



St. Mary's Church Oxted

Annual Report 2023

Knowing Christ

Growing Community, Renewing Heritage

Charity number: 1164439

PCC Members

Ex Officio members

Rev. James Ashton

Team Rector (Chairman) – from 7 January 2020

Austin Copp

Churchwarden – from September 2022

Deanery Synod Representatives

Sue Mallinson *

Diocesan and Deanery Synod

Catharina Hickson

Diocesan and Deanery Synod

Valerie Adamson

Edward Kyte

*Sue Mallinson represents St. Peter's Tandridge on Deanery Synod and is on the electoral roll of St. Mary's , also representing Tandridge Deanery on Diocesan Synod.

Diocesan Synod Representative

Catharina Hickson

Licensed Readers

Sue Mallinson

Co-opted members

Rev. David Weightman

Rev. Ken Robinson

Marian Dalton PCC Secretary

Liz Lane (Clergy)

Katharine Nockles (Safeguarding Officer)

Catharina Hickson (Diocesan Synod)

Valerie Adamson (Deanery Synod)

Elected Members

Martin Fisher 2020 Treasurer and Vice Chairman

Richard Adamson (2023 – 2026))

Natasha Copp (2023-2026)

Katy Aspinwall (2023 -2026)

Alison Murden (2023 – 2026)

Emma Church (2023 - 2026)

Caroline Horsford (2023 -2026)

Len Muir (2023 – 2026)

Xavier Copp (2023 – 2026)

Standing Committee

Rev. James Ashton, Austin Copp, Martin Fisher, Rev. David Weightman, Marian Dalton

Members of the Standing Committee are agreed at the PCC meeting after the APCM. It conducts the business on behalf of the PCC (as directed by the PCC) in between PCC meetings and also sets the agenda for meetings.

Electoral Roll Officer - Paul Shillito

Treasurer - Martin Fisher

Churches Together in Oxted and District - David Cook

Mission Group

David Cook, Valerie Adamson, Ruth D'Alessandro

The Mission Group (joint with St. Peter's) coordinates the links the churches have with the mission organisations the PCC decides to support. This includes donating money from PCC funds; raising awareness of their work; ensuring there is prayer for the work of the charities within services and other church events and encouraging people to pray at other times, inviting people from the charities to speak at services.

Ministry Team

Rev. James Ashton	Team Rector
Rev. David Weightman	Assistant Priest
Rev. Liz Lane	
Sue Mallinson	Reader
Rev. Ken Robinson	Assistant Priest
Mary Cook	Pastoral Visitor

Bank Details : Barclays Bank 20-76-55

PCC StMARYS OXTED General Account: 10688967
Regular Giving Only Account: 00688746

Introduction

2023 saw joys and challenge throughout the wider world; we welcomed a new King for our nation, there was ongoing concern at the cost of living crisis, our Lionesses were, so nearly, world champions, and there was the start of the ongoing violence and turmoil in Gaza and Israel, and the continuation of the painful conflict in Ukraine. We remember these world events, and continue to pray for all involved. In the season of Easter, we recall the empty cross and tomb. We thank God that we are filled; with his love, hope and joy. We thank God that we are filled with the joy of a shared life and worship. It is a real blessing to be part of the St Mary's community, and I trust you find the same blessing as we journey together.

Our ministry team grew during 2023, and we have been blessed with Rev Liz and Rev Judith, who have joined our ministry team as assistant priests. Their commitment to faithful and creative worship and prayer, enhances our team greatly. I am also extremely grateful to Rev David, Sue Mallinson, and Rev Ken for their partnership in the gospel.

My thanks also to Natasha in the Parish Office, who gives us so much as a church, and keeps everything in order; and so much more besides. We also all owe many thanks to Austin, who has carried the position of Churchwarden with hard work and creative leadership – thank you Austin. Thank you also to members of the PCC, who have met regularly to scrutinise, listen and plan for the future.

Our finances continue to challenge us – we have seen a lot of the tower work completed, although this largely came from outside grants. Our day-to-day finances improved slightly during 2023, and we are grateful to all those who continue to support us financially. Many thanks to Martin for leading the finance team again this year.

Thank you to Rod, our organist, and the choir, who ensure that we are well-served musically. The new 'Come & Sing' evenings have been popular, and very welcome. Thank you also to Mira and her team, who have built our youth work here, and across our team ministry. I am also extremely thankful to our Junior Church team – you are all amazing.

During 2023 The_Space became more utilised in our life, and hosted events, gatherings and meals throughout the year. There are too many highlights to mention, but one brilliant example has been the growth and joy of Baby_Space. It started in Spring 2023, and regularly welcomes between 10 and 20 parents with children under 1; they enjoy the friendship and support received at the group. We trust that The_Space will continue to be a wonderful aspect to our life together.

We also continue to work in so many other places in the community. We regularly visit St Mary's School, Tandridge Heights Care Home, Ridgeway Manor and Sycamore Court. These opportunities are an excellent way for us to love our community and be involved.

I commend this Annual Report to you, and all that is contained within. May we pray and work together as a church, as we are filled with the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit of God; always putting the example of Jesus before us.

James Ashton, Team Rector

Churchwarden's Report

The story for 2023 overall very positive with good congregation numbers and the team clergy back to full compliment. The recent inductions of Judith and Sue are really exciting and provide support to James in his new Team Rector role and to the whole ministry team.

I've frequently heard and agree with many comments on the quality of sermons and services and thank the team for the hard work they put into these and all the other aspects of their ministry.

With regard to the physical state and condition of the church, it is a story of old and new. For the lovely old St Mary's building we have seen the completion of part of the Tower work under David Weightman's expert eye. Although the lower section still needs to be done (and will be in the not too distant future), the immediate pressure is off. The next phase is some relatively minor works to the crumbling Porch stonework that should be done later this year.

The new St Mary's Space we have been blessed with has been well used from the start. It continues to host an expanding programme of faith and community events. We are very grateful to those who supported the purchase of the Space financially and with time and effort to refurbish. We are also very grateful to those who organise and staff the events held there and provide the delicious refreshments, which are always a tangible demonstration of God's love.

The upkeep of both buildings is considerable and the cost of this will be covered in more detail in our Treasurer's report. We are thankful to those who regularly give to contribute to these costs and would encourage anyone not doing so and if possible allow us to claim Gift Aid on this.

There are grants available for some works and we have been blessed with several already, and would like to seek out more. We would welcome help from any members who feel they could make the time to complete a Grant Application form or two to increase our chances of securing further funds.

More mundanely, I am pleased to report that the buildings are insured and gas and electrical safety checks are valid as well as fire extinguishers serviced.

Our thanks go to the army of volunteer cleaning parties both regular and occasional teams and also the gardening teams and others who keep the church and grounds looking well. Please look out for the next opportunities as the fellowship of working alongside church members can be a form of worship in itself, or at least the refreshments are heavenly!

Austin Copp Churchwarden

GIFT

Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) is a lively ecumenical group with members from across CTOD churches. We meet during term time to share in a morning of bible study, group discussion, prayer or a social time. We also have occasional visiting speakers or listen to podcasts with a Christian theme. This summer we enjoyed a visit from Vic Stone who told us about her training for Ministry and its challenges. We also heard from Gillian Dickson of Hurst Green Evangelical Church. She spoke of how God has moved to bring about the rebuilding of the church against many apparent challenges.

