly as follows:

Newbury Deanery covers some 105 square miles of the western part of West Berkshire. It includes the urban centres of Newbury and Thatcham, the market town of Hungerford and an extensive rural hinterland. The eleven

benefices (roughly speaking groups of churches overseen by a single priest) encompass 36 parishes ranging in population from over 25,000 to under 100, together with 42 church buildings, and one church which has no building of its own. There are 15 paid clergy in the Deanery and three House for Duty Posts (unpaid clergy) – not counting curates in training.

The Deanery is an administrative unit of the Church of England which is part of its structure of “synodical government” – the way the Church makes decisions about its internal workings where they affect more than a single parish. Traditionally the Deanery has had two functions – (the money function) allocating the parish share which pays for the clergy and support costs (just under £1million for Newbury Deanery) and then collecting it; and (the people function) negotiating the deployment of clergy at a time when clergy numbers nationally have been declining. More recently the people function has been developed into a more positive mode of mission planning – actively supporting parishes and their people to meet the common challenges we face. The Newbury Deanery Synod also maintains a link with the South African parish of Batlharos in the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman.

The Deanery is run by the Deanery Synod. Like the PCC this is a mixture of clergy and elected lay members, but in the Deanery case the members represent the different parishes. The Deanery Synod elects a standing committee and appoints officers to act as an executive, and to progress the various aspects of its work. It may also receive requests from the Diocese of Oxford or from the National Church to respond to matters of interest – this happened with the legislation on women becoming bishops. The Deanery Synod can also raise matters of concern and ask for these to be addressed at a Diocesan or national level.

2020 was the final year of a four year term for elected lay members.

A sincere vote of thanks was extended to all Parishes that did their best to meet their 2020 Share allocation. In aggregate, the Deanery paid 93.6% of the total requested by the Diocese – a shortfall of £61,635.

This was slightly greater than the 5% shortfall that was anticipated at the October Deanery Synod. 21 Parishes paid their Share in full, and 8 Parishes managed to pay part of their allocation. For the first time in many years, the Deanery did not qualify for the full 3% rebate on meeting its allocation in full. We did, however, meet 50% of our allocation by 31st July which earned a rebate of 1%.

The Deanery focus continues to be on discerning local needs and on responding to Bishop Steven’s Common Vision initiatives.

Thank you for your support for Mary, Tony and myself who have served as representatives over the last three years and to Catherine Forbes who has joined the team.

Chris Watts

St. Mary's Church Bellringers

Following ringing for Christmas 2019 and New Year Ringing 2020, Bell Founders John Taylor and Co. arrived, as planned to carry out some relatively minor maintenance items, to the rope pulleys and new bearings to bell numbers 7,8,9 & 10. The work was carried out very efficiently within one week, with assistance from Richard Marshall and Mark Backhouse. Although we missed one Tuesday night practice, the bells were rung on the Sunday before and after the work commenced.

The cost of £6,620 plus vat was met from funds held by the PCC for bell maintenance.

We rang two quarter peals in February as our contribution to the Newbury Branch Quarter Peal Week.

I had a minor operation in January and did not return to ringing until March, just before the first lockdown. My thanks to Rachel Backhouse for running the ringing during my absence. With the ringing room small and poorly ventilated, and following discussion with Revd. Mark, it has not been possible to return to general ringing during the remainder of the year.

However, on Saturday 15 August, the tenor bell was tolled 75 times as part of the Royal British Legion Remembrance Service for VJ Day. The tenor was tolled again in November on Remembrance Sunday and Remembrance Day, 11 times on these occasions. My thanks to Mark Backhouse for carrying out these Acts of Remembrance.

In August, we were all shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden death of Di Bridle, a regular Sunday Service and practice night ringer at St Mary's. She was a very competent ringer and made a much valued contribution to our ringing here, in the Newbury Branch and further afield. She will be greatly missed by us and many other ringers..

On a happier note, Margaret Robinson, our previous Tower Secretary for 14 years' celebrated her 80th birthday on 16 April. As is customary at St Mary's, Margaret was given an engraved table bell. Unfortunately with strict lockdown rules in force at the time, it was not possible to present the bell personally to Margaret and so it was sent by Royal Mail Special Delivery with our best wishes.

Bill Butler, who had fallen and broken his hip earlier in the year, became 90 on 7 August. With lockdown restrictions relaxed, Sue and I made a socially distanced visit to Bill in his garden to present him with two plants and a Waitrose token for "wine, cheese or anything you fancy" on behalf of the ringers.

A number of ringers made individual socially distanced garden visits in the following days to wish him well.

We are currently, awaiting further information and guidance on how and when it may be possible to resume ringing.

Tony Smith
(Tower Captain)

Churchwardens

Special arrangements were required in 2020 to enable local incumbents to ensure the incoming churchwardens were properly 'charged' with their responsibilities. This took place at St Mary's in November 2020 at the first opportunity following the postponed Annual Meeting held using ZOOM on 8th October.

Particular thanks go to Viv Druce and Glenn Peters who stood down after periods of valuable service and to Paul Bullock and Colin Waters who have both returned to the ranks of churchwardens

If you are new to the Anglican Church you may not know that the wardens are the eyes and ears of the Bishop in the parish. They have an obligation to ensure that the

Rector and Clergy are doing as they ought (they most certainly are), that the business of the church is running satisfactorily (better than might be expected under the circumstances) and that the fabric is in good order (oh dear ! see below). They are also tasked to keep the congregation in order !

All three of the wardens with Mark are trustees for the Thatcham Almshouse and Thatcham Relief in Need Charities, working with other agencies to help those people in our community who have fallen on hard times or with health and disability issues.

