THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

England & Wales · Charity number 1175551

Details

Other names	DAMASCUS PARISH, DAMASCUS PCC
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2017-11-03
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	The Damascus Parish Office @ All Saints Church The Green Sutton Courtenay Abingdon Oxfordshire OX14 4AE
Phone	01235847179
Website	damascusparish.org.uk

Activities

Objects: PROMOTING IN THE PARISH THE WHOLE MISSION OF THE CHURCH, PASTORAL, EVANGELISTIC, SOCIAL AND ECUMENICAL

Activities: Regular public worship open to all.The provision of sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation.Pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved.Teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groupsTaking of religious assemblies in schools.The provision of a youth club with a Christian ethos.Promotion of Christianity through the staging of eve

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

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Geography

- Oxfordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£279,290	£239,068	-	-
2023-12-31	£253,587	£206,539	-	-
2022-12-31	£263,755	£201,797	-	-
2021-12-31	£238,381	£209,991	-	-
2020-12-31	£514,074	£577,127	£752,619	14

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Rev HELEN KENDRICK	Chair	2017-07-01
ALEXANDRA LANDSBERT		2017-07-01
Alison Budd		2020-10-21
Anthony Sloggett		2021-06-23
Caroline Miller		2021-06-23
HH ANTHONY KING		2017-07-01
Michael Murray		2020-10-21
NICOLA TURNER		2017-07-01
Rev Dov Whittle		2025-07-14
Susan Harris		2025-07-14
VALERIE CROSS		2017-09-13

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Accounts

The DAMASCUS Parish

Drayton | Appleford | Milton
Sutton Courtenay | Steventon

2024 Report and accounts for the DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council

St Peter's, **D**rayton
St Peter & St Paul's, **A**ppleford
St Blaise, **M**ilton
All Saints', **S**utton **C**ourtenay
St Michael & All Angels', **S**teventon

Nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love

Registered charity number 1175551

Introduction to the DAMASCUS Parish

The DAMASCUS Parish is a single parish, formed from the five, growing, semi-rural villages of Drayton, Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courtenay, and Steventon in 2017. We are continuing to enable one another to flourish and grow together. The Parish is situated between Abingdon and Didcot with boundaries abutting both towns. There are considerable numbers of professional people in the area, with Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, Harwell, Culham, Didcot Power Station and Milton Park Enterprise Zone all in the locality. The easy access to Didcot Parkway Station means that many parishioners commute to London, Oxford, Reading, Swindon and beyond

Aim and Purposes

The DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Helen Kendrick, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the churches of St Peter's Drayton, St Peter and St Paul's Appleford, St Blaise Milton, All Saints' Sutton Courtenay and St Michael and All Angels' Steventon and St Michael's Hall Steventon.

Our Vision and Mission

Our vision is to be a living Christian presence at the heart of our communities, nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.
- To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the five churches in the parish.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and prayer

Throughout 2024 the number of regular worshippers across the Parish has increased slightly but with a different age and attendance profile (younger age range but attending less frequently). The revised service pattern has enabled us to sustain a pattern of one service in every church every week. Main Sunday services take place at 9.30 or 11.00, except for the fifth Sunday when there is a DAMASCUS Parish service in one of the five churches. Mid-week services are held in two churches on different days of the week. All five churches are open during the day every day for our local community and visitors to enjoy and use for private prayer. Limited live streaming of Sunday services has been available but proved to be a challenge due to technical difficulties and lack of expertise. The Ministry team continued to provide service sheets for people to worship at home where requested. During 2024 there were 198 people on the Parish Electoral Roll.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey of life. Throughout 2024 the requests for live-streaming of funerals continued to increase and live-streaming of weddings, particularly in All Saints', Sutton Courtenay was made available when requested. In the DAMASCUS parish we have celebrated 30 baptisms, 10 weddings 3 blessings and 29 funeral services in church, 6 funeral services at crematoriums. In 2024 we had three confirmation candidates who were prepared for confirmation by the Reverend Canon Dr Phillip Tovey and Mike Blanch and the Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick.

Remembrance Sunday Services were well supported. Four of the five churches participated in the government's Warm Spaces scheme and offered a variety of opportunities for individuals and families to benefit from free hospitality and activities with the benefit of a grant from local government.

We focused on sharing faith through various prayer and study groups which were hosted in the River Room and/or online and open to all. A Lent Group ran in the River Room using the Bishop of Oxford's Come and See Material – The Way of Love. This was well attended by people across the parish. An Advent Course, hosted in the River Room for the whole parish, was based on the film The Nativity which led to good discussions of the characters and their relationships. A new weekly Home Group started in the Autumn led by Chris and Wendy Leake, attended by people from across the parish. The Tuesday online prayer group has continued this year, and Chris Leake has taken over the organisation.

We would like to thank our Rector, The Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick, our Associate Ministers - The Reverend Phil Sutton, The Reverend Rosie Bruce, our new Curate The Reverend Dov Whittle and Reverend Dr Phillip Tovey (retired PTO) and all the Licensed Lay Ministers for their hard work leading, nurturing, inspiring and teaching us during this year.

The following paragraphs present points about worship and ministry specific to each of the five churches in the parish.

Drayton

The Worship team continues to meet regularly to plan the Thursday morning service rota and the leadership of the monthly Praise Services. Members of the team usually lead one service per month on the Thursday rota. The Praise Services continue to provide interesting topics with music provided by Kay Davies and her team. Reverend Rosie Bruce supports the group, along with the congregation. One member of the team organises the organist's rota, while another plans the hymns for each Sunday service.

The virtual prayer meetings continue to be held on the 4th Mondays of the month. The group has not met physically due to the cold weather and various health problems. It is hoped that they can meet together physically in the spring when the weather is warmer.

Healing Ministry continues to be supported at St Peter's. The team meet up on the Saturday evening before the healing service, when prayer requests and cards left on the prayer board are offered for healing prayers. During the services the following morning, the congregation are invited to receive healing prayer by the laying on of hands.

The Comms team continues to connect St Peter's with the village community through different forms of media. They post regularly on the St Peter's Facebook page and the Drayton Village Community page. They also cross-post with Sutton Courtenay. The number of followers has increased during the year many of whom are not connected with the church. Additional posts are made for special occasions, services and events. They update the church noticeboard regularly which attracts a lot of interest. They also put together the church page in the Drayton Chronicle each month.

Pebbles continues to flourish under the leadership of Cheryl Jarvis and Katy Hoyle. It draws in mothers and carers from a wide area. A great number of children moved on to school or nursery at the end of the summer term, however, since September the numbers have increased again. This year the nativity was led by Rev Dov Whittle, who also led the crib service on Christmas Eve, both of which were very well attended.

The First Tuesday Connections group continues to meet on the first Tuesday of the month with a range of activities throughout the year, as well as tea and chat. Their annual summer party was a great success as was the Christmas party.

The Care Team continue to visit people on a regular basis. Phone calls are made to those who have not been seen for a while. Bereavement cards are sent on the anniversary of someone's death and are much appreciated. The group also sends out baptism and wedding anniversary cards.

Appleford

A service is held every week in the church and the numbers have remained stable throughout 2024. Breakfast Church is on the first Sunday of every month which continues to attract all ages. The WhatsApp group managed by Vicky Shepherd continues to be a useful method of promotion and communication as well as the parish council Facebook page.

For Mothering Sunday flowers and prayer cards and for Easter, greeting cards and seeds, were distributed to every home in the village. These were very well received and helped to remind people that the church community was still active and praying for the wider community.

The Street Nativity was extremely well attended and once again a donkey was supplied by The Donkey Sanctuary. The Appleford Community Project paid for the donkey and provided refreshments in the farmyard at the end which was much appreciated by all who attended. Several people helped to knit bells which were then distributed around the village by the church families, for people to find and hang on their own Christmas trees. The carol service was led by The Reverend Dov Whittle and well attended with children and adults all playing a part. Midnight Communion was a shared service with Sutton Courtenay, held in Appleford.

Milton

The typical attendance at the main Sunday service is 12 adults, but for family services typical attendance is 17 adults and seven children. One Sunday each month we have had a lay led service, Faith Conversations, this is a café style service and has been led by a variety of members of the congregation and a wide range of topics have been discussed. Our Family services have been well supported, and the young people have been willing contributors.

We have monthly joint services with Milton Methodists, the Palm Sunday procession began at St Blaise and walked to Milton Methodist church for the service. We were pleased to welcome some members of Milton Methodists to our service celebrating St Blaise Day and on Remembrance Sunday and on Christmas Eve. We enjoyed the Methodists covenant service and a summer picnic service. Through the year we have experienced a variety of service styles in each church.

For Easter a village craft afternoon blew and decorated eggs which added a colourful display as part of our Easter decorations. For Remembrance Sunday, the knitted poppy cascade was fixed around the porch entrance and in church there was a display of information about those whose names appear on our war memorial, this was much appreciated by the Milton community.

We had a successful Christingle service, and the children (and adults!) enjoyed making their Christingles during this service. The nativity play performed by the young people was particularly well supported and very much enjoyed by the congregation. After the success of the carol service in previous years we again held a Christmas Eve carol service by candlelight with a mix of traditional, contemporary and performance readings and music. The congregational singing was enhanced by the support of the Milton AHA Choir. The church was beautifully decorated and very full; everyone appreciated this lovely service.