Regular items in our programme have included listening to a podcast from 'The Archbishop Interviews', in which Justin Welby discusses life and faith with a well-known person such as Tony Blair or John Cleese. We have also studied 'Meeting Jesus in John's Gospel', bible studies concerning the stories of women such as Martha and Mary Magdalene.

This autumn we hosted a four-part course in The Space, investigating the realities of Modern Slavery. This was run by Chris Elliott and Jennifer Hyde of Reigate Archdeaconry Social Justice Focus and was open to all. Each year we also form our own group in the weeks up to Easter to take part in the CTOD Lent Course, which is always thought provoking.

Our final meeting of the year was, as usual, the Christmas Lunch which is held in the home of one of our members and always a fitting Christmas celebration. It is also a chance for purely social fellowship time together. We then take a break for a few weeks, before resuming to plan our next meetings and look forward to another year.

Alison Murden

Parochial Church Council

St. Mary's PCC meets every two months with the agenda being set by the standing committee the week before. All PCC meetings are held jointly with St. Peter's and the meetings are split into two, the first half as a joint meeting and in the second half the two churches divide into their separate groups. The PCC agrees with the treasurer issues regarding finance and how funds should be allocated. In 2023 they agreed St. Mary's donations to the Parish Support Fund and donations to charities. It also agrees how money should be spent on the fabric of the church and recently in particular the renovation of the church tower. At every meeting there is an update on safeguarding and in 2023 the PCC adopted the current safeguarding policy. The Rector always updates the PCC on issues around the clergy team and they discuss how to plan for the big events around Christmas and Easter.

Marian Dalton

Baby Space

Baby Space was launched in April 2023 with the aim of providing parents and caregivers of under 1s with a nurturing environment to connect and build friendships. The_Space was the perfect room to offer a welcoming environment where caregivers could socialise while enjoying tea, coffee, and some lovely homemade cakes!

During the initial weeks, Baby Space attracted between 3 and 5 mothers and their babies. Over time, the attendance numbers have steadily increased, culminating in a record-breaking gathering of 17 parents and their babies.

The success of Baby Space exemplifies the growing need for social support networks for those with young babies. The positive response from the community demonstrates the value of initiatives such as Baby Space in fostering relationships and providing a supportive environment for parents. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who make Baby Space happen, from the set up to cake making, which enables it to run so successfully.

Caroline Horsford

St Mary's Church Choir

We now have 10 regular choir members, recently increased by the admission of James as a very keen and competent treble and Laura has joined the sopranos. On average there are 5/6 singers on any given Sunday at 9.30.

We thank Sheila Bennett for her very loyal and musical service spanning more than 40 years. She has moved away recently and we wish her well. We have several singers from our congregation who join us for weddings, Christmas (including 4 "juniors"), Easter etc. I am most grateful for everyone's support. As St Mary's is also the Parish Church of Oxted, I feel there is an expectation, particularly from visitors, that there is a choir. We have had the privilege of singing, not only at regular services but also at our Remembrance and Memorial services, the Coronation celebration where we joined with St John's, and more recently at James' installation as Team Rector. We had a good team of carol singers at Tandridge Heights and since May 23 we have started meeting in church once a month for a chance to sing hymns and enjoy fellowship. Thank you to Rod, our organist who accompanies us each week.

We are still without a Music Director...please keep looking!.....when the position is filled we may get back to choir practices too.

Mary Cook

Churches Together in Oxted and District 2023

John Tolley has been manfully leading us as Chair and Rev James Ashton has agreed to lead us from our November 2024 AGM. A working group of members from Kings Church, Hurst Green Evangelical Church, URC and St Mary's met to discuss the future direction of CTOD and suggested we work on a less structured basis although no written report was received. In view of our healthy financial situation we decided NOT to ask our member Churches for the usual annual Subscription.

The World Day of Prayer held on the first Friday in March was marked locally by two services:- one in the morning at St. Andrew's on the Chart and one in the evening at St. Peter's, Limpsfield. The services were put together by the Christian women of Taiwan and the committee from the local churches helped to sort out the finer details.

Our 2023 Lent Groups were rather fragmented but about 70 people were involved. One course was "Talking Jesus" which included some interesting videos with examples of sharing our faith with others. Another course was "Walking in the Wilderness". which was more introspective. The ever popular Good Friday Walk of Witness took place on Good Friday 7th April and was organised by Rev Helen Cook of St Peter's Limpsfield

The "Job Club" initiative has continued to help several local people into employment and the Oxted Churches Bereavement support group has been a real benefit to the bereaved.

Our fifth Sunday CTOD services raised £495.95 for the new CTOD Charity the locally inspired Children's Hospital Pyjamas.

David Cook (CTOD Treasurer) Feb 2024

St. Mary's Sheep

The sheep continue to graze part of the old graveyard and the graveyard extension alternately. They seem happy and are very well visited by old and young alike. The other benefit to us as a church is that the grass and other growing greenery are kept down and tidy.

We still have some nettles and ferns which need managing by volunteers. Posts still rot and some need replacing each year. The sheep are a very hardy breed and live outdoors all year round. They need supplementary feeding outside the growing season. Beech hedges are used for extra feed especially in hot dry summers. Other hedge management is arranged by David Cook and Austin Copp.

I am very grateful to the A Team made up of Roger Hewitt, Hazel and Paul Showler, and Robin Hickson.

Catharina Hickson

St. Mary's School

St Mary's school continues to thrive under the leadership of Sarah Lewis and Anna Woodward in the academic year 2022-23. It is a place of friendship, inspiration, fun, learning and development for pupils, staff and hopefully families.

St Mary's is a place that lives to celebrate the small moments and the big things in the life of individuals and classes and the whole school whether they be personal, academic, artistic, sporting or performance.

The community is deliberately mutually supportive, and learning how to be good friends in the good times and the trickier ones is woven into all that is done. This slowly builds self understanding, self worth and self control. Pupils learn to value effort as well as achievement. Learning that it is OK not to know or grasp something new straight away but after quite a bit of practice and effort the reward of success is even greater. Mutual respect and support is developed by daily mindfulness practice and issues resolution using restorative justice.

The joys of knowing God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are available to all, and worship anchors each day and the major events of the year.

The school has many sporting teams that excel in competition, they win and lose with equal grace, which is a great credit to them. At St Mary's the school is blessed with 3 halls and lots of outdoor space including playgrounds, a multi use games area with an astroturf surface, climbing and balancing structures; all of which naturally encourage sporting play and fitness.

Performance is built into the curriculum for all and becomes a learnt skill which is very useful in adult life. Those that want to can join dance, singing and playing music and drama in clubs and build to performances that we all enjoy.

The School visits church to worship and to learn about the building and it's surroundings and we in the church enjoy welcoming them. Our Rector, James also leads worship and prayer in school regularly.

Many of the school staff support the development of teaching and teachers both in our school and around Surrey, leading on many teacher qualifications by mentoring and coaching. This keeps our staff teams reflective and up to date with best practice which in turn benefits our pupils.

Some of my favourite highlights are the festival in the field, the art exhibition and sharing worship and prayer at harvest.