We have a faithful band of people working in the background (and in a few cases obliged to remain in post during the pandemic) as cleaners, servers, gardeners, sidespeople, coffee makers, pew removal and replacement, assisting at services, singers, little church providers, providers of home communions, hospital visitors....and many more jobs. The church would not function without them. If you feel that you would like to contribute to God's work in any way, all help is welcome regardless of how little you are able to do. Please get in touch with me or Ann the Parish Administrator or indeed Sue Stevenson who maintains the rota.

Chris Watts

Fabric

In summary the log of work by contractors and volunteers to the fabric of St Mary's includes:

- Spring and autumn clean and clear
- Monitor water/tree damaged areas to north nave wall and Pathfinders Room and the south west corner of the Meeting Room
- Test lightning conductor
- Test and service Fire Extinguishers
- Service heating boilers
- Tune and minor repairs to organ (noting the Choir manual is not operational)
- Replacement of five floodlights around the tower with LED lamps

Minimal progress has been made on the project to repair the organ as priority had to be given to pandemic issues.

The PCC's architect, Christian Randall of Wantage submitted his first five yearly report on the state of the fabric in 2018. He listed the regular concerns of clearing gutters and repairs to rainwater downpipes, repairs to stonework and flint facing and ivy on the tower. In addition he noted:

- the need to address the repair of the roof and valley gutter to the western end of the north aisle and above the Pathfinders Room
- significant dampness and deterioration to the plaster on the external walls to north and south aisles,
- damaged floor tiles and 'subsidence' to the central and northern aisles
- rotting of timber thresholds to both north doors.
- a series of minor repairs to stonework

Attention to these items was recommended within 18 months. In addition improvements are required to the Meeting Room and kitchen. An Appeal has yet to be launched for funds to cover the cost of the organ and building repairs, totally refurbished kitchen complying to current building and health and safety regulations

and further improvements to Meeting Room and storage. A Fundraising Group has not been able to make progress due to the pandemic.

Thanks are again due to Chris Druce, Paul Bullock and also to Mark Backhouse for help with general repairs and lower level lamp replacements, to Marion and a team of dedicated gardeners for work on the flower borders, to Rita for polishing the brass and to all who regularly clean, arrange the flowers and maintain the brassware.

Chris Watts

Inventory

Four panels depicting the Nativity were prepared by Thatcham Park School and St Barnabas and displayed in a Churchyard Trail over Christmas 2020. The panels are stored on the gallery. 10 crosses were constructed for a Holy Week trail in 2021. The panels and crosses are to be stored on the gallery.

The Meeting Room clock has been replaced.

The Inventory now includes the amplifier / speaker referred to by Viv in her report on Music.

Chris Watts

Sewing group and Flowers.

The Sewing Group has not met but continues to sew as required. As well as making linen items for use at communion we also repair items and alter the length of choir robes when the user changes or grows. We have been given over time lots of fabrics, lace, and other sewing needs and these we use to create items for the craft sale and raffle usually in November but in 2021 at the Annual Meeting. Please feel free to visit us in the chapel at 2pm when we can get back to normal, and join in if you wish even if all you can do is tacking!

Marion and friends.

There are now a lovely group of flower arrangers with many differing talents all of which are welcomed and encouraged. Display were created for Christmas and Easter and the rota for Sundays will restart soon.

Marion and team.

Little Churches, Home Communions.

"Little Churches"

The 'Little Churches ' will start again soon when regulations allow.

These churches are made up of people who live in the residential / sheltered housing in Thatcham. Communion is offered along with readings, a short bible verse and narrative and prayers. Some services also have one of two hymns and each is usually accompanied by refreshments either before or after the service. Usually held on a Saturday morning, the service the exact time varies from location to location. Visits will be made to: Nevil Court, Ferndale Court, Gilbert Court, Walnut Close and Thatcham Court. This service provides a lifeline to those who are unable to attend a traditional Sunday service or simply prefer the informal setting of a common lounge.

Nothing would happen without the faithful dedication of a handful of volunteers for whom I thank on behalf of the Clergy. If anyone is interested in helping out should speak to any of the clergy team.

West Berkshire Community Hospital

When permitted we will resume the practice of meeting each Sunday afternoon at 1:45, for a short service of Holy Communion at the hospital. Volunteers from St. Mary's and other churches in Thatcham and Newbury give up their time to sit with patients and other visitors. The service lasts about 40 minutes and over the years numbers increased significantly. It was not uncommon to have 10 patients attend. Each one is looked after. In some cases, it may be the only time a patient will be able to interact with other people as sadly, some patients receive no visitors at all. The valuable outreach is only possible because of the volunteers who make it happen.

My personal thanks go to Joan Collins and Margaret Holmes for their commitment to this vital ministry.

If you feel able to give up an hour or so every now and again, please come and find me.

Steve Rice

C.A.M.E.O. Come and Meet Each Other

CAMEO started in January 2014 with the aim of a weekly meeting place to bring together people in Thatcham who live on their own, who feel lonely after bereavement, or are unable to get out, to come together to make friends, and chat over homemade cake and a cuppa.

Since those early days the group grew substantially and was self funded with the introduction of a weekly raffle. Joan, Viv, Ann and myself, along with three drivers volunteered to serve the group and our reward was to see CAMEO flourish. The number of people coming rose to over 40, but they did not come every week. Cakes and tea were served during the afternoon, mostly home baked cakes, although on special occasions we buy doughnuts and they go down very well!

The process of restarting CAMEO will begin as soon as the restrictions are lifted.