Sutton Courtenay

This has been another year of growth where we have welcomed new people to our worshiping community. The pattern of services has remained the same with a Family Service on the first Sunday, Holy Communion on second and fourth Sunday and Morning Worship on the third Sunday. The major festivals have been well attended.

During Holy Week the Maundy Thursday service followed by a Lamb Supper was open to the whole Parish and was appreciated by all who came. This year we just had a family service on Good Friday. Then the church was left open with stations for reflection set up around the church for private prayer and reflection. The Easter Day Family Eucharist was very popular. The children enjoyed their annual Easter Egg Hunt around the graveyard.

Christmas Services again were well supported. The Torchlight Procession returned with torches this year and attracted 1000 people. Christmas Eve Crib Service had 74 children dressing up and taking part in the 'Star' Story. Over 700 bells were crafted by individuals for the Christmas Bell Hunt for members of the community to find and hang on their own tree – along with the 'Follow the Star' Booklet produced by the CofE.

Steventon

The size of the congregation at each Sunday service has increased slightly in 2024 but continues to show a more occasional pattern of attendance. This is most noticeable in our monthly family service which attracts five village families and the most infrequent attenders (averaging once every 2-3 months). Midweek communion services maintain an average of eight attenders which include parishioners who do not attend Sunday services. The monthly service of Evening Prayer has developed into Evensong and attended by upwards of 12 worshippers (from a total of 18 frequent attenders).

End of term school services, village Christingle and Crib services plus weddings and funerals have led to the church having attendances of over 150 for 11 services in 2024. Occasional services including Harvest, Remembrance and special summer celebrations all attracted congregations of greater than 70.

Social and fund raising

Many of the social activities provide outreach and mission opportunities within the village communities. Thanks to grant support we were able to offer a warm space and free activities and refreshments in some of our churches in January, February, March and December for a few hours each week. This has helped many who are struggling with heating and eating.

Drayton

The annual plant sale in May went well and raised £400.The Christmas Cracker event at the end of November raised over £700 and drew in many people from the village. Homemade cards are on sale in church throughout the year and add to the fund raising.

The monthly Knit and Natter sessions not only provide an opportunity to make garments for charity, as well as knitting for ourselves, but provide a social gathering. A number of people who attend are not church goers and numbers have increased during the year.

Appleford

Monthly coffee mornings continue to be held, courtesy of Richard and Linda Payne, and are well supported by villagers and people from further afield. They provide an invaluable point of social contact and are much appreciated. The money raised goes to the Appleford Fabric Fund. The Appleford 100 Club continues to run and bring in some much-needed income. The draw is held at the monthly coffee morning. A sell-out Winter Warmer Lunch and Quiz was held in the Village Hall in November. The Christmas Carol Singing Evening was very well supported and raised several hundred pounds for Oxfordshire Homeless.

Milton

Our twice monthly tea, chat and craft afternoons offer an opportunity for companionship particularly for older villagers and these have run regularly through the year. The crafters in the group enjoyed planning and running the Easter craft event and making items for the craft fair.

On Shrove Tuesday we held a pancake event with many pancakes and a variety of competitions and races. The young people had a great time and were probably surprised at how competitive parent and grandparent races can be! Lots of pancakes were tossed and consumed. Donations at this event went to our lent Charity.

In April we held the Milton Duck race. The rain held off and lots of villagers turned up to support their duck and to share tea and cake in the church after the racing. We raised over £1000 for church funds, and it continues to be a popular community event.

Working in partnership with the church, MICE (Miltonians in Community Events) have led in the promotion of a 100 Club and other events from which the 'church' benefitted, both financially and socially. In July MICE joined the church in running a food stall at TRUCK over a warm weekend. They sold out and raised over £2000 for church funds.

The craft and jigsaw fair in November, featuring several talented village crafters as well as the church stall. This event was well supported raised over £700 for the church funds and got our Advent and Christmas season off to an enjoyable and profitable start.

Our Lent Charity was EMBRACE the Middle East and at Christmas we supported the DAWN (Didcot, Abingdon and Wantage Talking Newspaper). There was good support for Oxford Historic Churches Ride and Stride – with one family visiting churches and well sponsored. We also had welcomers at St Blaise for most of the day, who did a grand job tidying the churchyard, cleaning the church and decorating for harvest festival during quiet periods!

Sutton Courtenay

The regular events such as Community Cafe, Community Brunch, Movie Matinee, WeCare2, Together in Stitches, Knit and Natter have continued and have reached out to the community. A free family craft afternoon was offered to the community which attracted over 40 children and adults.

Specific Fundraising events included: The Vicar's Funday on Spring Bank Holiday Monday - which raised money for the 26th Abingdon Scouts; The Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project and All Saints' Church Fabric Fund; Moonrakers Concert; Orwell Society annual visit with Cream teas; Cream teas during August.

100 hampers were distributed again at Christmas, reaching a lot more families in need than past years.

The collections at the Village Carol Singing and at the Torchlight Procession and Bonfire raised over £1,000 for DEC Middle East Humanitarian Appeal.

The River Room has continued to be well used both for church activities and external bookings. It is being used by the wider church community, such as a Clergy Quiet Day, run by the diocese, PCC away days by PCCs from Abingdon. It is becoming popular as a venue for Baptism parties and Wakes.

Steventon

The Lent lunches, were well supported, raising over £1000 for Christian Aid. Two pasty parties, a plant sale, a concert, a harvest supper, two history group events, and the church fete all provided successful fund-raising opportunities for both the general fund and the church fabric fund. The annual TRUCK festival provided the opportunity of generating substantial funds for both the parish general fund and Steventon church fabric maintenance. A tremendous amount of work was involved in providing food for 20,000+ festival goers including a tonne of baked potatoes, 260kg of bacon, 4,000 crumpets and more than 30 catering sized tins of baked beans. Truck 2024 broke all records for the amount of food served, monies taken and the number of volunteers drawn from church families and villagers highlighting the level of support and encouragement for the church and its service to the community.

Music

There are regular weekly choirs in Steventon and Sutton Courtenay. Singers from across the Parish regularly combine forces for weddings and funerals and for shared DAMASCUS Services.

Drayton

The former members of the choir join with other choirs from the DAMASCUS Parish for certain DAMASCUS services as well as for some weddings. Drayton and Sutton Courtenay held a joint 9 lessons and carols service at which **the** choirs combined. A big thank you to the organists who play for us at Sunday services as well as Brian Thompson who accompanies us on guitar. Also, to Kay Davies who leads the music at our Praise services and frequently teaches us new hymns.

Appleford
With no regular organist, Iris Ramkisson continues to choose and upload the hymns to the church iPod and the sound system is used to good effect. Organist support is provided for special services (Christmas Carols and Midnight Mass) thanks to John Napper and Philip Agg.

Milton
We do not have a regular organist, so we have effectively use music from CDs. Through the year we have continued to experiment with using some of the less well known hymns in our hymn book with the support of choirs from around the world via YouTube.

Sutton Courtenay
The 'Singing Saints' have continued to support our worship and they were joined by a good number of 'guest' voices for the Carol Service in December to make a 25-strong choir. Our thanks go to Philip and Keiran Agg who rehearsed the choir, conducted and played the organ for the Christmas services. They are very grateful indeed to John Napper, who plays the organ, and to Barbara Vellacott for her piano playing during the year. Barbara retired at the end of 2024 due to ill-health.

Steventon
Two long standing members of the choir sadly died in 2024 reducing the choir's numbers to an average of 5-6 for services of Morning Worship and Holy Communion. All the members are very loyal and have all been with the choir for very many years. The choir rehearses once a month and sings at three services a month leading the congregation in the singing of hymns. For special occasions we can call on members of Steventon Choral Society to help with singing. The Choral Society joins the church choir annually for the traditional Christmas carol service and performs a concert on Palm Sundays in the church. Helen Pearce continues to serve as organist and Terry Pearce as choirmaster.

Bells
The bells in Drayton, Milton, Sutton Courtenay, and Steventon have all rung regularly for services during 2024. Practices have been held most weeks at all four churches. Ringing at Sutton Courtenay during 2024 has been restricted because of a broken gudgeon on the fifth bell, so that bell has been unringable for much of 2024, it is anticipated that this will be repaired in spring 2025. The bells at Appleford remain unringable.

In addition to services and weddings the bells have been rung for local and national events. Most notably this year was the ringing at Steventon in April to mark the 90th birthday of Jack Jarvis and his retirement as Licensed Lay Minister. Steventon ringers were delighted that the Dean of Westminster accepted their invitation to dedicate a peal board and to deliver the address during a service of evensong on the church's Feast Day. The Dean attended in the Abbey's role as the patron of Steventon church. The beautiful, hand-made board marked the 75th anniversary of Jack's membership of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Bell Ringers. There was ringing at Steventon and Milton in June as part of the national initiative Ring out

for Peace marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings. In November there was ringing at all the churches for Remembrance celebrations in our villages.