Our pupils, parents and staff remain a joy and the school a jewel that remains bright and varied. It is an honour to visit and support as a governor.

Catharina Hickson, Governor

Hear Here

Hear Here continues to welcome the users of NHS hearing aids, to service them and to pass on advice to those who use them.

We were retrained in autumn 2023 by Crawley audiologist, Faye and the Guilford Hear Here lead Jude Darby.

This service is free to users on a first come first seen basis. We see from two to 15 people per month. We are present on the first Friday of the month with Meeting place.

Meeting place has moved from the OCH meeting room to in Church and now has its home in OCH The_Space which is much more user friendly. I am grateful to Austin and Natasha for arranging for sound baffles on the walls to dampen reflected sound which can be a big problem for those with less than perfect hearing.

I would like to thank our team:- Roger Hewitt, Dudley Withers, Hazel Showler and our most recent recruit Robin Hickson.

**Catharina Hickson,
Hear Here@ St Mary's Oxted, lead.**

Fellowship/Social

2023 was a busy year with a variety of events being organised although sadly the May Fayre was not amongst them. Several of the events were held in The Space which was officially launched by the Archdeacon on April 23rd

Some of the social activities were a mixture of social and worship. The first of these was the Shrove Tuesday evening of pancakes and prayers on February 2nd held in The Space.

From 6th to the 8th of May the church was open to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. It had been beautifully decorated on the Friday and throughout the three days visitors were welcomed in to admire the flowers. On Saturday 6th May the Coronation was screened in church. There was a good crowd to watch the televised service and a toast was given for the King. On Monday 8th May a large variety of activities were laid on in Church including the ever popular tower tours and meet the sheep as well as cream teas and some tasty cakes being available. A large crowd of people enjoyed the day. At the end of it all a well attended barbecue was held in the church grounds.

On June 10th a Trivia Quiz was held with a two course buffet supper. This raised around £650 which was split equally between church funds and the funds of The Heritage Trust

On 1st July a well attended and very enjoyable wine tasting evening was organised in The Space by Richard Lane, raising approximately £500 for church funds.

From 21st to 25th August Holiday at Home was organised in The Space. With a different activity every day followed by a light lunch this was popular.

The Patronal Festival was celebrated on 10th September with a barbecue and cricket match against St. John's, Hurst Green at Master Park with tea in the pavilion, all courtesy of Oxted and Limpsfield Cricket Club. This was the 30th such occasion and for a variety of reasons probably won't be celebrated in this way again.

Harvest time was celebrated towards the end of September. On 23rd September a church open day was held. As usual this was very popular with visitors coming in to admire the beautiful flower displays and to enjoy the various activities that were laid on. An enjoyable Harvest Lunch was held on Sunday 24th September

As usual the pupils of St. Mary's School donated a huge amount of produce when three harvest services were held for them in church. This was sorted by a small band of volunteers. About 50 parcels were distributed to local people, and food was sent to Welcare, Caterham Food Bank and the Renewed Hope Trust at Redhill -- organisations that help the homeless and families in some sort of need. Toiletries were collected by the Godstone Hygiene Bank.

On October 14th an Autumn Fair was held, using the Meeting Room in OCH as well as the St. Mary's Space giving a profit to church funds of around £550.00 It was held at the same time as the RNLI sale and both organisations felt that they benefited from the synchronisation of dates.

On 5th November the annual Memorial Service for the departed was held in church. As usual it was very popular and was attended by well over 100 people, with once again many of them travelling some distance to attend. After the service many of them enjoyed a tea in Oxted Community Hall.

On 26th November –Stir up Sunday, Christmas puddings were made in the Space and in December three informal Advent lunches were held.

Through the year breakfasts have been held in The Space on the first Saturday of the month.

Valerie Adamson

Oxted Churches

For practical reasons the Oxted Churches decided to continue with the practice started in Covid restricted times and not produce joint Easter and Christmas cards. Instead articles were published in the Oxted Local magazine giving some details of services from Holy Week through to Easter and at Christmas along with details of church contacts.

Lent groups were held as usual, some in people's homes and some by Zoom and were led and enjoyed by several members of St. Mary's

On 25th November the usual joint Churches Trivia quiz was held. This was well attended with representatives from the local Oxted churches and also from Hurst Green Evangelical Church. With no card printing costs to pay for the profit of around £325 from the evening was given to the St. Mary's Heritage Trust.

Valerie Adamson

Missions and Charities

The Mission and Charities Committee (including members from both St. Mary's and St. Peter's Tandridge) met on 3rd May to discuss general principles about how much to give to Missions and Charities and which ones to support. It was decided that having supported the same organisations for the previous four years a change should be made and discussion took place with regard to the various categories that should be supported. It was decided that two international organisations should be supported, two National ones and one local. It was agreed that members of the respective congregations should be asked for their suggestions and that the most popular would be considered for support. It was noted that £2,000 had already been sent to Christian Aid in support of the Turkish Earthquake Appeal, most of this coming from donations topped up by Gift Aid, given by members of the congregation.

At July's PCC meeting it was announced that the most popular organisations suggested by St. Mary's members were Mercy Ships, The Christian Blind Mission, (CBM) CSW-- Everyone Free to Believe, Justice and Care and Jigsaw South East. It was agreed that these should be supported. As church finances were running at a loss some of the donations were sent off immediately and some held back. By the end of the year £1,000 had been sent to CBM, Mercy Ships, CSW and Jigsaw South East.

It was agreed that efforts would be made to get speakers from the organisations to address the congregation and that they should be supported in prayer

More details about the selected Missions and Charities are available on the church web-site
Thanks are due to David Cook who served on the committee for the previous four years but retired from it in January 2023.

Valerie Adamson

St. Mary's Oxted Bellringers Report for 2023.

The year of 2023 was very successful for the bellringers. We managed to ring at the majority of Sunday services as well as other special events. The ringers were fully involved with the Church 'Open Day' and provided a demonstration of bell ringing. On a couple of occasions, we supplemented the ringers at Limpsfield Chart by ringing simultaneously for Sunday services at both St. Mary's and St. Andrew's churches. The year ended with a Ringer's Social Gathering in The_Space where ringers, their 'other halves', and some church officers were invited. The event, planned to include all between 8 and 80 years of age was enjoyed by all.

The band of ringers is now strong following many years of trying to recruit new ringers. We are most fortunate to have several young ringers who, I hope will continue to ring for many years to come. All new ringers are following an accredited training programme (Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) scheme). All have reached Level 1 and most Level 2 while making good progress towards Level 3. One band member moved away.

St. Mary's has now got an excellent ringing teaching facility fully equipped with computers which are connected to the bells. This enables individual and group learning to be done without making a noise outside. I am most grateful to have received a few newer computers which has allowed me to upgrade our system and pass on older but fully functioning equipment to others.

The availability of the computer training system has enabled St. Mary's to host several training sessions for both the Surrey Bellringers, Whiting Society and other organisations. Regular 'Twice a Month' sessions were introduced and have become very popular enabling afternoon and evening practices to be organised. Donations have been made which are passed on to the Church funds.

We look forward to an equally successful 2024. New or returning ringers are always welcome to join us.