Meanwhile we continue to collect milk bottle tops for The Thames Valley Air Ambulance charity with bags of tops appearing in church from around the parish! Over £110 has been raised from milk bottle tops. **Only milk bottle tops please.**

pp Theresa Lucas

The Thatcham Parochial Charities

I wrote a report on the Charities last year, as an introduction as to who we are and what we do in the local community. The Charities play a significant role in the life of our church. The rector and all three churchwardens are ex officio members of the Board of Trustees and I (Chris Druce) am currently a representative of Thatcham Town Council and Chairman of Trustees.

There are 2 principal charities – the 'Thatcham Parochial Almshouse Charity' and 'Thatcham Relief in Need Charity'. We cover the area of the 'Ancient Borough of Thatcham', encompassing modern Thatcham, together with Cold Ash, Midgham and

Greenham. The trustees have a wide remit of responsibility, covering various needs of our local community.

The Almshouses – The first almshouses in Thatcham were established by Thomas Loundyes, in 1446 AD. Some of the present almshouse flats, in Chapel Street are named after him. To qualify for accommodation, applicants should be ‘of a certain age’, a resident in the Ancient Borough and can demonstrate a housing need. All flats are currently occupied. As you can imagine, this year has had special calls upon the trustees, to ensure the continuing health and well-being of all our residents. The clerk’s regular visits were initially replaced by weekly telephone calls, until doorstep visits could resume. Maintenance work needed to be reduced to essential work only, with contractors wearing necessary PPE and any non-essential work put on hold. Hand sanitizer stations and information signage was installed in all properties and additional cleaning in communal areas was introduced. Fortunately, there was no major outbreak of virus in any of the properties.

Relief in Need Charity –

The object of this charity is to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the Ancient Borough, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress, by making grants of money or providing items or services to reduce that need.

As with the Almshouse Charity, this year had very special needs for our local community and Relief in Need was very much ‘Open for Business’. During this year, the charity awarded grants in excess of £22,000. This is the highest value since 2007, the year of the floods! This included £7,500 to a local, Coronavirus appeal fund, which was match-funded by local charity, Greenham Trust. A further grant was awarded to a local youth hub, specifically to help young people with problems during the epidemic. And, of course, there were the normal requests for white goods, flooring and specialist equipment for those with disabilities.

So, you can see, it has been an eventful year. Lockdown does not mean that everything stops !!

If you know of anyone who may need a helping hand, a piece of equipment otherwise unaffordable, do, please, have a word with me, Mark, or one of the churchwardens.

Thankyou – Chris Druce

House Groups

Thursday group has not been meeting over the past year, but I think we all miss our weekly natter and look forward to meeting ‘Face to Face’ when we can. The dynamics of the group will change when we get back together so we will be at a good point to welcome new people who would like to give ‘House Group’ a go.

Julie Dunwell

Wednesday house group has attempted a mixture of approaches, over the last months and we are hoping to return to some kind of structured learning, in May; at home or at St. Mary’s.

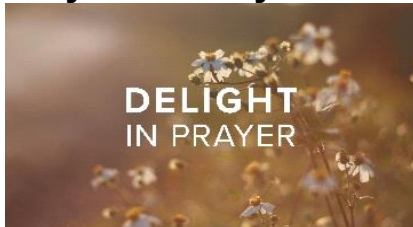
During the last lock down we met via Zoom for informal chats and support. We had a new adventure lead by Ben Hulks, who was part of Wednesday house group. It takes place on Tuesdays at 7.30 and has all along been a structured

learning/discussion time. A different day and Zoom has worked really well for this group!

Lourdes Cottam

Further details on the website or from the Parish Office

Prayer Ministry at St. Mary's



This year we have been praying in our homes, on our walks, on the phone and video calls, in fact wherever we have safely been whilst we haven't been able to pray with people in person.

Sue Stevenson.

MISSIONS



Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

This year has obviously been a difficult year for fundraising with the pandemic. However, we have kept going as well as we could online, and we did manage to raise a magnificent £1243 in 2019/20 (the Christian Aid financial year runs from October to September). We have held a Zoom Quiz and Zoom Bingo, as well as an online AGM. As I write this, in March, we have already raised £1360 this year, and have Christian Aid week to come (May 10th to 16th).

So we are incredibly grateful to all our supporters in Thatcham, not least those who have donated from St Mary's. You have been incredibly generous.

However, this compares with about £4000 that we raised in 2018/19, and this drop in giving has been replicated across the country. Also, the needs are greater during a pandemic (imagine having Covid in a refugee camp with no running water).

Equally, other needs don't go away, and work with these is continuing - Christian Aid week this year has focused on those suffering from climate change. Droughts are now more frequent and intense due to the climate crisis, and millions of people in

Kenya are struggling to get enough food and water. So Christian Aid has, for example, helped communities to build earth dams, so that when the rains do come they can store the water they need to live.

Sometimes very little giving on our part can make an immense difference. However, we know that this is a difficult time with many calls on our money, and some of us can't afford to give. So if you can't give, please do pray for us. Or consider doing something instead - we are a small committee, and always welcome new members or new fundraising ideas. Please do talk to me, or Mary Baker and Steve Rice (the other Committee members at St Mary's) if you would like to know more.

Lastly, I would like to give thanks to God for all the support you have given us and Christian Aid throughout the year.

Sarah Bennet

Chair, Thatcham Christian Aid Committee

Fairtrade and Traidcraft

The aim of FAIRTRADE is to secure a better deal for farmers and traders in 74 countries around the world. FAIRTRADE was founded by CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Traidcraft, The World Development Movement and The National Federation of Women's Institutes. The Headquarters is in Bonn, Germany.

The key areas of activity are to:

- Provide independent certification of the trade chain for products and licensing of the FAIRTRADE mark on products
- Help in growing demand for FAIRTRADE products and empowering producers to sell to traders and retailers.
- Work with their partners to support producer organisations and their networks.
- Raise awareness of the need for FAIRTRADE with the public.