We are pleased to report that learners recruited at Drayton, Milton, Sutton Courtenay, and Steventon have all been making good progress. All four of our ringable towers have been pleased to be able to welcome visiting bands and to host branch practices for ringers from the local area. During 2024 there were two peals and six quarter peals rung at Drayton; 19 peals and ten quarter peals rung at Milton; ten quarter peals rung at Steventon; and one quarter peal rung at Sutton Courtenay. Of note, two ringers, one from Steventon and one from Milton, rang their first quarter peal and two called their first quarter peal at Steventon, several ringers rang their first quarter in a method they had not rung before. There were also several peal achievements among the more experienced ringers, most notably Colin Turner rang his 8000th peal, the first person ever to reach this milestone.

Routine checks and maintenance of the bells has been carried out by the bellringers at each tower during the year. Sutton Courtenay bells had an annual maintenance visit from Whites of Appleton in March which identified a broken gudgeon preventing that bell being rung until the gudgeon is replaced. The clappers of Drayton bells were refurbished in July. We are grateful to visiting ringers, peal, and quarter peal bands for the donations they make to our church bell funds which help with paying for ropes and necessary repair work on our bells.

Flowers

All the churches in the Parish are decorated for festivals and special occasions. We thank the many volunteer flower arrangers and those who organise flower rotas for all their efforts to make our churches look so beautiful.

Drayton

Sally Dixon and Val Cross decorate the church for the major festivals, with help from other members of the congregation. At Easter, Tony Allen and Sally create an Easter garden beneath the altar and at Christmas they create a nativity scene. If a member of the congregation would like a loved one remembered, then a pedestal arrangement is done.

Appleford

A team of people from the church and village ensure there are flowers each week in the church and come together to decorate the church for the major festivals. They are much appreciated by the congregation and visitors alike. We are grateful to Richard Mathews who maintains the two tubs outside the church door with all year around blooms.

Milton

Whilst there is no flower arranging group at St Blaise, a variety of volunteers organised decoration of the church for Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Day, and Christmas.

Sutton Courtenay
The Flower arranging team, under the leadership of Ann White, have continued to provide a dedicated service, with most providing the flowers at their own expense despite their being funds available to compensate them. We are grateful to Richard Mathews who maintains the two tubs outside the church door with all year around blooms. The Easter Lilies continue to be very popular, and a number of people support their purchase to dedicate lilies in memory of loved ones who have died.

Steventon
The church flower arrangers team provide flowers for church every Sunday; about twelve volunteers together decorate the church for the main festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas. During the Covid pandemic when gathered acts of worship were not permitted, fresh flowers were placed on the altar as an act of worship. The placing of flowers on the altar on a Sunday has now become a tradition of a rural community praising God for the beauty and wonder of His creation.

During 2024 the Team joined with the families to provide floral decorations for both weddings and funerals. The Church Flower Arrangers continue to provide only sustainable flowers and foliage, i.e. grown locally or in the UK and to eschew the use of floral foam as completely as possible, thus reducing their carbon footprint.

Schools
Within the DAMASCUS Parish there are four primary schools of which the three in Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon are Church of England schools. The clergy and lay people are actively involved in a variety of ways – as governors, taking assemblies, helping to deliver the RE curriculum, *Open the Book*, and as reading volunteers.

Drayton
There continues to be limited engagement with Drayton Community Primary School.

Appleford
There is no school in Appleford but links are maintained with families in the village who attend Europa; Long Wittenham, Sutton Courtenay and other local schools.

Milton
Milton CofE Primary School continues to have a strong link with the parish through the Reverend Phil Sutton who is a Foundation Governor with additional responsibilities for Safeguarding and staff wellbeing.

The demands on the pastoral care resources of the school have reached unprecedented levels as families find the high cost of food and energy pushing them further into debt and hunger. The need for emergency and maintained pastoral support reached such a level at

Christmas 2024 that longer term support mechanisms will be considered and implemented in 2025.

At the end of the school year in July 2024, the school bade a fond farewell to their Head, Ruth Leach and a welcome to the new Head, Becky Costello. The transition has been a very successful one with the school achieving a 'Good' Ofsted rating with warm praise for its Christian ethos of care, nurture and positive learning environment. Class visits to the church have taken place during the year, but it has not been possible to hold School services in the church due to the complications of transporting the children to the church.

Sutton Courtenay

A small team has continued to take Open the Book assemblies to Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School. These are always well received and the Year 6's enjoy taking on roles too. Year 6 have also come to All Saints' for a variety of Experiences, including Holy week and Pentecost. The children have time to reflect and talk about the events surrounding the Easter stories. Years 5 and 4 came to the Church for the Christmas Experience. Nursery visited for an Angel Hunt around the Church and their Christmas party. The school also come to All Saints' for end of term services at Easter, Summer Leavers' Service and Christmas.

2024 has been a time of huge transition for the school with the departure of the head, Rachel Hornsey and the majority of the other members of staff. A new head, Raluca Chende, started in September 2024 and good relationships are continuing between school and church. We are currently seeking a new Foundation Governor to replace Bryony Landsbert who stood down after several years of service.

Steventon

Steventon St Michael's CofE Primary School joined the Abingdon Learning Trust Academy in December 2024 after 2 years of careful analysis of our options as to becoming an academy school or remaining as a LEA school. The school, Trust and governing body were delighted to celebrate our school becoming the fourth school in ALT when the complex legal process was complete. The benefits of enhanced senior teacher mentoring, curriculum and learning monitoring are already in evidence. The Trust is committed to enabling us to further develop our community and church links and to model such examples for the Trust's three Abingdon schools.

The small Open the Book team continues to offer a whole school assembly once a fortnight which receives strong support from the children via their pupil parliament. Revd Phil Sutton continues to offer whole school and classroom assemblies as well as coordinating a pastoral support resource for families in crisis. Typically, four families will be receiving significant resources at any one time. Kathryn Mendus resigned as a Foundation Governor in the autumn and the governing body are actively seeking a replacement governor in conjunction with the Oxford Diocese and Didcot based churches.

Fabric

In all five churches routine maintenance has taken place, including clearance of drains and gutters and servicing of boilers, fire extinguishers, lightning conductors, roof alarms, CCTV, clocks, and organs. One quinquennial inspection took place during this year. For each church other specific activity related to maintaining the building and churchyard is given in the following paragraphs.

Drayton

The repairs to the south wall and guttering have been done. Work remains to be done on the tower. At the end of the year the central heating was creating problems which was caused by a faulty radiator. This has now been removed.

There were many complaints in the spring when our gardener was unable to cut the grass in the churchyard. Drayton Parish Council has now taken on the responsibility for grass cutting from Spring 2025.

Appleford

In September 2024 Brian Blakeman agreed to take on the role of Clerk of Works for Appleford alongside his work in All Saints', Sutton Courtenay. A tree survey was undertaken and as a result the yew tree closest to the Church Cottage boundary had significant work done to make it safe; the front path yew trees were trimmed to a more manageable size and general pruning was carried out throughout the churchyard. Thanks to the team of volunteers headed up by Jacob Shepherd.

Milton

The church building and its interior are in good condition following the major projects in recent years. Work carried out during the year includes improving the lighting in the chancel by replacing all the light bulbs with daylight LEDs; realigning and repointing stonework of the back vestry porch, repointing the roof joint between the north side of the nave roof and the chancel wall, re-building the top section of the high wall on the north-west side of the churchyard. Further work has been carried out clearing ivy from the churchyard walls. We would like to record our thanks to Paul Browning for the many tasks he has ably and enthusiastically carried out to maintain the church; to all those involved in cutting the churchyard grass and to the Churchyard Working Group that has done so much to keep the churchyard tidy.

Sutton Courtenay

Thanks go to Brian Blakeman, the All Saints' clerk of works, for continuing to help maintain the fabric of the church and the River Room. During the year the South Pillar on the main gate was rebuilt. The chancel lights were repaired and upgraded so they can now be dimmed. The Tower Clock was finally repaired and is back in working order. Path lights to the River Room have been replaced with pillar lights. The Main Entrance Inner Door has had the fabric covering replaced. Work continues on coming up with a solution to enable live streaming of services.

Steventon

Minor repairs have been undertaken to curtain poles and screen panels, a faculty was obtained for the installation of a commemorative plaque to celebrate the lifelong service to the church and community by Mr Jack Jarvis. A second faculty application was submitted in the autumn for the replacement of eroded and broken external stone on the church tower and north wall along with extensive repointing of the south wall. This work was specified in the 2020 quinquennial report and the specification and contract documents were prepared by the same architect.