Ian Griffiths

Safeguarding

The role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is to work with the clergy, churchwardens, PCC and members of the church community to make sure we create a safe environment for the activities that we undertake with children and vulnerable adults. We follow the guidance provided for us by the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer in 'A Safe Church'. A summary of the safeguarding principles adopted by your PCC can be found on the church porch noticeboard and the noticeboard inside church. These principles were readopted by the PCC in September 2023. I have worked for a number of years with Fay Prater, the PSO from St Peter's, so that together we can consider and support each other with safeguarding planning and any issues. We are also now linking up with the two new PSOs at St John's so we can further combine our various experience and knowledge. We have recruited, or are in the process of recruiting, a number of new volunteers following the process agreed by the PCC a few years ago. This still seems to be working well. We have also been focussing on getting training up to date for all those who volunteer in our church. This is mostly done via an online course but for leaders within our church community the training is delivered by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and a number of us have completed this course over the last year. Fay and I are also making more use of the church database - Churchsuite - to support us in the administrative aspects of safeguarding activity.

At any time, if any member of the congregation has a concern, please speak to me, James, Liz or David, or Fay the Safeguarding Officer at St Peter's. Even if it isn't clear whether there is a safeguarding issue or not, it is always better to talk it through at an early stage so that a potential issue can be averted or if our safeguarding arrangements don't seem to be covering a particular activity or scenario we can respond. Please contact me by email on safeguardingstmarysoxted@gmail.com or on 07778 539664 (please note that my phone goes straight to voicemail for any unrecognised numbers so do leave a message and I can call you back).

Katharine Nockles
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Meeting Place

Our Friday morning drop in coffee continues to thrive, with new faces alongside some who have been coming for many years. It is a happy and lively room, offering a warm welcome along with fresh coffee and home-made cakes.

We are very pleased to welcome two new team members - Janet Magnay and Bernice Staples - thank you!

The_Space continues to offer convenience for the team and comfort for our guests.

On the first Friday of every month the Hear Here champions run their drop in clinic, this is a lovely way to welcome more people for coffee, a number of whom then return during the month. We have been visited by the Tech Angels to discuss how they can help support people with their smart phone, tablet and pc use.

Meeting Place - for coffee, cake and conversation, Friday mornings 9:30-11:30. All welcome.

Thank you to the Meeting Place team.

Natasha Copp

Tandridge Deanery Synod

The meetings were all about social concern in society today.

Zoom meeting of 23rd February: addressed by Mark Russell, CEO of The Children's Society: 'Helping children thrive, not just survive'

Chief Executive of The Children's Society since 2019, Mark Russell is an inspirational, engaging and passionate speaker with a good sense of humour and a lovely Irish accent. The Children's Society dates from 1881 when Edward Rudolf, a young Sunday school teacher in South London, decided to do something about the effects of poverty on young children. Originally called 'The Society of Waifs and Strays', it has been re-branded over the years. Mark Russell talks about that white anger that life is still just too hard for too many children, after 141 years. The Society's roots are deep inside the Christian faith and deep inside God's heart for children. He sees his work as his vocation, to fight for the children of this country. There are proportionately more children living in poverty in London today than when The Children's Society was formed. That is a disgrace.

The Children's Society's Good Childhood Report, is not just research by academics but the voice of children themselves. This is a worsening situation. *See it at*

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/good-childhood-report-2022>

This research shows there are more unhappy children in Britain than anywhere else in Europe. This is attributed to the pressures of the exam system causing worry about failure and the fact that Britain has the highest levels of poverty. The goal is, by 2030, to overturn the damaging decline in children's wellbeing, which has worsened every year since 2009, setting a path for long lasting growth. Children will be happier than they are now, more hope-filled and more secure. A good strategy is needed, with Christ-centred, outward focused parishes. Mark Russell said he believed in the power of the church to make a difference and change the world for children.

Meeting at St John's Hurst Green on 14th June: addressed by Mervyn Thomas CMG: Founder President of CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

The vision of CSW is a world free from religious persecution, where everyone has the right to practise their religion or belief freely. The specialist team of advocates works in over 20 countries across Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America to protect and promote everyone's right to freedom of religion or belief. They work to challenge and change laws, behaviours and policies which lead to abuses of this vital right.

Mervyn Thomas founded CSW in 1979 at the age of 27, following the suggestion of an MP friend. He felt God had spoken to him and that this would become his life's work, which it did. At first there was little interest and no understanding of the extent of the problem. The Keston College study in 1979 on prisoners provided useful evidence of the violation of the right to freedom of belief in the countries of Eastern Europe, Asia and around the world. Over time the work expanded to countries beyond Europe and people of other religions and beliefs in addition to Christians. When as Christians we speak up for them, this is missional and what Jesus would do. Proverbs 31: 8 says 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.'

Consider also the story of the Good Samaritan.

2019 saw the publication of a report, requested by Jeremy Hunt, Foreign Secretary, written by the Bishop of Truro (assisted by Mervyn Thomas). The British Government adopted all 22 recommendations, including a Special Envoy for the Freedom of Religion or Belief.

This is Fiona Bruce MP for Congleton; there are 170 MPs on the all-party parliamentary group. 84% of the world's population lives in countries with high or very high restrictions on religious freedom. In Britain there may be discrimination in places, but there is not persecution. Governments should put human rights before trade. India is the worst country for attacks on religious minorities, but little is said about it because we want to trade with them.

We can: PRAY - PROTEST (write to your MP) - PROVIDE (letters) - PROCLAIM (tell people what is happening, speak out, invite a speaker from CSW to your church). See [CSW.org.uk](https://www.csw.org.uk)

Final meeting: a Training Session on Unconscious Bias, led by Revd Canon Wendy Robins. The background to UB is described in this answer to a question at Southwark Diocesan Synod (2021)

In 2017, the Church of England commissioned the development of an in-house UB training programme, to ensure that it was theologically grounded. The underlying assumption is that unconscious bias affects the church's ability to honestly and openly use the gifts of all God's creation for the purpose of the Kingdom.

UB training is only the first step in exploring the way in which we can build a church where all are appreciated and valued, where individuals can utilise their unique strengths and where all can flourish as we work towards a more just and equitable church.

The training is primarily offered by Church of England lay and ordained trainers, who have been trained by the course developers, a highly respected and experienced organisation Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI). This is to ensure that the trainers fully understand the context of sin, forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration

Written by Rt Revd Bishop of Croydon, Rosemarie Mallet, then Archdeacon of Croydon, who was a leader in writing the Anti-Racism Charter for Southwark Diocese (2021)

Our churches' representation on Deanery and Diocesan Synods

Lay Membership of Tandridge Deanery Synod

Members were nominated and elected in 2023 by their church PCCs

Each of our churches has three places - not all were taken

For St Mary's - Valerie Adamson and Ed Kyte

For St Peter's - Sue Mallinson

The three vacancies need to be filled - if you are interested do talk to the present reps.

The Deanery Synod elects 3 lay representatives to Southwark Diocesan Synod

Currently two are from our churches - Sue Mallinson and Catharina Hickson

2024 is election year.

There will be a call for nominees - who do not have to be current members of the Deanery Synod.

If you are interested, please do talk to Sue and Catharina.