The organisation has 1,5 million farmers/workers and 1210 FAIRTRADE certified producer organisations. 25% of all FAIRTRADE workers are women. Products are sold by all 5 of major UK supermarkets and over £23 FAIRTRADE premium is generated from sales in the UK.

FACTS:

- A typical poor family in a poor country spend 70% of its income on food.
- Small holder farmers grow 70% of the world's food but make up half of the world's hungriest people.
- 1.4 billion people in the developing world live in poverty, 300 million children go to bed hungry every day.
- The richest 85 people in the world have more wealth than the poorest half of the world
- FAIRTRADE promote better education and healthcare.

Typical products include: tea, coffee, sugar, sweets, pasta, biscuits, cleaning products, home products, fashion products, toys and stationery.

A stall selling a limited range of food products begin again in the Meeting Room every 2nd Sunday each month when Services resume. Products can be ordered from the TRAIDCRAFT catalogue.

Relan Clarke

Children's Society

Collecting boxes at St Mary's and St Barnabas are used to support the Children's Society in this parish. £40 was sent to the Society in 2020. Collecting boxes are available for anyone wanting to support the Society in its work with children.

The money goes to help the Society and its network of centres and projects to deliver specialist services for children who face disaster and danger in their daily lives; children who are unable to find the support they need elsewhere.

If anyone would like to take on the organisation of events for the Society, please speak to Ann Watts or any of the Churchwardens

Ann Watts

USPG

USPG is working with the Anglican Church in Zambia to develop healthcare and leadership programmes that will have an impact on the life and outreach of the church and community. Support was given for training of specialists at the Hospital of St Francis at Katete in Zambia.

£719 was given to US in 2020 thanks largely to Cream Teas in the churchyard.

If you would like to help, please speak to Ann Watts (864567) to arrange for a collecting Globe.

Ann Watts

West Berks Foodbank



At the start of the Covid pandemic the Foodbank rapidly changed its operational processes when all Foodbank Centres closed to clients in line with Government guidance. From seeing clients face to face, food parcels were delivered direct to clients' homes by a new army of volunteers, many of whom were recruited from people on furlough from their usual jobs.

Thatcham parish has continued to support the Foodbank with donations whenever possible and in various ways. St Mary's became a focal point for the wider community's generous response at Harvest Festival and to the Reverse Advent Calendar scheme in December. Many people continued to donate in the supermarket permanent collection boxes or they arranged a home collection via the Foodbank's newly formed 'Food on your Doorstep' initiative. This idea of leaving donations on the doorstep to be collected helped to keep everyone safe whilst maintaining the level of donations needed.

By mid-March 2021 the Foodbank had fed 9589 people – almost twice as many people as in the previous reporting period. This staggering number reflects those who had lost their jobs, businesses folding, becoming ill or being on furlough.

As well as giving food parcels to individuals and families, the Foodbank has also supported schools, other organisations and those temporarily housed in hotels. Meanwhile donations have poured in from supermarkets donating fresh produce to supplement the standard food parcels, from catering organisations forced to shut and villages getting together to co-ordinate collections via social media groups. Many people donated money too.

All of this has enabled the Foodbank to provide the necessary food support to those in need in West Berkshire.

Thank you to everyone.

Sue Stevenson

Rainbows and Rangers (Girlguiding at St. Mary's)



Both of the Girlguiding groups that would normally meet each week at the back of St. Mary's have continued to meet online through Zoom. The Rainbows (5-7 year olds) and Rangers (14-18 year olds) have done all sorts of things from game and crafts to pamper evenings and escape rooms. 'Goody bags' have been sent out to the girls each term with all the craft and activity materials that they need for the online evenings. ... but both the girls and the leaders can't wait until they can meet in person.

If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to help with the Rainbows or Rangers please contact Julie, julie@dunwell.org or if you would like for information www.girlguiding.org.uk/

Connect

Connect, our parish magazine, is published ten times a year, double issues being December/January and July/August. Particular emphasis was made of circulating the magazine on the website and hand delivery on request. The magazine includes news, information and illustrations about services and events in St. Mary's and St. Barnabas. All of our clergy team provide a regular article but more contributors are always welcome. Any articles or adverts to be published can be sent to Steve Rice, steverice1@virginmedia.com, or Julie Dunwell, julie@dunwell.org.

Julie Dunwell

Service Rota Teams

	A much smaller version of the rota has been operating during this year as we all negotiated what churches and their congregations were allowed to do. How blessed we were to be able to hold services in the church grounds during the good weather; many thanks to those who provided an outside PA system and pre-recorded music. Thank you to everyone who coped with differing weather challenges to read the lectionary readings or lead the prayers. During the winter and spring periods our services transferred to Zoom so thanks also to those who volunteered to read and lead prayers for these. Sue Stevenson

St Mary's Church Website

The web site was very active and full of information, announcements and activities. Unfortunately, the pandemic has severely reduced what St. Mary's is able to do and as a consequence the web site has reflected this. As a result of this quieter period the following version controlled documents have been produced or updated to ensure that the management and maintenance of the web site can be transferred to other individuals in the future.