Deanery Synod

During 2024 Deanery Synod has met in February, May, October and November. Standing agenda items have included finance and parish share, and it was good to be able to again report that Abingdon Deanery parishes have all paid their share in full, so that a Diocesan discount continues to apply. It was wonderful to hear the news that St Helens Dry Sandford was able to reopen during the year, following remedial works to dangerous stonework. Other happy news included the appointment of Rev Wealands Bell, the former chaplain at Magdalen College School to be incumbent of Appleton with Besselsleigh, and Rev Dr AKMA Adams, a New Testament tutor at Oxford University to support the team at St Helen's Abingdon. The Area Dean's focus for the year has been on Children Young People and Families ministry, and this has carried across to our own PCC meetings. This initiative was also supported by a presentation to Deanery Synod by Anne Ferry – the newly appointed Parish Development Advisor for Dorchester Archdeaconry.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our five churches lively and vibrant communities. Particularly we thank welcomers, sidespeople, readers, intercessors, junior church leaders, refreshment providers and all those who assist with the financial processes, and all those who work behind the scenes who make for an efficient operation and ensuring we have well-presented buildings and churchyards.

Ministry Team

The Reverend Helen Kendrick was installed as an Honorary Canon at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford on Saturday 27th January where she was supported by family and friends from the Parish. This was in recognition of her services to the Diocese over 25 years.

The Reverend Dov Whittle and his wife Katy, and sons Daniel and Isaac moved into Drayton Vicarage as Dov commenced his Curacy in the DAMASCUS Parish. Members of the parish attended his ordination at Christ Church Cathedral at the end of June.

Financial review

This financial review covers the period 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024. Income has exceeded £250,000 so we continue to prepare and present the accounts using the accruals method. Income and expenditure are therefore recognised as soon as entitlement is established, e.g., gift aid must be recognised when the income is received even though the actual claim may be received in the subsequent year.

Accruals accounts consist of a SOFA (Statement of Financial Activities), a balance sheet, a cash flow statement, and further explanatory notes. The SOFA is on page 19, the balance sheet is on page 20, the cash flow statement is on page 21 and the notes on pages 22-32.

Total unrestricted income during 2024 was £183,593, a small increase on the previous year's income of £178,793 primarily due to an increase in tax efficient and other planned giving, an increase in fund raising income for the unrestricted fund and an increase in interest. There was a decrease in income to the unrestricted fund from statutory fees because some statutory fees are now being paid to relevant church fabric funds. Overall, the income from statutory fees in 2024 was similar to that in 2023 as was total income from fund raising activities, but the share of these monies between unrestricted and restricted funds has changed. Total income from interest was higher in 2024 due to the high interest rates, but most of this income is in restricted funds.

Total unrestricted expenditure increased slightly from £158,175 to £165,837, this is mainly due to an increase in the Parish share, as we had a £5,000 reduction in the payment of the Parish Share in 2023 as recompense for the Rector taking the role of Acting Assistant Archdeacon during a vacancy. There was a decrease in the cost of church utilities from £22,925 in 2023 to £16,150 in 2024, this was partly due to a modest reduction in the cost of electricity and gas but mostly was due to a hugely overestimated gas bill in one church in 2023 and it took most of 2024 to use up the balance of the overestimate. We purchased a new parish photocopier during 2024.

In 2024 there was a net gain in unrestricted funds of £20,186. Consequently, the unrestricted funds carried forward to 2025 are £97,573. The increase in unrestricted funds means we have a cushion above the limit set by our reserves policy (see below). As we review our ministry staffing in 2025 and plan for the future, the modest gains in the unrestricted fund for three years despite increasing costs, will allow us to consider whether an increase in the ministry team might be sustainable.

A designated fund established in 2022 to handle short term grants for warm spaces projects, received a further grant of £8,000 in January 2024. This, together with the remaining money from previous grants, allowed funding of Warm Spaces activities in January to March and in December 2024. The balance of £6,725 in the fund will continue to be used for Warm Spaces activities in 2025.

The overall income to the restricted funds during 2024 was £87,697, an increase on the previous year’s income of £74,794. There were more voluntary donations and associated gift aid to restricted funds and the income from interest has been higher. There was a legacy

of £10,000 to one Fabric Fund and increased grant income from Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. The expenditure from the restricted funds was higher in 2024 at £71,677 than in 2023 when it was £46,400. This increase in expenditure in the restricted funds is mostly in major capital expenditure and in church running costs because of several minor maintenance or fabric repair projects across the five churches and the start of a more major fabric project in Steventon Church. Overall, there was an increase in the balance of the restricted funds of £16,988, though this is largely an increase in the balance of two of the restricted funds. All the church fabric funds have an adequate balance for day-to-day expenditure, but most would require fund raising if there are essential large building repairs required.

Investment funds, which are all endowment funds, increased in value from £674,784 to £686,409. For most of these funds only interest or dividends may be spent.

In summary, we have had a successful year with modest increases in the overall balances of both the restricted and unrestricted funds despite high inflationary increases in costs and more minor maintenance activity. However, we must continue to pay close attention to the level of unrestricted funds if we are to increase our ministry staffing. Considering the age profile of our committed regular givers, we need to continue regular stewardship campaigns if this important source of income is to be maintained into the next decade. Additional fund raising will be required, particularly for the five church fabric funds, if we are to continue keeping the churches in good repair.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on free reserves (net current assets) which equates to at least two months unrestricted payments. This is equivalent to £30,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. It is our policy to invest short term balances with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund and longer-term reserves in the CCLA Church of England Investment fund.

Structure, governance, and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. In the DAMASCUS Parish the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, other members of the clergy team, churchwardens, licensed lay ministers, and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the parish. All those who are members of the congregations are encouraged to register on the electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC met six times during the year all were in-person meetings. The Local Church Committees (LCC), with responsibility for considering local activity and provide local church feedback to the PCC and who act as a forum for the PCC to consult with the congregations of each of the five churches continued to meet in the alternative months to the PCC. Each of the five LCCs provide a report to every PCC meeting. For each church Pro-Wardens, elected at the APCM, carry out roles ensuring the smooth running of their church and maintain order in the church and grounds.

A Standing Committee consisting of the incumbent, the churchwardens, the PCC Secretary, the PCC Treasurer and two other members of the PCC meet bi-monthly (in the months between PCC meetings) to transact business delegated to them by the PCC.

Administrative information

The Ministry team

Clergy

Parish Rector – The Reverend Helen Kendrick
Associate Priest (Half-Time Stipendiary) – The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest (SSM) - The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Retired PTO – The Reverend Canon Dr Phillip Tovey
PTO – The Reverend Geoff Morgan
Assistant Curate – The Reverend Dov Whittle (from July 2024)

Licensed Lay Ministers

Dr Tim Budd (PTO)
Mr Jack Jarvis (PTO) (until April 2024)
Mrs Alex Landsbert (PTO)

Authorised Preacher

Mr Paul James

The DAMASCUS Parish is part of the Abingdon Deanery within the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Parish Office, All Saints Church, The Green, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4AE. The PCC is a body corporate

(PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission, with registered charity number 1175551.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:
Incumbent: The Reverend Helen Kendrick (Chairman)
Associate Minister: The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest: The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Jack Jarvis
Licenced Lay Minister: Mrs Alex Landsbert
Churchwarden: Dr Hilary Otterburn (until July 2024)
Mr Anton King representative in Deanery Synod
Mr Michael Murray representative in Deanery Synod
Mrs Sue Harris, Secretary
Mrs Sue Jenkins, Safeguarding Officer

Elected members:
Mrs Valerie Cross
Mrs Linda Johnson (until May 2024)
Mrs Nicola Turner (Hon. Treasurer)
Dr Elaine Maxwell
Mrs Alison Budd (Churchwarden from July 2024)
Professor David King
Mrs Caroline Miller
Mr Tony Sloggett

Local Church Committee members who have served at any time from 1 January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:
Drayton LCC: Val Cross (Pro-Warden); Gareth Davies (Clerk of Works); Sally Dixon; Sue Harris; Sue Icke; Linda Johnson (Pro-warden until June 2024); Anton King; and The Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick and The Reverend Dov Whittle
Appleford LCC: Elizabeth Duffield; William Finch; Sue Helby; Linda Payne; Iris Ramkissoon; Jacob Shepherd (Pro-Warden from November 2024) and The Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick and The Reverend Dov Whittle
Milton LCC: Mike Blanch, Pat Capuzzimati, Elaine Maxwell (Pro-Warden), Janet Money, Janet Taylor, Nicola Turner (Pro-Warden) and The Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick and The Reverend Dov Whittle.
Sutton Courtenay: Brian Blakeman (Clerk of Works), Alison Budd (Pro-Warden), Susan Jenkins, David King, Alex Landsbert, Viviene Maunders, Malcolm Ross, Phil Stubley, Mary Warrington and The Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick and The Reverend Dov Whittle.
Steventon: Alan Binning (Pro-Warden), Diana Bowder, Doreen Goddard, Jack Jarvis, Andrew Loutit, Caroline Miller, Mike Murray, Hilary Otterburn (Pro-Warden), Terry Pearce, David Sandford, Tony Sloggett and The Reverend Phil Sutton.