Sue Mallinson, Deanery Synod Representative

Flowers

St Mary's has a small team who arrange flowers to beautify our ancient church. Our focus is on creating displays for the key festivals of Easter, Christmas and Harvest though arrangements are created for other occasions too. None of us are formally trained. We have all learned by trial and error over the years and we help and support each other. Every arrangement is different and reflects us as individuals; the common theme is that we enjoy creating something that we hope is enjoyed by others and visually enhances our worship. In 2023 we particularly enjoyed decorating for the Coronation. Our most recent activity was creating small spring posies for Mothering Sunday. Some of those were done at the Friday Meeting Place where two ladies were delighted to help put them together. Given how much enjoyment was had we plan to expand on that next year.

A few years ago the team was large enough for there to be a rota so that - aside from the more sombre periods of Lent and Advent - there was a pedestal of flowers near the altar throughout the year. It would be lovely to get back to that again if possible so if anyone would like to come and join the team please do contact me on flowers.stmarysoxted@gmail.com.

Katharine Nockles

Flower Team

St. Mary's Monkeys

St Mary's Monkeys playgroup was historically closed during school holidays. I have sought to change this reopening post Covid in May 2021. During 2023, our doors were only closed for five Fridays during the full calendar year (four of those closures were due to the hall being hired out to a third party, not due to a lack of helper support/availability).

Our playgroup is aimed at children under five years of age and thus school holidays are not relevant to many of our users and for many parents and carers, the playgroup is an invaluable asset during school holidays because we also welcome older siblings (many of whom are our past "Monkeys" which is always lovely) and it provides an affordable activity for the whole family. The admission fee for playgroup, has been maintained since May 2021 as £3 per adult guest because we wish to be fully inclusive. This means that during the holidays, parents can bring the whole Von Trapp family of children and we still only charge the family £3.

There is an additional charge of £2 now in place for late bookings; this is primarily there to act as a deterrent for families booking at the last minute because our numbers were fluctuating significantly and too often, within the last 24 hours and that created problems for efficiently managing our resources (namely craft and snacks).

We seek to be a fully inclusive playgroup and welcome everyone from the community, regardless of creed or culture and we are also pleased to include children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). I sporadically advertise the playgroup on local Facebook sites, so that new parents and carers can be made aware of the group. We are also advertised on site on the noticeboard and also on the Oxted Community Hall internet site. During 2023, we attracted 107 new members to St Mary's Monkeys playgroup and at the time of writing, we have 379 members of the Facebook page. This figure is down versus 2022 because I now conduct regular maintenance and remove members who are not utilising the playgroup, for additional safeguarding, parents are always welcome to rejoin if they wish.

Safeguarding our playgroup is paramount and this area is led by our professional, Katharine Nockles. All our helpers working alongside the children running our arts and craft table are DBS checked. We updated our risk assessment document in 2021 and all new helpers are required to read and understand this document. We have our own playgroup First Aid kit which is regularly reviewed and this includes an ice pack which is put in the freezer before the start of each session. For the joyous and inevitable vomiting mornings, we also have disposable sick bowls to assist parents/carers in getting home.

Cleaning our mats and toys is key to running a healthy and appealing playgroup. This workload is assigned across our team of volunteers as part of the monthly rota drafted and we try and wash as many toys as we can onsite to avoid additional effort. These tasks are completed in rotation.

Our sessions continue to be capped at 45 adult guests. This is to ensure the enjoyment and safety of all our patrons and to ensure that this runs smoothly and we are not turning parents away at the door, this is why places for playgroup have to be booked and paid for in advance online. We are full most weeks but it is clear from our regular parent/carer guests, if you book in, you get in.

Whilst only a quarter of our volunteer helpers (currently a team of 12) attend St Mary's Church, we have two strong supporters who ARE members of our Church community. Whether Chris Phillips-Jones attends with one or two of his children, he always comes early to help set up and stays until we have finished at clear away. Chris has created the highpoint of playgroup for many of the children....running up and down the hall with him at the end, when you will always find Chris holding the broom! Alice Dalziel has also been a huge blessing to us this year; Alice is the brain power behind our craft table; Alice's imagination and creativity are boundless. I often suggest a theme and Alice will just rustle up the most varied and unique activities which are both age appropriate and she also works hard to protect our budget as well as our environment by using recyclable materials. The children adore their "What shall we make today?" experience and we are very fortunate that Alice gives her time for us in this way. We lost 3 helpers over the course of 2023 due to business and grandparent commitments and we are always looking to boost our small team and welcome new friends (hint, hint!).

We were delighted to welcome Isla Drake to playgroup during 2023, who gave us time both at Easter and throughout the summer holidays, despite her busy GCSE year, not to check a box for “voluntary experience” but simply because she wanted too. Isla was key to us being able to keep playgroup open during the holidays and I hope other youngsters might consider being so generous with their time.

We have continued to purchase a gift for newborns joining us as a “Welcome to Monkeys” which families have very much appreciated receiving and the gift comes with a card signed by the team. The gift remains consistent for all and is a Beatrix Potter ceramic figure from the first letter of the baby’s name. We also set up our “Ratatouille” club this year. Both members of our team and parents and carers volunteered to cook a meal for a ‘Monkeys family’ and the ingredients for the meal itself are funded from our receipts. This is available to any playgroup family, at any time, who might need some extra support for any number of reasons.

Thanks to strong support from St Mary’s Church, as well as playgroup parents and carers, the playgroup continued to make a number of generous monetary contributions during 2023 to various charities.

We made a £200 donation to Children in Need in November 2023; this is the only Friday in the year when we ask families to give a donation for their drinks and snacks.

After the success of our playgroup game, “What’s in the box?” in 2021 and 2022, we ran the game at both Easter and Christmas 2023. The game costs £5 to play and parents/carers win free playgroup sessions. Easter 2023 raised £350 and Christmas 2023 raised £195 for our local Hygiene Bank. I can’t help but feel that the enormous support at Easter 2023 was because the hostess (me!) was sitting in a wheelchair with a broken ankle...I might need to try that again!

At Christmas, we also supported local families falling under the Barnardo’s umbrella with over £150 worth of Christmas shopping. This was in addition to the £200 we spent on babygrows and Pyjamas for charity, Children’s Hospital pyjamas.

Throughout 2023, I have continued to source baby equipment from our local charity shops to direct to local charities, Stripey Stork (based in Reigate) and Their Voice (based in Caterham). This means that for each £1 we donate, we benefit TWO charities. The charity shop who receives the funds AND the local charity who receives the equipment.

We have also bought many gifts for our local charities, items which second-hand are very often not to standard or we would struggle to source. Examples – baby changing mats, baby hooded towels, baby blankets, baby bottles, mattress protectors, bedding, hair clippers, toiletries.

In addition to these gifts, we support Stripey Stork, Their Voice, The Hygiene Bank and Ukraine by receiving pre-loved donations at playgroup and redirecting them to the charities. This helps boost donations of goods received for these charities but also helps parents who can simply bring their donations to playgroup and drop them off, without the struggle of car seats, buggies and finding parking, simply to struggle into a High Street charity shop. We also support Great Ormond Street Hospital with our ongoing collection of milk bottle tops.

In March 2023, we made a donation to The Brains Trust. A donation made primarily to support two of our playgroup families suffering bereavements, in friendship and with love.