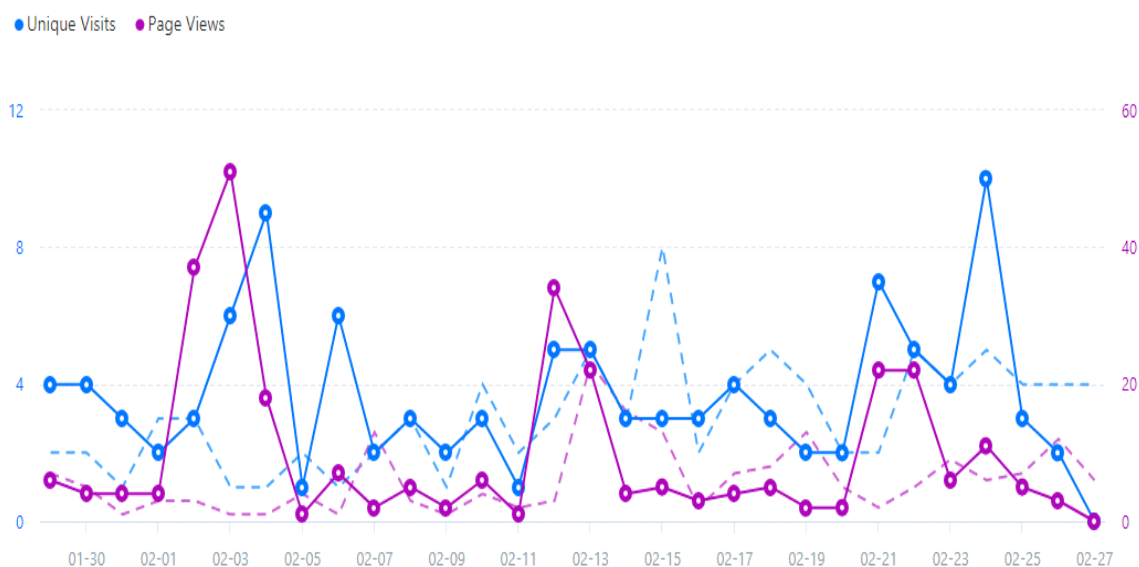
- Domain Name Hosting
- Web Master Job Spec
- Web Site On-Line Contracts
- Web Site User Guide

These documents have all been issued for review.

The contract with Fasthosts for hosting the domain name (stmarysthatcham.org.uk) has been changed and previous costs of around £160 per annum which included the old web site are now £12.59 per year. Similarly, the web site hosting by Weebly has seen a saving of £19 per annum having reduced the annual cost from £58 to £39 per year.

There have been changes to the Weebly web site environment and as a consequence the usage reports and statistics do not have quite the same format as those given at the last APCM. For the month of February 2021 the number of hits and related page views is shown in the graph below. What this plot shows is fairly consistent with much of the activity over the last couple of years. The most likely explanation of the small number pages viewed per visit is a reflection on the ease of use of the web site and how quickly users can find the information that they need.

The previous period (January 2021) is shown as dotted lines.



As lockdown begins to ease, the number of visits to the web site is increasing as shown by the following charts.

Overview

Daily



January 29, 2021 - February 27, 2021



The following tables show the most visited pages and the internet search engines that were used to access St. Mary's web site.

Top Active Pages February 2021		Referring Sites	
Page Name	Views	Referrer	Views
/	60	www.google.com	28
/services.html	19	www.google.co.uk	4
/contact.html	18	www.bing.com	1
/bulletin-connect.html	17	uk.search.yahoo.com	1
/whos-who.html	15	duckduckgo.com	1
/covid19-restrictions.html	14	Google continues to be the major search engine being used to find and access the St. Mary's web site. Although <u>Google.com</u> far exceeds <u>Google.co.uk</u> . It is not possible to determine if these are international searches or just people using <u>.com</u> instead <u>.co.uk</u> .	
/history.html	9		
/electoral-roll.html	9		
/donate-giving.html	9		
/st-barnabas.html	8		

The web site is wholly reliant on its content from all participants who are directly and indirectly involved with St. Mary's and who produce information for general consumption and who organise events. The timely provision of such notices is greatly appreciated and helps to promote the church activities and as can be seen from the tables above, keeps a very wide audience well informed. If there is an announcement to make, then it should be on the web site. Please keep the information flowing.



Minutes of the Thatcham Annual Parish Meeting by ZOOM on Thursday 8th October 2020 commencing at 7.05pm.

Attendance: Revd Mark Bennet (in Chair), Revd Nicola Hulks, Revd Brenda Harland, Revd Leonard Onugha, Revd Angela Brennan, retired priests Ven Michael Harley and Revd John Coombs and 31 residents of Thatcham

Apologies received from: Gay and Tony Collie, Alison Dean, Peter Harvey-Di Gioia, Debbie and Colin Waters, Viv Druce, Pam Hicks and Henry Moffatt.

The Revd Mark Bennet opened the meeting with prayer.

01

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2019 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

02

Election of Churchwardens

Paul Bullock, Colin Waters and Chris Watts were proposed and seconded and elected to serve as Churchwardens for the year 2020/2021

Mark thanked the wardens for their work in the past year and Glenn and Viv for their service over many years.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

.....Chairman

.....date

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held by Zoom on Thursday 8th October 2020, commencing at 7.40 pm.

Attendance: Revd Mark Bennet (in Chair), Revd Nicola Hulks, Revd Brenda Harland, Revd Leonard Onugha, Revd Angela Brennan, retired priests Ven Michael Harley and Revd John Coombs and 31 residents of Thatcham

Apologies received from: Gay and Tony Collie, Alison Dean, Peter Harvey-Di Gioia, Debbie and Colin Waters, Viv Druce, Pam Hicks and Henry Moffatt.

Minutes of the APCM on 9th April 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Matters arising

None

Annual Report

Proceedings of the PCC as summarised in the Report were noted.

Fabric of St Mary's and the Log Book. It was agreed that the logbook for 2019/20 and the amended Inventory be agreed and placed in the records of St Mary's.