DAMASCUS PARISH
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on pages 19 to 32.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement
I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed

Caroline Webster, FCA

UHY Ross Brooke
Suite I, Windrush Court, Abingdon Business Park, OX14 1SY

Date: 13.05.2025

DAMASCUS PARISH
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year to 31 December 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS							
Voluntary income	2a	139,821	8,000	36,090	-	183,911	160,237
Activities for generating funds	2b	19,702	-	15,505	-	35,207	35,820
Church activities	2c	14,439	-	7,368	-	21,807	23,996
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	2d	3,496	-	28,734	-	32,230	27,964
Other incoming resources	2e	6,135	-	-	-	6,135	5,570
TOTAL INCOME		**183,593**	**8,000**	**87,697**	**-**	**279,290**	**253,587**
EXPENDITURE							
Church activities	3a	126,787	136	3,315	-	130,238	121,004
Church expenses	3b	35,725	1,418	58,815	-	95,958	81,796
Costs of generating income	3c	1,189	-	3,372	-	4,561	3,022
Major capital expenditure	3d	-	-	5,568	-	5,568	-
Other expenditure	3e	2,136	-	607	-	2,743	717
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		**165,837**	**1,554**	**71,677**	**-**	**239,068**	**206,539**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE BEFORE INVESTMENT GAINS		**17,756**	**6,446**	**16,020**	**-**	**40,222**	**47,048**
NET GAINS ON INVESTMENTS					**11,625**	**11,625**	**43,687**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE		**17,756**	**6,446**	**16,020**	**11,625**	**51,847**	**90,735**
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS		2,430	(3,398)	968	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		**20,186**	**3,048**	**16,988**	**11,625**	**51,847**	**90,735**
Total funds brought forward		**77,387**	**3,677**	**182,546**	**674,784**	**938,394**	**847,659**
Total fund carried forward		**97,573**	**6,725**	**199,534**	**686,409**	**990,241**	**938,394**

DAMASCUS PARISH
BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Notes	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible	6	1,240	-
Investments	7	686,409	674,784
		687,649	674,784
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and prepayments	8	15,340	13,271
Short-term deposits		200,434	170,402
Cash at bank and in hand		89,812	84,968
		305,586	268,641
LIABILITIES			
Creditors - amounts falling due in one year	9	2,994	5,031
NET CURRENT ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		302,592	263,610
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		990,241	938,394
Creditors - amounts falling due after one year	10	-	-
TOTAL NET ASSETS		990,241	938,394
PARISH FUNDS			
Unrestricted	11	104,298	81,064
Restricted	12	199,534	182,546
Endowment		686,409	674,784
		990,241	938,394

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 12/5/2025 and signed on its behalf by:

The Revd Helen Kendrick (Chair) HGKendrick

Nicola Turner (Treasurer) Nicola Turner

DAMASCUS PARISH
CASH FLOW STATEMENT AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
Net cash from operating activities		4,506		(3,606)
Cash flows from investing activities				
Dividends, interest and rent from investments	32,230		27,964	
Interest paid	-		-	
Proceeds from sale of:				
Tangible fixed assets	-		-	
Tangible fixed investments	-		-	
Purchase of:				
Tangible fixed assets for the use of the PCC	(1,860)		-	
Fixed asset investments	-		-	
Cash flows from financing activities				
Loans (outstanding balances)	-		-	
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities		30,370		27,964
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		34,876		24,358
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January		255,370		231,012
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December		290,246		255,370
Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) before investment gains				
Net income before investment gains 31 December		40,222		47,048
Adjustment for:				
Depreciation charges		620		203
Dividends, interest and rent from investments		(32,230)		(27,964)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors		(2,069)		(1,760)
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors		(2,037)		(21,133)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		4,506		(3,606)
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents				
Cash in hand		89,812		84,968
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		200,434		170,402
		290,246		255,370

DAMASCUS PARISH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Parish is a public benefit entity within the meaning of FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared under The Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and with the Regulations "true and fair view" provisions, together with FRS102 as the applicable accounting standard and the 2019 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP (FRS102). The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets, which are shown as fair value.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. There are no material uncertainties in respect of the charities ability to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

ASSETS

Consecrated and benefice property

Consecrated and beneficed property of any kind is excluded from the accounts by s.10(2) of the Charities Act 2011. All expenditure incurred during the year on such property is written off as expenditure in the SOFA and separately disclosed

Moveable church furnishings

These are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful economic life (normally 20 years) other than when insufficient cost information is available. In this case the item is not capitalised, but all items are included in the Church's inventory in any case.

Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £1,000. The Parish photocopier comes within this scope and has been depreciated over 3 years.

FUNDS

Unrestricted Funds

These represent the remaining income funds of the PCC available for spending on general purposes of the PCC. They include designated funds that have been set aside by the PCC for specific purposes.

Restricted Funds

These are income funds that must be spent on restricted purposes and details of funds held and restrictions provided are shown in the notes to the accounts.

Endowment Funds

These are restricted funds that must be retained as trust capital either permanently or subject to a discretionary power to spend capital as income.

INCOME

Collections and planned giving are recognised when received by or on behalf of the Parish. Income tax recoverable on covenants or gift aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised. Grants and legacies to the church are accounted for as soon as the Parish is notified of its legal entitlement and the amount due. Funds raised by fund-raising events are accounted for as gross. Sales of books and magazines are accounted for gross.

INVESTMENT INCOME

Interest on bank balances is accounted for on an accruals basis with interest recognised in the period to which the interest relates.

Dividend income is recognised on the date the share interest becomes ex-dividend or when the right to the dividend can be established.

EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal and constructive obligation and settlement is probable and quantifiable.

DAMASCUS PARISH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

2 INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
2(a) Voluntary income						
All other giving and voluntary receipts, including Special Appeals (recurring and one-off)	4,624	-	15,889	-	20,513	17,156
Collections at services	15,083	-	1,644	-	16,727	16,576
Collections at services for charity	4,973	-	-	-	4,973	4,029
Gift Aid recovered	24,300	-	2,112	-	26,412	25,752
Grants (include recurring and one-off)	4,564	8,000	4,745	-	17,309	13,037
Other planned giving	4,347	-	-	-	4,347	2,216
Legacies received (capital value)	-	-	10,000	-	10,000	1,000
Tax efficient planned giving	81,930	-	1,700	-	83,630	80,471
	139,821	8,000	36,090	-	183,911	160,237
2(b) Activities for generating funds						
Gross income from fundraising activities	19,702	-	15,505	-	35,207	35,820
	19,702	-	15,505	-	35,207	35,820
2(c) Church activities						
Additional wedding and funeral fees	2,267	-	60	-	2,327	1,416
Gross income from trading (e.g. hall lettings, magazine, bookstall). NOT fundraising.	4,454	-	4,524	-	8,978	11,961
Statutory fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc)	7,718	-	2,784	-	10,502	10,619
	14,439	-	7,368	-	21,807	23,996
2(d) Dividends, interest, income from property etc.						
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	3,496	-	28,734	-	32,230	27,964
	3,496	-	28,734	-	32,230	27,964
2(e) Other incoming resources						
Other incoming resources	6,135	-	-	-	6,135	5,570
	6,135	-	-	-	6,135	5,570
TOTAL INCOME	183,593	8,000	87,697		279,290	253,587

3 EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£		£	£	£	£
3(a) Church activities						
Clergy and staff expenses	2,841	136	-	-	2,977	3,319
Diocesan parish share contribution	105,785	-	-	-	105,785	96,292
Mission giving and donations	11,371	-	175	-	11,546	11,443
Salaries, wages and honoraria	6,790	-	3,140	-	9,930	9,950
	126,787	136	3,315	-	130,238	121,004
3(b) Church expenses						
Mission and evangelism costs	274	1,418	4,425	-	6,117	5,962
Church running expenses	19,953	-	51,481	-	71,434	51,528
Church utility bills	13,678	-	2,472	-	16,150	22,925
Cost of trading	-	-	437	-	437	218
Independent examiner's costs	1,200	-	-	-	1,200	960
Depreciation on church equipment	620	-	-	-	620	203
	35,725	1,418	58,815	-	95,958	81,796
3(c) Costs of generating income						
Costs of fundraising activities	1,189	-	3,372	-	4,561	3,022
	1,189	-	3,372	-	4,561	3,022
3(d) Major capital expenditure						
Major repairs to the church building	-	-	5,568	-	5,568	-
New building work	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	5,568	-	5,568	-
3(e) Other expenditure						
Other outgoing resources/ payments	2,101	-	607	-	2,708	682
Governance costs	35	-	-	-	35	35
	2,136	-	607	-	2,743	717
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	165,837	1,554	71,677		239,068	206,539

4 STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Parish administrator	6,760	6,720
Cleaner	1,590	1,515
Groundsman	615	615
Gravedigger	-	-
Organist	935	1,100
Vergers	30	-
Bell ringers	-	-
	9,930	9,950

Note: All staff above are self-employed

Parish administrator	1	1
Cleaner	1	1
Groundsman	1	1
Gravedigger	-	-
Organist	3	5
Vergers	1	-
Bellringers	-	-

None of the Trustees received any remuneration or employee benefits during the year. The lay trustees, where applicable, who acted as agents to the PCC in making approved payments on its behalf, were reimbursed for these expenses on presentation of suitable documentary evidence.

Clergy working expenses were reimbursed in accordance with Church of England guidelines.

There were no related party transactions.