We have continued to support Ukraine at playgroup this year, using receipts to buy food, toiletries and nappies and these gifts have been transported to Ukraine via registered charity, British Humanitarian Aid.

Thanks to the long standing success of St Mary's Monkeys playgroup, set up over 15 years ago (a clear testament to the commitment shown by Mary Cook, Natasha Copp, and Shelley Miller who have been on the team since the very beginning), we are able to make these donations to so many different charities, whilst covering our running costs and whilst still providing a small income for St Mary's Church.

I believe that this approach is essential to retain and attract volunteers to our team, who are outside the Church community. Both the playgroup families we support, as well as our team of helpers, are always interested in understanding how our funds are being directed.

I am continually grateful to both James and Natasha for their ongoing support with my direction of funds from playgroup in order to target real need. I also think it is wholly appropriate that whilst we play, laugh, drink tea and eat Shelley's endless supply of cakes, that we extend our hand in friendship and support to those less fortunate because as we all know, the only time we should look down on anyone is when we are helping them up.

Penny Kirk

Junior Church

Junior Church at St Mary's continued to go from strength to strength in 2023. We regularly welcomed children aged from around 2 to 13 years old, as well as some parents. The older children have been encouraged to help as much as possible with the sessions, which has provided them with the confidence to grow in their faith. We have been blessed with an enthusiastic and committed group of leaders and helpers.

At Junior Church we have talked about miracles, acted out stories, had endless craft sessions and regularly discussed how we can see God in all aspects of our lives. We have made the most of our beautiful surroundings by playing games in the churchyard and talking about our local community.

The children have enjoyed reporting back to the congregation on our activities each week, and of course showing off their craft creations!

Rosie Davies

Youth Work

It has been great to see youth come together and feel comfortable to ask questions about faith. We started to meet together with youth in November 22. In the first year we have been meeting every 2 weeks with the youth group at St Johns Evangelist in Hurst Green. In the second year we have been meeting every Sunday and the youth enjoy being together.

We have started to build friendship and learn more about our God and our Creator. Through games we share more about ourselves and learn more from each other. We also create a free environment to share and discuss who God is.

Some of our spiritual discussions in these meetings are:

1. Who God is and who we are and who made us from Psalm 139.
2. We also talked more about friendship and what the Bible says about this. Can we choose friends? Also how to love everyone but we can choose friends that pull us up and help our faith and not people that draw us down .
3. We have been talking more about Beatitudes. We talked about how to be humble and to be close to God. We had a little reflection about being independent and being dependent. How this relates to ones relationship with God .
4. Creator (this was based from Genesis 1:1-5),
5. Just like God (Genesis 1:26-31)
6. Rest 'Genesis :1-4, When we rest we need to remember and enjoy being with God.
7. Are you sure" Genesis 3;1-6 We discussed more about doubt or confusion that we might have sometimes about who God really is.
8. Not my fault" Genesis 3:8-13 We were sharing more on how easy it is for us to find excuses and not tell the truth. It was a good conversation and they felt comfortable sharing their feelings etc....

We have also spent time talking about social media and thinking about how to invest in the inner person rather than putting on an outer show. This has also helped raise awareness about the dangers of social media.

We always try to make our meetings fun and lots of parents have commented on how much their children enjoy being part of the group, and some children have brought their friends and siblings along.

We continue to develop a culture of hospitality, by enjoying healthy (mostly!) snacks and hot chocolate. It is great to see how the young people enjoy helping prepare this, building a sense of ownership.

My desire is to build a safe place where youth can come together and share their friendship and where we all can be stronger in Faith.

Valmira Xhelili



Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting

For St. Mary's Church Oxted

Held on Sunday 23rd April 2023

Present: The Revd James Ashton chaired the meeting attended by 38 parishioners present in the church.

Revd. James Ashton welcomed everyone to the APCM and opened the meeting with a prayer .

1. Approval of Minutes from the 2022 APCM

The minutes from the 2022 meeting were approved and signed by JA.

Proposed by Martin Fisher

Seconded by Andrea Muir

2. Election of Churchwardens

The current Churchwarden Austin Copp was re-elected.

The Revd James Ashton gave thanks to Austin Copp particularly as currently we only have one Churchwarden.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 23rd April 2023 at St. Mary's Church Oxted

1. Elections

Parochial Church Council

All the current representatives on the PCC were coming to the end of their three year term.

The following were re-elected/elected:

Richard Adamson
Natasha Copp
Katy Aspinwall
Alison Murden
Caroline Horsford
Martin Fisher
Emma Church
Len (Jock) Muir
Xavier Copp

Synod Representatives

The four Deanery Synod representatives came to the end of their three year term.

Re-elected

Valerie Adamson
Sue Mallinson

Elected

Edward Kyte

1.1 Sidespeople (Welcomers)

The current list of Sidespeople is available on Church Suite and was read out to those present.

Approved

Proposed by Sue Mallinson

Seconded by Richard Adamson

2. **Vicar's Comments**

James Ashton said that we gathered today to renew our commitment to our common values and shared priorities. Looking back, 2022 saw us get used to life without the Anderson family who moved to Winchester. We also welcomed the Rev Liz Lane who moved to Oxted with her husband Richard. Alison Murden finished working as our Administrative Assistant and we are thankful for her work. We also lost other significant members of our church as they moved away from the area, but these changes should not dissuade us from finding creative ways to grow together.

The church marked the royal occasions of 2022, the Platinum Jubilee and then sadly the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

Through our commitment to Knowing Jesus, the church runs Alpha courses, has regular prayer breakfasts and has a continued presence in local schools.

We continue to Grow Community through events in The_Space, and in the church with, Holiday At Home and Get Involved.

The church's commitment to Renewing our Heritage continues by maintaining the fabric of the building and as well as the ongoing building projects, there are fundraising events and maintenance days for the building and church grounds.

JA thanked all those involved with the choir and music at St. Marys, the Bellringing Team and flower arrangers.

Looking forward - JA felt hopeful for the church but pointed out that in a local community of over 11,000 people only around 500-1,000 were in churches. The Big Help Out needs to go beyond the Coronation weekend, we need to be continually focused on our children and youth and not least there is the ongoing issue of finance. JA also drew everyone's attention to the fact that we only have one churchwarden and this is far from ideal.

3. Reports

3.1 Electoral Roll Report

Paul Shillito reported that there are currently 115 on the Electoral Roll. In 2019 there were 141.

Revd. James Ashton thanked Paul Shillito for his work on the Electoral Roll and PS said he was happy to continue.

3.2 Treasurer's Report

Martin Fisher said he was pleased to present the accounts for the year to December 2022 which have been reviewed by the PCC and the church's Independent Examiner. A copy of the Annual Accounts was available to everyone present and had been emailed out to church members. MF drew attention to the ongoing loss in the accounts which he said was unsustainable and the church would run out of cash in three years if nothing changed.

In answer to what could be done, MF said that there was a small finance team meeting every three months to review the accounts. Along with increased photocopier charges, banking charges were of great concern. Therefore MF feels it is essential for the church's donations to go digital especially as local bank branches are being closed. He thanked those who give regularly and generously.

MF went on to introduce the new digital machine at the entrance to the church which replaces the collection plate.