Inventory. It was noted that two altar candles presented by Revd Marion Fontaine in memory of Win Easen and blessed by Bishop Steven had been added to the Inventory together with the air conditioning equipment installed to the Ringing Room and Tower Roof in December 2019/February 2020.

The report of the activities of St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches in the past year was presented to the meeting. Following a proposal from Mark Bennet, seconded by Mary Baker, it was adopted unanimously.. Thanks were expressed to all those who contribute to the work in the parish.

It was reported that there were currently 192 names on the Electoral Roll as revised 1st October 2020.

Other matters noted from the Report included:

Mark expressed thanks for the work of all those groups and the individuals responsible for the wide and varied activities recorded in the Annual Report.

In particular, he referred to the work of the Safeguarding team in dealing with the constant stream of requirements, revision to policies and guidance and in keeping up to date the certification people working with children and vulnerable adults. Leanne had prepared a draft annual policy update for the APCM which had been circulated. Attention was drawn to the recognition of concerns regarding 'spiritual abuse'.

The Policy statement for 2020 was approved without dissent.

Presentation of Accounts

Chris Watts presented the accounts as approved by the PCC on 24th February 2020 as amended as recommended in the report and statement of Simon Witcomb the Independent Examiner. He expressed thanks for help received over the year from Peter Harvey Di Gioia, Bernadette Ellison and Ann Watts.

Chris noted that the Parish Share had again been paid in full and within the required timetable thus qualifying for the maximum available rebate. The General Account for St Mary's had shown a surplus of £5,500 for 2019 and a in the cumulative surplus of £3,567 and the General Fund for St Barnabas had shown a surplus of £765 over the year

Proposed by Mark Bennet, seconded by Steve Rice and agreed unanimously that the Accounts for 2019 be approved. The meeting thanked Peter, Bernie, Ann and Chris for their work on the Accounts.

Appointment of Independent Examiners

The Meeting accepted the recommendation that Tax Avenue Accountants of Turnfields Gate, Thatcham be appointed to examine the accounts for 2020

Election of representatives to Newbury Deanery Synod

The meeting received nominations for Antony Collie, Lourdes Cottam, Mary Stagg and Chris Watts to be elected as representative for St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches on Newbury Deanery Synod for the period 2020/4

Election of PCC 2017/8

John Hicks, Leanne Fowler, Bernadette Ellison and Lourdes Cottam were elected to PCC to represent St Barnabas. (Cath Forbes subsequently agreed to substitute for Lourdes Cottam)

Chris Druce, Margaret Holmes, Lynne Starr, Ann Watts had all served 3 years and were due to stand down. Steve Rice had decided to resign from PCC. The meeting accepted the nomination of Viv Druce, Kevin Dunwell, Ann Watts and Emma Watts to membership of the PCC. Chris Druce agreed to allow his willingness to be co-opted as representative of the Social Committee to be referred to the next meeting of the PCC.

In summary the PCC includes

Ex officio members,

The clergy:

Revd Mark Bennet, Revd Nicola Hulks, Revd Brenda Harland, Revd Leonard Onugha and Revd Angela Brennan

Churchwardens:

Paul Bullock, Colin Waters and Chris Watts.

Deanery Synod Representatives for the period to 2020/4.

Tony Collie, Lourdes Cottam, Mary Stagg and Chris Watts

Elected Lay Members:

Christine Rice (2019), Viv Druce (2020), Kevin Dunwell (2020), Ann Watts (2020) and Emma Watts (2020).

Appointed by St Barnabas:

John Hicks, Leanne Fowler, Bernadette Ellison (up to 2 vacancies)

Co-opted members (subject to annual PCC approval):

Treasurer – Peter Harvey-Di Gioia

Safeguarding Officers – Leanne Cox and Ann Dibble

PCC Secretary – Mike Stevenson

Bellringers – Mark Backhouse

Social Committee – Chris Druce

CTiT – (2 vacancies - a representative from each of St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches)

(Giving a total of 24 members with up to 6 vacancies (up to 4 representatives of St Barnabas and 2 representatives to Thatcham CTiT)

Mark thanked all those who have agreed to serve on the PCC from 2020 and expressed thanks to all who had served over the last year.

Rector's Remarks

Mark thanked all who were working for St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches both within the congregations and in the wider community and referred those present to his comments made during consideration of the Annual Report.

Open Forum

It was noted that the newly elected Churchwardens do not take up their duties until given their charge by the Team Rector (under Regulations approved by the Bishop of Oxford under provisions required to prevent the spread of Covid 19).

Mary Baker informed the meeting that £353 had been raised for Christian Aid in connection with the recent AGM. Mary and Sarah Bennet expressed particular thanks for support for Christian Aid in this time of great need.

The meeting also noted with gratitude the tremendous ongoing response to the appeal from West Berkshire Foodbank to mark Harvest celebrations.

The meeting with the Grace at 8.30 pm and was followed by Evening Prayer led by the Team Rector.

..... Chairman Date

The next meeting the PCC was scheduled to take place using Zoom at 7.30pm on Tuesday 20th October 2020.