5 TRANSFER OF FUNDS

	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	Total £
From Warm Spaces Grant (Designated Fund WARM) to General and restricted funds depending on the expenditure	2,430	(3,398)	968	-

6 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost of valuation		
At 1 January 2024	-	-
Additions	1,860	-
Disposals	-	-
At 31 December 2024	1,860	1,860
Depreciation		
At 1 January 2024	-	-
Charge for the year	620	620
At 31 December 2024	620	620
Net book value at 31 December 2024	1,240	1,240
Net book value at 31 December 2023	-	-

7 INVESTMENTS

		Market value at 31st December 2023	Additions	Disposals	Market value at 31st December 2024	Change in value Jan 1 to Dec 31 2024
		£	£	£	£	£
Milton Milton - Church Lands		601,309	-	-	611,253	9,944
Drayton Bradfield Trust		10,607	-	-	10,850	243
Drayton Clerk's Piece CO3056670		933	-	-	954	21
Drayton Miss Emma Hyde for maintenance of church fabric CO3055160-001		2,600	-	-	2,658	58
Drayton Hyde's charity for psalmody CO3057211		893	-	-	913	20
Steventon CB3031650 - ENDOWMENT FUND		34,329	-	-	35,115	786
Steventon CB3031648 - N01 INVESTMENT FUND		24,101	-	-	24,653	552
DAMASCUS PCC CB3030966	*	12	-	-	13	1
		674,784	**-**	**-**	**686,409**	**11,625**

* This investment was purchased for £10.00 on 21 Aug 2018 by a parishioner for the Parish but was omitted from the investment list in 2018 to 2021 inclusive.

8 DEBTORS

	2024	2023
	£	£
HMRC Gift Aid	3,025	3,330
Statutory fees due	160	99
Collections to be banked	2,282	1,065
Fund raising to be banked	793	1,593
Parish share rebate	4,274	2,558
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	4,299	4,402
Miscellaneous debtors	507	224
TOTAL	15,340	13,271

9 CREDITORS falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accounts examination costs	1,200	960
Mission and evangelism costs	-	732
Clergy expenses	146	-
Church running expenses	863	812
Mission giving	-	1,627
Parish Administrator	600	560
Organist	25	175
Cleaner	150	165
Miscellaneous creditors	10	-
TOTAL	2,994	5,031

10 CREDITORS falling due after one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
	-	-
TOTAL	-	-

11 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
General funds	77,387	183,593	165,837	2,430	97,573
Designated funds					
DAMASCUS Warm Spaces	3,677	8,000	1,554	(3,398)	6,725
	3,677	8,000	1,554	(3,398)	6,725

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS IN 2023

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
General funds	54,554	178,793	158,175	2,215	77,387
Designated funds					
DAMASCUS Warm Spaces	8,034	-	1,349	(3,008)	3,677
Steventon Roots and Shoots	615	-	615	-	-
	8,649	-	1,964	(3,008)	3,677

12 RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
Drayton fabric	9,316	4,181	5,279	188	8,406
Drayton Carpenters legacy	1,314	54	-	-	1,368
Drayton Bells	3,602	605	1,985	-	2,222
Drayton Clerk's Piece	424	26	-	-	450
Drayton Hydes for Psalmody	690	25	-	-	715
Appleford fabric fund	13,779	1,622	2,515	-	12,886
Milton bells	14,461	1,322	234	-	15,549
Milton building	14,486	3,454	7,156	-	10,784
Milton Church Lands	70,078	24,023	10,200	195	84,096
Sutton Courtenay Fabric	21,240	34,333	28,414	477	27,636
Sutton Courtenay Ringers	246	155	-	715	1,116
Sutton Courtenay Fun Day	8,162	7,260	7,058	(715)	7,649
Steventon Fabric	7,021	9,792	8,777	108	8,144
Steventon Churchyard	14,787	609	-	-	15,396
Steventon Tower	2,940	236	59	-	3,117
	182,546	**87,697**	**71,677**	**968**	**199,534**

RESTRICTED FUNDS IN 2023

		Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
	Drayton fabric	9,317	6,014	6,015	-	9,316
	Drayton Carpenters legacy	1,269	45	-	-	1,314
	Drayton Bells	3,244	358	-	-	3,602
	Drayton Clerk's Piece	398	26	-	-	424
	Drayton Hydes for Psalmody	665	25	-	-	690
	Appleford fabric fund	10,498	4,308	1,027	-	13,779
	Milton bells	13,224	1,302	65	-	14,461
	Milton building	12,779	2,899	1,192	-	14,486
	Milton Church Lands	54,084	21,632	5,723	85	70,078
*	Sutton Courtenay Fabric	14,008	25,333	18,809	708	21,240
	Sutton Courtenay Ringers	705	16	475	-	246
	Sutton Courtenay Fun Day	8,732	4,573	5,143	-	8,162
**	Steventon Fabric	6,880	7,144	7,003	-	7,021
	Steventon Churchyard	14,871	516	600	-	14,787
	Steventon Tower	2,685	603	348	-	2,940
		153,359	**74,794**	**46,400**	**793**	**182,546**

* During 2023 the Restricted Fund called Sutton Courtenay River Room was merged with Sutton Courtenay Fabric

** During 2023 the Restricted Fund called Steventon Church Repair was merged with Steventon Fabric

SUMMARY OF ASSETS BY FUND

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	**TOTAL 2024** £
Tangible fixed assets	1,240	-	-	1,240
Investment fixed assets	-	-	686,409	686,409
Current assets	105,223	200,363	-	305,586
Liabilities				
Amounts falling due in one year	(2,165)	(829)	-	(2,994)
Amounts falling due after one year	-	-	-	-
	104,298	199,534	686,409	990,241

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

England & Wales - Charity number 1175551

Accounts

The DAMASCUS Parish

Drayton | Appleford | Milton
Sutton Courtenay | Steventon

2023 Report and accounts for the DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council

St Peter's, **D**rayton
St Peter & St Paul's, **A**ppleford
St Blaise, **M**ilton
All Saints', **S**utton **C**ourtenay
St Michael & All Angels', **S**teventon

Nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love

Registered charity number 1175551

Introduction to the DAMASCUS Parish

The DAMASCUS Parish is a single parish, formed from the five, growing, semi-rural villages of Drayton, Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courtenay, and Steventon. The five parishes had been working together for over twenty years as a Group Ministry prior to the formation of the single parish in July 2017. We are continuing to build on growing together.

The Parish is situated between Abingdon and Didcot with boundaries abutting both towns. There are considerable numbers of professional people in the area, with Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, Harwell, Culham, Didcot Power Station and Milton Park Enterprise Zone all in the locality. The easy access to Didcot Parkway Station means that many parishioners commute to London, Oxford, Reading, Swindon and beyond.

Aim and Purposes

The DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Helen Kendrick, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the churches of St Peter's Drayton, St Peter and St Paul's Appleford, St Blaise Milton, All Saints' Sutton Courtenay and St Michael and All Angels' Steventon and St Michael's Hall Steventon.

Our Vision and Mission

Our vision is to be a living Christian presence at the heart of our communities nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love.

Through:

1. Reaching out to our existing communities and the influx of new residents.
2. Building a new community of faith within the Milton Heights development.
3. Re-invigorating our existing traditional churches to support mission and outreach.
4. Enabling outreach within our Schools to flourish and grow.
5. Developing a spirit of generosity and giving, where all the churches support mission where it is most needed.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the five churches in the parish.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and prayer

Throughout 2023 the number of regular worshippers across the Parish returned to pre-pandemic numbers but with a different age and attendance profile (younger age range but attending less frequently). The smaller churches of Appleford and Milton recovered faster than the larger congregations.

In 2023 the Ministry team and PCC revised the service pattern to enable the reduced clergy team to cover services in all five churches in a more sustainable way, whilst still offer a range of services across the parish during the week and over the course of the year. Main Sunday services now either take place at 9.30 or 11.00 with at least one service in each church every Sunday, except for the fifth Sunday when there is a DAMASCUS Parish service in one of the five churches. Mid-week services are held in two churches on different days of the week. All five churches are open during the day every day for our local community and visitors to enjoy and use for private prayer.

Limited live streaming of Sunday services has been available but proved to be a challenge due to technical difficulties and lack of expertise. The Ministry team continued to provide service sheets for people to worship at home where requested.

During 2023 there were 196 people on the Parish Electoral Roll.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey of life. Throughout 2023 the requests for live-streaming of funerals continued to increase and live-streaming of weddings, particularly in All Saints', Sutton Courtenay was made available when requested. In the DAMASCUS parish we have celebrated 37 baptisms, 11 weddings and 33 funeral services in church during 2023.

Remembrance Sunday Services were held inside our church buildings in 2023 and they were well supported – with attendance similar to pre-COVID years.

Four of the five churches participated in the government's Warm Spaces scheme and offered a variety of opportunities for individuals and families to benefit from free hospitality and activities with the benefit of a grant from local government.

In 2023 we had six confirmation candidates who were prepared for confirmation by the Reverend Canon Dr Phillip Tovey and Mike Blanch.

We focused on sharing faith through various prayer and study groups which were hosted in the River Room and/or online and open to all.