The congregation was informed that it costs £2,250 per week to run the church.

Questions/discussions/Comments from the congregation included:

- The possible use of the new _Space to save on heating in the winter. Austin Copp said he was keeping the heating down as much as possible and James Ashton said he was definitely considering this as an option.
- Standing Orders – Yes these were Gift Aided
- Thanks to MF for choosing a simple to operate machine
- Do we subsidise poorer parishes? Our giving with St.Peter's covers our clergy costs and accommodation and we do give about £20,000 over what we need to to keep our clergy.

- Giving to charities – This may need to go down and it was noted that individuals can give to the charity of their choice themselves.
- Our 5 charities under Missions and Charities have not changed for 4 years, If anyone has any suggestions, please speak to David Cook or Valerie Adamson.

AOB

It was asked who owns the church car park? - It is part of the Community Hall and security cameras are in place which can be viewed by the hall manager and Martin Fisher.

Fundraising Committee - Valerie Adamson is looking for new members.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

Parochial Church Council of St. Mary's, Oxted

Financial Review

For the year 1st January – 31st December 2023

St. Mary's Financial Review	2023	2022
(Deficit) on the Unrestricted Fund	£ (11,155)	£ (20,735)

The general (unrestricted) fund incurred a loss of £11,155 which is an improvement on last year which was an unsustainable level.

The accounts have been reformatted this year to align more closely with the Diocesan standard format.

Voluntary income at £78,237 is up 6.1% on last year with digital collections and income from St Marys_Space more than offsetting a decline in planned giving.

Huge thanks are due to those 61 members who give regularly by standing order or through Stewardship UK which averages at £70 monthly per member.

Income from fundraising events raised £3,502 compared to £1,059 last year excluding the St Mary's School May Fayre share of £3,320.

Investment income of £5,000 is the ground rent from the Oxted Community Hall. PCC income from weddings, baptisms and funerals was £5,566 compared to £3,948 last year.

St Peter's PCC contributes 27.8% [last year 28%] to shared administration costs. This is based on the relative Parish Support Fund payments.

The Parish Support Fund payment remained at £65,000 which together with St Peter's payment of £25,000 ensures that the United Benefice's combined contribution of £90,000 exceeds the Southwark Diocese requirement for funding a stipendiary minister.

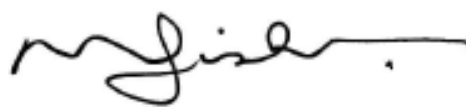
Mission giving was reduced this year to £6,000 which represents 7.4% of income. [The restricted fund financed £3,267 and the general fund £2,733]

The restricted fund showed a planned decline in the year as £98,040 was mainly spent on the church tower. Significant grant money was attracted for this project which is identified in note 1 to the accounts. Note 8 identifies £22,753 remaining in the Church restoration fund a proportion of which will be spent in 2024 on the Church porch.

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 13 March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



James Ashton (Rector)



Martin Fisher (PCC Treasurer)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ended 31 December 2023

		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds	
		Funds	Funds	2023	2022
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources					
Planned giving		51,163	-	51,163	56,274
Collections in church		5,278	-	5,278	6,702
Collections in The_Space		1,953	-	1,953	-
Digital collections		4,319	-	4,319	861
All other giving		1,550	3,267	4,817	688
Gift Aid recoverable		13,974	-	13,974	12,305
		78,237	3,267	81,504	76,830
Grants	1	-	85,725	85,725	99,584
Fundraising events		3,502	-	3,502	4,379
Investment income		5,000	-	5,000	5,000
PCC Fees		5,566	-	5,566	3,948
Church groups		1,708	-	1,708	-
St Peter's PCC		3,245	-	3,245	5,295
Total incoming resources		97,258	88,992	186,250	195,036
Resources expended					
Church activities					
Fundraising costs		934	-	934	3,003
Mission giving	2	2,733	3,267	6,000	11,431
Parish Support Fund		65,000	-	65,000	65,000
Salaries, fees, and honoraria	3	11,142	-	11,142	14,831
Clergy expenses		4,029	-	4,029	5,336
		83,838	3,267	87,105	99,601
Church expenses					
Evangelism, St Marys_Space		5,308	388	5,696	5,658
Insurance		4,632	-	4,632	5,329
Maintenance & minor repairs		1,232	2,000	3,232	3,733
Provision of services		2,665	-	2,665	6,329
Church office		6,786	-	6,786	2,182
Light, heat & water		3,179	-	3,179	3,845
Church groups		773	-	773	-
		24,575	2,388	26,963	27,076
Major expenditure					
Church building repairs		-	98,040	98,040	1,080
St Mary's_Space		-	5,631	5,631	5,306
Youth work		-	589	589	-
Depreciation		-	14,652	14,652	13,852
Total Resources expended		108,413	124,567	232,980	146,915
Net (Outgoing)/Income resources		(11,155)	(35,575)	(46,730)	48,121
Transfer between funds	8	(8,005)	8,005	-	-
Net movement in Funds		(19,160)	(27,570)	(46,370)	48,121
Balances brought forward 1 January		63,393	517,940	581,333	533,212
Balances carried forward 31 December		44,233	490,370	534,603	581,333

The notes on pages 5 to 7 form part of these account

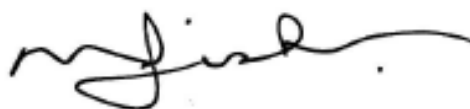
BALANCE SHEET at 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	
				2023	2022
		£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	4	-	467,617	467,617	474,265
Current assets					
Debtors	5	3,214	-	3,214	6,821
Cash at bank	6	42,269	24,603	66,872	104,567
		45,483	24,603	70,086	111,388
Current liabilities					
Creditors	7	(1,250)	(1,850)	(3,100)	(4,320)
Net current assets		44,234	22,753	66,986	107,068
Total net assets		44,233	490,370	534,603	581,333
Parish funds					
Unrestricted		44,233	-	44,233	63,393
Restricted - Church	8	-	22,753	22,753	42,700
Restricted - Youth	8	-	-	-	976
Restricted - Oxted Corn Hall	8	-	467,617	467,617	474,264
		44,233	490,370	534,603	581,333

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 13 March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



James Ashton (Rector)



Martin Fisher (Treasurer)

Charity Number: 1164439

Parish Office 53 Church Lane, Oxted, Surrey RH8 9LU

The notes on pages 5 to 7 form part of these accounts

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparation of accounts

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, together with applicable accounting standards and the FRS 102 (SORP).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and include all transactions, assets, and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of St. Mary's Oxted Heritage Trust (the Heritage Trust) as this is a separate registered charity.

Funds

Restricted funds represent donations or grants received for a specific object or invited by the PCC for a specific object. The funds may only be expended on the specific object for which they were given. Any balance remaining unspent at the end of each year must be carried forward as a balance on that fund.

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

Incoming resources

Planned giving, collections and donations are recognised when received. Tax refunds are recognised when the incoming resource to which they relate is received. Grants and legacies are accounted for when the PCC is legally entitled to the amounts due. Interest receivable is accrued. All other income is recognised when it is receivable. All incoming resources are accounted for gross.