2020

Thatcham Annual Parish Meeting Annual Report Financial Appendix APCM 18 July 2021

Parish Office
St Mary's Church
Churchgate
Thatcham
RG19 3PN

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THATCHAM TEAM MINISTRY CHARITY**

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity, and a comparison on the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act, and to prepare accounts in accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

M Tabat

Mrs Monika Tabatabaian ATT MAAT
Tax Avenue
Turnfields Gate, Turnfields
Thatcham, Berkshire
RG19 4PT

Date: 28 June 2021

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY'S, THATCHAM, BERKSHIRE**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2020**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from donors	97,391	0	0	97,391	113,696
Other voluntary incoming resources	11,059	0	0	11,059	12,891
Income from investments	2,419	0	0	2,419	6,125
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	20,957	0	0	20,957	27,150
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	131,826	0	0	131,826	159,862
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Grants and Special Collections	2,543	0	0	2,543	2,738
Activities relating to the work of the Church	133,289	3,169	0	136,459	147,004
Church Management and administration	4,084	(1,929)	0	2,155	13,914
Transfers			0	0	0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	139,917	1,241	0	141,157	163,656
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(8,091)	(1,241)	0	(9,332)	(3,794)
Gains on investment assets:					
on disposal	0	0	0		0
on revaluation	(223)	(696)	(3,932)	(4,851)	23,590
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(8,314)	(1,937)	(3,932)	(14,183)	19,796
BALANCES B/FWD 1 JANUARY	32,971	103,532	167,997	304,501	284,705
BALANCES C/FWD 31 DECEMBER	24,657	101,595	164,065	290,318	304,501

Thatcham Team Ministry
Balance Sheet
As of 31 December 2020

	31 Dec 20	31 Dec 19
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Other Current Assets		
2001 · Investment		
47a Station Road	76,339	76,339
2010 · CBF Bell Maintenance 3	24,836	22,761
2020 · CBF Bell Maintenance 2	231	230
2030 · BLK C of E Charity COIF Perp	24,990	26,124
2050 · BLK Organ Fund (Designated)	4,901	5,123
2060 · BLK Organ Fund (Restricted)	36,668	38,331
2070 · Rookery Church Fund	122	119
2080 · Rookery Fund (Lloyds)	147	145
2090 · Thatcham Church Estate	2,964	3,100
2093 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Bond	19,815	19,170
2094 · Thatc02 BR Char UK Equity	61,968	66,413
Total 2001 · Investment	252,980	257,854
Total Other Current Assets	252,980	257,854
Cash at bank and in hand		
1001 · PCC Thatcham		
1002 · General Fund	- 5,081	3,567
1003 · Fabric	35,640	38,724
1004 · Organ (Designated)	- 1,206	-622
1005 · Organ (Restricted)	140	140
1006 · Choir	273	300
1007 · Youth work	- 495	-395
1008 · Curate (Hsg/Expenses)	615	-1,314
1009 · Bell Maintenance	2,848	277
1001 · PCC Thatcham - Other	1,942	0
Total 1001 · PCC Thatcham	34,676	40,679
1050 · St Barnabas	541	3,397
1052 · St Barnabas - Set Up	90	90
2101 · Vicar & Churchwardens Treasurer	1,519	1,867
2102 · Vicar & Churchwardens Instant	867	843
Total Cash at bank and in hand	37,694	46,876
Total Current Assets	290,674	304,730
NET CURRENT ASSETS	290,674	304,730
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	290,674	304,730
NET ASSETS	290,674	304,730
Capital and Reserves		
1010 · Share Capital Account	304,730	304,730
3200 · Unrestricted Net Assets	126	0
Profit for the Year	- 14,182	126
Shareholder funds	290,674	304,856