We would like to thank our Rector, Reverend Helen Kendrick, our Associate Ministers Reverend Phil Sutton, Reverend Rosie Bruce, and Reverend Dr Phillip Tovey (retired PTO) and all the Licensed Lay Ministers for their hard work leading, nurturing, inspiring and teaching us during this year.

The following paragraphs present points about worship and ministry specific to each of the five churches in the parish.

Drayton

The Worship Team

The team meets regularly to plan the Thursday morning rota and the leadership of the monthly Praise Services. Members of the team usually lead one service per month on the Thursday rota. The Praise Services, have provided some very interesting and enjoyable topics during the last 12 months, with music provided by Kay Davies.

The worship team have gained in confidence, ably supported by Reverend Rosie Bruce and the congregation. A team member organizes a rota of organists and other musicians who play for us, another member chooses the hymns.

Prayer meeting

We continued to have weekly virtual prayer meetings in our homes for the first three Mondays of the month. On the fourth Monday of the month we physically met up in the church room or a home. A Prayer Supplement is prepared weekly which is much appreciated by those who continue to pray virtually in their homes. Being able to do this has encouraged us to have prayer as part of the church's life together.

Healing Team – Healing Ministry continues to be well supported in St Peter's. The team meet up on the Saturday evening for a Preparation Service in The Lady Chapel. At this service prayer requests and cards left on the prayer board in St Peter's are offered for healing prayers. During the service the following morning after communion the congregation are invited to receive healing prayer by the laying on of hands.

The Comms Team

The Comms Team aim to connect St Peter's to the village community with God's love through different forms of media. We have been posting regularly on the St Peter's Facebook page and on the Drayton Village Community page. Additional posts are made for special services and events, including All Souls' service, Remembrance Day, and Harvest. Both our Easter Day 2023 and Christmas Day 2023 posts received quite a lot of likes on the Drayton Village Community page, many of which were from people not connected with St Peter's and who don't regularly interact with our posts. Knit and Natter posts also drew positive responses, as did the thank you post following the Churchyard cleanup. We update the noticeboard outside St Peter's very regularly and many Church events and services are advertised here also. More people are showing an interest in looking at the board and it is

brighter and more interesting. We continue to put together the church page in the Drayton Chronicle, each month.

Pebbles

The group caters for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their parents and carers. It takes place on Wednesday mornings during term time in the Church Room and at the back of the Church. 2023 saw a change in the leadership of Pebbles with Sue Icke stepping down from leading in July. The leadership was taken over by Cheryl Jarvis and Katy Hoyle who are assisted by two others.

Attendance was very good during 2023 with some leaving to start school and new babies coming for the first time. The children enjoy free play, crafts, singing and story time. The nativity in December was very well attended and thank you to Reverend Phil Sutton for coming and reading to the children. A party followed and was enjoyed by all.

Feedback from the mums and carers was very encouraging, a lot of them stating the Pebbles was the most welcoming group they had been to. 2023 was a very promising one for Baptisms from within the group with 4 children being baptised. A gift of a children's Bible story book was given to each from the group.

First Tuesday Connections – In January exercises from the chair with music and singing was offered. In May, there was a talk about wildlife in the area and a visit to the speaker's garden. In August we celebrated a member's 90th birthday with singing and cake. In November there was another sing along session. In other months it was "just a chat" with tea/coffee and biscuits or seasonally appropriate food.

The Care Team – Continue to visit people who need a listening ear and to share a cup of tea and a chat. Phone calls are often made to check that people not seen for a while are keeping well. Cards sent on the anniversary of a bereavement are much appreciated. Baptism and wedding anniversaries are also sent cards.

Appleford

During 2023 the congregation numbers remained stable, with the highest attendance at Breakfast Church. Breakfast Church is held on the first Sunday of every month with refreshments being served before the service starts and then a short, informal all age liturgy to follow. This continues to be well-supported by families and the WhatsApp group continues to be a useful method of promotion and communication as well as the parish Facebook page.

For Mothering Sunday flowers and prayer cards and for Easter, greeting cards and seeds, were distributed to every home in the village. These were very well received and helped to remind people that the church community was still active and praying for the wider community.

The Street Nativity was extremely well attended and once again a donkey was supplied by The Donkey Sanctuary. The Appleford Community Project paid for the donkey and provided refreshments in the farmyard at the end which was much appreciated by all who attended.

Several people helped to knit angels which were then distributed around the village by the church families, for people to find and hang on their own Christmas trees. The carol service was well attended with children and adults all playing a part.

Milton

The typical attendance at the main Sunday service is 11 adults, but for family services typical attendance is 17 adults and seven children. One Sunday each month we have had a lay led service, Faith Conversations, this is a café style service and has been led by a variety of members of the congregation and a wide range of topics have been discussed. It has also been an opportunity to hear from a representative of our Lent charity. This service has been well supported. Our Family services have been particularly well supported and the young people have been very willing contributors.

We have regular joint services with Milton Methodists, the Palm Sunday procession began at St Blaise and walked to Milton Methodist church for the service. We were pleased to welcome some members of Milton Methodists to the service on Remembrance Sunday and on Christmas Eve.

Our Lent charity was Emmaus (Oxford) and a companion from the charity talked with us about their experience of homelessness and how Emmaus has helped and support them and the work they do in the social enterprise.

For Easter several members of the congregation contributed to the production of 150 knitted chicks containing Easter eggs for all the children at Milton School. For Remembrance Sunday, the knitted poppy cascade was fixed around the porch entrance and in church there was a display of information about those whose names appear on our war memorial, this was much appreciated by the Milton community.

We had a successful Christingle service, and the children (and adults!) enjoyed making their Christingles during this service. The nativity play performed by the young people was particularly well supported and very much enjoyed by the congregation. After the success of the carol service in previous years we again held a Christmas Eve carol service by candle-light with a mix of traditional and contemporary readings and music. The congregational singing was enhanced by the support of the Milton AHA Choir. The church was beautifully decorated and very full; everyone appreciated this beautiful service.

The difficulties of transporting children from Milton School to St Blaise Church have meant that Milton School have been unable to have services at St Blaise church this year, but we maintain links with the school and look forward to welcoming them to church in the future. The knitted chicks with Easter eggs as a gift from the church was very much appreciated by the children.

Sutton Courtenay

As the year progressed the congregation at All Saints' have welcomed several new families and couples but a few of the longer standing members of the congregation have died or moved away. The major festivals have been well attended.

During Holy Week the Maundy Thursday service followed by a Lamb Supper was open to the whole Parish and was appreciated by all who came. The Good Friday Family Service was well attended followed by a less well attended Holy hour. This will be reviewed for 2024. The Easter Day Family Eucharist was very popular.

On April 23rd All Saints hosted the Parish Confirmation Service, at which six candidates were confirmed by Bishop Gavin. This was followed by lunch in the River Room. On Sunday 21st May we celebrated the 20th Anniversary of Reverend Helen Kendrick's Licensing with a joint service, followed by a bring and share lunch. This was well supported and a joyful occasion. Christmas Services again were well supported. The Torchlight procession happened without the torches and bonfire due to poor weather conditions, but it was still well attended and, with the parish carol singing, raised over £1,000 for Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

The primary school held its Easter, End of Year and Christmas Service in the church, whilst its Harvest Festival was held in the school.

An online prayer group has started this year – running on Tuesday mornings from 7.45-8.15am. Sutton Courtenay has hosted several parish study groups during the year in the River Room which enabled us to welcome some participants on zoom. There was a Lent Group; Damascus Big Read in June/July; and a Bible study exploring faith and the environment during October/November.

Our engagement with the local community has continued with regular posts on the church Facebook page, thanks to Bryony Landsbert for acting as admin for this, which are then re-posted onto various community pages. The engagement with our social media has steadily increased through the year and we continue to contribute to the Sutton Courtenay News – promoting our services and events.

Steventon

The size of the congregation at each Sunday service has increased slightly in 2023 however the pattern of attendance has changed significantly with more occasional service attenders and less very regular attenders. Our family services can have three families attending with up to seven children. The two monthly communion services being the best attended. Midweek communion services have an average of eight attenders which include parishioners who do not attend Sunday services. The monthly service of Evening Prayer has developed into Evensong and attended by upwards of 12 regular worshippers.

End of term school services, village Christingle and Crib services resulted in the church packed with over 210 adults and children. Occasional services including Harvest, Remembrance tide and special summer celebrations all attracted a congregation of greater than 60.

Social and fund raising

Social and fund-raising activities have increased in 2023 returning to pre-COVID levels of activity. Many of the social activities provide outreach and mission opportunities within the village communities. Thanks to grant support we were able to offer a warm space and free activities and refreshments in some of our churches in January, February, and March for a few hours each week. This has helped many who are struggling with heating and eating.

Drayton

It was decided at the beginning of the year to put our energy into fundraising events that we felt worked well. We had a successful plant sale in May, several members of the congregation nurture plants for sale at this event. We also had a successful Christmas Cracker weekend event at the end of November, at which over £900 was raised.

Appleford

The Coffee Mornings continue to run monthly – attracting between 20-40 people from across the village on a regular basis - mainly retired and those at home during the day. It provides an invaluable point of social contact and is much appreciated. The Appleford 100 Club continues to run and bring in some much needed income. The draw is held at the monthly coffee morning.