Resources expended

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded if that award creates a binding or constructive obligation on the PCC. The Diocesan parish share is accounted for when due. All other expenditure is generally recognised when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

Fixed assets

Consecrated and benefice property is not included in the accounts in accordance with s.10(2)(a) and (c) of the Charities Act 2011.

The Heritage Trust has partially funded the construction costs of Oxted Community Hall, subject to a proportion of such costs being funded by East Surrey Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme Limited (Crossroads), who did hold part of the property on a 99-year lease. During 2007, the Heritage Trust transferred the value of the Community Hall to the PCC. The transfer value represents the estimated cost, less contribution from Crossroads. In 2022 the church acquired the Crossroads space for £60,000.

The Community Hall is built on land vested in the Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance and held in trust on behalf of the PCC.

The construction cost of the Community Hall is being depreciated over 50 years at 2% per annum on a straight-line basis, apart from the equipment and fittings which are depreciated at 10% per annum on a straight-line basis over 10 years.

Movable church furnishings held by the Rector and churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal are inalienable property, listed in the church's inventory which can be inspected (at any reasonable time). Expenditure to renew, improve or add to them is written off as an expense in the financial year in which it occurs.

Equipment used within the church premises and parish office is depreciated at 20% per annum on a straight-line basis, unless the individual items cost £1,000 or less in which case they are expensed when acquired.

Parochial Church Council of St. Mary's, Oxted

ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

RESERVES POLICY

The PCC cash reserves are assessed as medium risk and represent 21 weeks of ordinary expenditure. The PCC is aware of this and the need for continued maintenance of the church building, for which the fundraising has been carried out by St Mary's Oxted Heritage Trust.

RELATED PARTIES

The PCC has a close relationship with St. Mary's Oxted Heritage Trust (the Heritage Trust), a registered charity, and Oxted Community Hall Management Limited, a "benefit of the community" Industrial and Provident Society and exempt charity. There are PCC appointees to the governing bodies of both charities.

The objects of the Heritage Trust are broadly the repair and restoration of St. Mary's Church and its associated grounds and buildings, and construction of any buildings within the curtilage. The Trust funded the costs of Oxted Community Hall and in 2007 it transferred the asset to the PCC at an estimated cost value of £580,000.

Oxted Community Hall Management Limited has leased the majority of the Community Hall from the PCC for a period of 25 years from October 2007 for a ground rent of £5,000 per annum. The company collects the rentals and funds the maintenance of the Community Hall. The space formally occupied by Crossroads was purchased by St Mary's Church in 2022 for £60,000 plus fees of £10,455.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. GRANTS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Unrestricted donations	-	9,198
Restricted Funds		
Heritage Trust donation to church fund	12,000	30,000
Heritage Trust donation to St Mary's_Space	5,631	52,386
Oxted Community Hall donation to St Mary's_Space	-	7,500
Oxted Parish Council Churchyard grant	2,000	500
Oxted Parish Council Church tower grant	10,000	-
Surrey County Council Church tower grant	5,000	-
Garfield Weston Church tower grant	15,000	-
Marshall Church tower grant	20,000	-
HMRC Listed Places of Worship Scheme (VAT reclaim)	16,094	-
	85,725	99,584

2. DONATIONS TO MISSIONS AND CHARITIES

	2023			2022		
	Income	PCC	Donated	Income	PCC	Donated
Turkey Disaster Appeal	1,424	576	2,000	-	-	-
Jigsaw SE	-	1,000	1,000	-	-	-
Christian Blind mission	1,000	-	1,000	-	-	-
Mercy Ships	843	157	1,000	-	-	-
Help the persecuted (CSW)	-	1,000	1,000	-	-	-
Last Year	-	-	-	1,307	10,124	11,431
	3,267	2,733	6,000	1,307	10,124	11,431

3. STAFF COSTS AND PAYMENTS TO PCC MEMBERS

As the Parish Administrator, Mrs N. Copp, who is a member of the PCC, was paid £7,732 (2022: £7,453) during the year. The Administration officer was paid £nil (2022: £4,738). St. Mary's PCC was reimbursed 27.8% of these costs together with Parish Office expenses by St. Peter's, Tandridge PCC.

The PCC also made ex-gratia payment to the organist and incidental small vergers fees to various church members. The total paid was £3,410 (2022: £2,640). No payments were made to any member of the PCC or other related parties apart from the Parish Administrator.

4. FIXED ASSETS (RESTRICTED FUND)

Cost or Valuation	Freehold Building £	Equipment & fittings £	Total £
Oxted Community Hall 1 January 2023	640,000	30,517	670,517
Additions St Mary's_Space 31 December 2023	-	8,004	8,004
	<u>640,000</u>	<u>38,521</u>	<u>678,521</u>
Depreciation			
1 January 2023	175,200	21,052	196,252
Charge in the year 31 December 2023	12,800	1,852	14,652
	<u>188,000</u>	<u>22,904</u>	<u>210,904</u>
Net Book value			
31 December 2023	452,000	15,617	467,617
31 December 2022	<u>464,800</u>	<u>9,465</u>	<u>474,265</u>

In 2022 the PCC of St Marys acquired from Crossroads their section of the Oxted Community Hall for £60,000 excluding fees. Total refurbishment (net of grant) amounted to £18,521 [2023: £8,004 and 2022: £10,517.]

5. DEBTORS

	2023 £	2022 £
Unrestricted fund		
Tax recoverable under Gift Aid	3,214	1,376
St Peter's Tandridge	-	5,295
PCC Fees	-	150
	<u>3,214</u>	<u>6,821</u>

6 CASH AT BANK

	2023 £	2022 £
Unrestricted fund	42,269	60,891
Restricted fund - Youth work	-	976

Parochial Church Council of St. Mary's, Oxted

Restricted fund - Church Fund	24,603	42,700
	<u>66,872</u>	<u>104,567</u>

7. CREDITORS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Unrestricted fund Oxted Community Hall deferred income	1,250	1,250
Accruals	-	3,070
Restricted fund Church Fund	1,850	-
	<u>3,100</u>	<u>4,320</u>

8. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Church Fabric Fund £	Youth Fund £	Mission Giving £	Oxted Community Hall £	Total £
Opening balance 1 Jan 23	42,700	976	-	474,264	517,940
Incoming resources	80,094	-	3,267	7,631	88,992
Resources expended	(100,041)	(976)	(3,267)	(5,631)	(109,915)
Depreciation	-	-	-	(14,652)	(14,652)
From unrestricted fund	-	-	-	8,005	8,005
Closing Balance 31 Dec 23	<u>22,753</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>467,617</u>	<u>490,370</u>

9. CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	2023	2022
	£	£
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	(46,730)	48,120
Less Building & Equipment	(8,004)	(70,516)
Add depreciation	14,652	13,852
Movement in working capital	2,387	(43,498)
Net Cash Flow	<u>(37,695)</u>	<u>(52,042)</u>
Cash and short-term deposits as at 1 January	104,567	156,609
Cash and short-term deposits as at 31 December	<u>66,872</u>	<u>104,567</u>

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO
THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARY'S, OXTED.**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023 which are set out on pages 1 to 7.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and Independent Examiner

The members of the PCC consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

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

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention

1. which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act; or
 - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Roger Thomas

25 March 2024