Thatcham Team Ministry
Profit & Loss
 January through December 2020

3:41 PM

16/02/21

Accrual Basis

Jan - Dec 20

comparison

31/12/2019

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

3000 · General Income

3100 · Donor income

3110 · Service Collections

3111 · Easyfundraising

31

3112 · Goodbox

549

3113 · Petty Cash

-28

3110 · Service Collections - Other

1,895

Total 3110 · Service Collections

2,447

8,774

3120 · Stewardship

3121 · Envelopes

9,069

3122 · PGS

21,863

3123 · Standing Orders

24,380

3124 · Tax reclaimed

14,661

3125 · Donations

10,744

3127 · Share Rebate

1,917

Total 3120 · Stewardship

82,635

95,298

3100 · Donor income - Other

550

3,960

Total 3100 · Donor income

85,632

99,258

3210 · Other voluntary income

3220 · Mission

3221 · Childrens' Society

40

3222 · Christian Aid

0

3223 · USPG

719

Total 3220 · Mission

759

1,497

3230 · St Barnabas - Share

10,300

10,500

3250 · Grants Youth Work

556

Total 3210 · Other voluntary income

11,615

3310 · Investment Income

3315 · Investment Income

457

3310 · Investment Income - Other

1,962

Total 3310 · Investment Income

2,419

2,622

3410 · Charity and Trading

3415 · BRF income

198

3420 · Fees

3422 · Funerals

11,779

3423 · Registrar

16

3425 · Wedding 2020

2,297

3426 · Wedding 2021

1,213

Total 3420 · Fees

15,305

18,598

3427 · Advertisements

337

285

3440 · Mast Rental

5,100

5,100

3450 · Altar Books

18

Total 3410 · Charity and Trading

20,957

26,350

3510 · Building / Equipment Income

3520 · Hall Hire

970

1,285

Total 3510 · Building / Equipment Income

970

3610 · Choir Income

3620 · Choir Fees

160

Total 3610 · Choir Income

160

3710 · St Barnabas income

10,073

Total 3000 · General Income

131,826

141,121

Total Income

131,826

Expense

4001 · General Expense		
4010 · Grants & Special Collection		
4011 · Missions		
4013 · Childrens' Society	40	
4014 · USPG	719	
4015 · Foodbank	120	
4016 · Christian Aid	0	
4017 · Bathlaros	100	
4019 · Other grants	761	
Total 4011 · Missions	<u>1,740</u>	
Total 4010 · Grants & Special Collection	<u>1,740</u>	
4030 · Work of the Church		
4031 · Ministry		
4032 · Parish Share	95,377	94902
4033 · Clergy Expenses	71	1402
4034 · Youth work	727	
4035 · Function & Activities	349	168
4036 · Fees (ODBF)	8,426	9695
4037 · Bank Account Charges	371	521
4038 · BRF expenses	233	
4041 · Curate Training		
4042 · Curate expenses	1,555	
4043 · Curate Housing	-3,484	
Total 4041 · Curate Training	<u>-1,929</u>	
Total 4031 · Ministry	<u>103,625</u>	
4051 · Church running costs		
4052 · Utilities		
4053 · Electricity	1,530	5178
4054 · Gas	2,644	
4055 · Water	109	
4056 · Telephone / Broadband	799	
Total 4052 · Utilities	<u>5,083</u>	
4057 · Insurance	5,096	5087
4058 · Professional Fees	3,820	5100
Total 4051 · Church running costs	<u>13,999</u>	
4061 · Upkeep of Services		
4062 · Altar	52	1365
Total 4061 · Upkeep of Services	<u>52</u>	
6510 · Choir expenses		
6524 · RSCM	107	
6526 · CCLA Copyright	212	
Total 6510 · Choir expenses	<u>319</u>	
Total 4030 · Work of the Church	<u>117,995</u>	<u>123520</u>
4070 · Administration		
4072 · Copier	702	1309
4073 · Stationery	145	1522
4074 · Subscriptions	10	
4076 · Audit	231	231
4077 · Administrator	2,025	4649
4078 · General Admin	67	1367
Total 4070 · Administration	<u>3,181</u>	<u>9363</u>
Total 4001 · General Expense	<u>122,916</u>	<u>135621</u>

5001 · Building Expense	
5020 · Fixed Equipment	
4025 · Organ tuning & minor repair	272
4026 · Organ Appeal & Major Repair	312
Total 5020 · Fixed Equipment	584
5040 · Equipment repair & replacement	1,409
5070 · Projects	
5072 · Electrical - Lights	150
Total 5070 · Projects	150
Total 5001 · Building Expense	2,144
7010 · Bells	
7020 · Projects	
7021 · Air Conditioning	-773
7022 · Bell repair	3,943
Total 7020 · Projects	3,169
Total 7010 · Bells	3,169
8001 - St Barnabas payments	12,125
8002 - St B account correction	804
Total Expense	141,157
Net Ordinary Income	-9,332

Other Income/Expense

Other Income

9000 · Unrealised revaluation	
9001 · revaluation Organ restricted	-1,663
9002 · revaluation Organ designated	-223
9003 · revaluation TCE Charishare	-136
9004 · revaluation Rookery	4
9005 · revaluation CBF Bell Main 3	2,075
9006 · revaluation Thatcha 02 Charinco	645
9007 · revaluation Thatch02 Charishare	-4445
9008 - revaluation Blk Bell Maintenance	-1134
Total 9000 · Unrealised revaluation	-4877
9500 · Interest and dividend	26
Total Other Income	-4851

Profit / Loss for year -14183

Unrestricted funds	Total	General	Organ	Fabric	Youth	Choir	St B
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES							
Incoming resources from donors	97,391	85,632		970	556	160	10,073
Other voluntary incoming resources	11,059	11,059					
Income from investments	2,419	2,419					
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	20,957	20,957					
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	131,826	120,067	0	970	556	160	10,073
RESOURCES EXPENDED							
Grants and Special Collections	2,543	1,740					804
Activities relating to the work of the Church	133,289	118,877		1,559	727		12,125
Church Management and administration	4,084	3,181	584			319	
Transfers	0						
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	139,917	123,798	584	1,559	727	319	12,929
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(8,091)	(3,732)	(584)	(589)	(171)	(159)	(2,856)

Restricted funds	Total	Bells	Hatherley
INCOMING RESOURCES			
Incoming resources from donors	0		
Other voluntary incoming resources	0		
Income from investments	0		
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	0		
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	0	0	0
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Grants and Special Collections	0		
Activities relating to the work of the Church	3,169		3,169
Church Management and administration	(1,929)		(1,929)
Transfers	0		
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	1,241	0	1,241
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	(1,241)	0	(1,241)
TOTAL	(9,332)		

THATCHAM PCC
Year ended 31 December 2020
Assets

	2020	2019
Analysis of current account (Lloyds Bank)		
General fund	(5,081)	3567
Organ (Designated)	(1,206)	(621)
Organ (Restricted)	140	141
Fabric	35,640	38,724
Youth	(495)	(395)
Choir	273	300
Bell Maintenance	2,848	277
Curates Hsg/Expenses (formerly Hatherley)	615	(1,314)
other	1,942	-
St Barnabas (HSBC Acc)	541	3,397
St Barnabas (Set up - HSBC Acc)	90	90
	<u>35,308</u>	<u>44,166</u>
Assets of general funds		
Current account (Lloyds)	35,308	44,166
Charishare (CBF Organ Funds)	41,568	43,454
Charishare (Blk Bell Maintenance)	24,990	26,124
CBF (Bell Maintenance 2+ 3)	25,067	22,761
Total	<u>126,933</u>	<u>136,505</u>
Endowments		
Station Road (Curate Hsg)	76,339	76,339
Charifund (Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Ltd)	81,783	85,584
Rookery	269	264
Church Estate (Blk Bond + Equity / V&C Lloyds)	5,351	5,811
	<u>163,742</u>	<u>167,998</u>
Total assets	<u><u>290,674</u></u>	<u><u>304,503</u></u>

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THATCHAM TEAM MINISTRY CHARITY**

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity, and a comparison on the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act, and to prepare accounts in accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

M Tabat

Mrs Monika Tabatabaian ATT MAAT
Tax Avenue
Turnfields Gate, Turnfields
Thatcham, Berkshire
RG19 4PT

Date: 28 June 2021