A Winter Warmer supper and quiz was held in the Village Hall, raising some funds. Again, this was well-supported and the catering team, as usual, provided a delicious meal enjoyed by people of all ages. The Christmas Carol Singing Evening held in a private house was very well supported and raised several hundred pounds for the National Kidney Foundation, Sobell Home Hospice, and the David Nott Foundation.

Milton

Our twice monthly tea, chat and craft afternoons and offer an opportunity for companionship particularly for older villagers and these have run regularly through the year. The crafters in the group enjoyed making 150 chicks with easter eggs for St Blaise School and then to making items for the craft fair.

On Shrove Tuesday we held a pancake event with many pancakes and a variety of competitions and races. The young people had a great time and were probably surprised at how competitive parent races can be! Lots of pancakes were tossed and consumed.

In May we held the Milton Duck race. It was a lovely sunny day and lots of villagers turned up to support their duck and to share tea and cake in the church after the racing. We raised over £1000 for church funds, and it was lovely community event.

Working in partnership with the church, MICE (Miltonians in Community Events) have led in the promotion of a 100 Club and other events from which the ‘church’ benefitted, both financially and socially. In July MICE joined the church in running a food stall at TRUCK over a warm weekend. They sold out and raised over £1000 for church funds.

The craft and jigsaw fair in November was well supported raised over £500 for the church funds and got our Advent and Christmas season off to an enjoyable and profitable start.

Our Lent Charity was Emmaus (Oxford) and at Christmas we supported the Didcot Emergency Foodbank. There was good support for Oxford Historic Churches Ride and Stride – with two families visiting churches and all well sponsored. We also had welcomers at St Blaise for most of the day, who did a grand job tidying the churchyard and cleaning the church during quiet periods!

Sutton Courtenay

The regular events such as Community Cafe, Community Brunch, WeCare2, Movie Matinee, Together in Stitches, Knit and Natter have continued to flourish and have reached out to different sectors of the community.

The special events included The Big Lunch on the Village Green to celebrate King Charles III coronation on 7th May. The English Music Festival returned to All Saints' for a concert on 29th May. The Orwell Society were welcomed for the whole weekend 24th/25th June. On the Sunday craft stalls were available and cream teas.

In the Summer Opera Anywhere performed Pirates of Penzance in the church as a fundraiser. On Sundays in August, we again sold Cream Teas which proved popular and raised funds for the church.

Hampers were distributed again at Christmas, reaching a lot more families than past years.

The River Room has continued to be well used both for church activities and external bookings. It is being used by the wider church community, such as a Clergy Quiet Day, run by the diocese, PCC away days by PCC's from Abingdon. It is becoming popular as a venue for Baptism parties and Wakes.

Steventon

Social and fund-raising events have increased in 2023, returning to pre-COVID levels of activity. Many of the social activities provide outreach and mission opportunities within the village, especially for young families living in the 3 newer housing developments. Throughout 2023 the church continued to actively support the 'Warm Space' programme it initiated in the autumn of 2022 in the church hall. Weekly café and food delivery services are now catered in the larger and better equipped village hall where 80-120 villagers attend each week, and 30 ready-made meals are provided throughout the week.

The Lent lunches, were well supported, raising £1000 for Christian Aid. The village coronation weekend celebrations centred on the church a flower festival, special Sunday service and afternoon cream tea; over 300 were recorded as entering the church for these activities.

Two pasty parties, a plant sale, church fete and book sale all provided successful fund-raising opportunities. The annual TRUCK festival provided the opportunity of generating substantive funds for both parish and church fabric maintenance.

The Friends of St Michael's supported our outreach to the village with the Causeway Christmas lights leading to the church, a full-size outdoor crib, refreshments for parents and children attending end of term services and the procession of lights from the church to the lighting of the village tree on Christingle Sunday.

Music

There are regular weekly choirs in Steventon and Sutton Courtenay. Singers from across the Parish regularly combine forces for weddings and funerals and for shared DAMASCUS Services.

Drayton

The former members of the choir have been supporting our singing in worship as part of the congregation this year. They have joined with those who sing in other DAMASCUS church choirs for joint services on occasions. Thank you to the rota of organists that come and play for the Sunday services at St Peter's and to Kay Davies for her help and support at the Praise services over the year.

Appleford

With no regular organist, Iris Ramkisson continues to choose and upload the hymns to the church iPod and the sound system is used to good effect. Organist support is provided for special services (Christmas Carols and Midnight Mass)

Milton

We do not have a regular organist, so we have effectively used music from CDs. Through the year we have continued to experiment with using some of the less well-known hymns in our hymn book with the support of choirs from around the world via YouTube.

Sutton Courtenay

The 'Singing Saints' have continued to support our worship and they were joined by a good number of 'guest' voices for the Carol Service in December to make a 20-strong choir. They are very grateful indeed to John Napper, who plays the organ, and to Barbara Vellacott for her piano playing.

Steventon

The church choir now consists of five Sopranos, two altos, one tenor and one bass. All the members are very loyal and have all been with the choir for very many years. The choir rehearses once a month and sings at three services a month leading the congregation in the singing of hymns. For special occasions we can call on members of Steventon Choral Society to help with singing. The Choral Society joins the church choir annually for the Christmas

carol service and performs a concert on Palm Sundays in the church. Helen Pearce continues to serve as organist and Terry Pearce as choirmaster.

Bells

The bells in Drayton, Milton, and Steventon have all rung regularly for services during 2023. Practices have been held most weeks at Drayton, Milton, and Steventon. Ringing at Sutton Courtenay during 2023 has been very limited because of the volume of the bells in ringing chamber after sound deadening was removed as part of the clear up following pigeons getting into the bell chamber. The bells at Appleford remain unringable.

In addition to services and weddings the bells have been rung for local and national events. Most notably this year was the ringing for the coronation of King Charles III in May. In November there was ringing at all the churches for Remembrance celebrations in our villages.

We are pleased to report that learners recruited at Drayton, Milton and Steventon have all been making good progress. Since regular ringing resumed at Sutton Courtenay in the autumn of 2023 some new recruits have started. All four of our ringable towers have been pleased to be able to welcome visiting bands and to host branch practices for ringers from the local area. During 2023 there were two peals and five quarter peals rung at Drayton; 22 peals and three quarter peals rung at Milton; one peal and two quarter peals rung at Steventon; and one quarter peal rung at Sutton Courtenay. Of note, the peal at Steventon was rung on the 100th anniversary of the first ever peal on Steventon bells; one of the peals at Milton was for the coronation of King Charles III and a new method called Coronation Alliance Major was rung and named. A quarter peal at Drayton was the first quarter peal for two of the new Drayton ringers and the first inside for one of the Steventon ringers.

Routine checks and maintenance of the bells has been carried out by the bellringers at each tower during the year. Steventon bells had an annual maintenance visit from Whites of Appleton. At Sutton Courtenay work was carried out by Drayton and Milton ringers to install insulation and a new floor under the bells to reduce the volume of sound in the ringing room. This has substantially improved the sound level at Sutton Courtenay and regular ringing of the bells was able to resume towards the end of 2023.

Flowers

All the churches in the Parish are decorated for festivals and special occasions. We thank the many volunteer flower arrangers and those who organise flower rotas for all their efforts to make our churches look so beautiful.

Drayton

Sally Dixon and Val Cross decorate the church for the festivals, Easter, Harvest and Christmas, they will also do a pedestal arrangement for St Peter's Day, our patronal festival, and for Remembrance Day. We do not do a pedestal arrangement on a regular basis but will

do an arrangement if requested by a member of the congregation in memory of a loved one.

Appleford
A small, but very dedicated and talented team keep the church decorated throughout the year. The Easter and Christmas arrangements were particularly beautiful. We are grateful to Richard Mathews who maintains the two tubs outside the church door with all year around blooms.

Milton
Whilst there is no flower arranging group at St Blaise, a variety of volunteers organised decoration of the church for Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Day, and Christmas.

Sutton Courtenay
The Flower arranging team, under the leadership of Ann White, have continued to provide a dedicated service, with most providing the flowers at their own expense despite their being funds available to compensate them. We are grateful to Richard Mathews who maintains the two tubs outside the church door with all year around blooms. The Easter Lilies continue to be very popular, and several people support their purchase to dedicate lilies in memory of loved ones who have died.

Steventon
Steventon church flower arrangers team provide flowers for church every Sunday and about twelve volunteers together decorate the church for the main festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas. The team joined families in providing floral decorations for weddings.

The highlight of 2023 was the flower festival called “Crowning Glory” held to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. There were 25 exhibitors and more than 400 people visited over the three days. This was a very successful way for villagers and for local voluntary organisation to collaborate in celebrating our king’s coronation.

Autumn 2023 saw the Flower Arrangers team launch a plan to support the Sustainable Church Flowers movement; in acknowledgement of the damage done to the environment by using floral foam (Oasis), this is no longer used. Also, to reduce the carbon footprint only local and seasonal flowers and foliage are used.

Schools
With the DAMASCUS Parish there are four primary schools of which the three in Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon are Church of England schools. The clergy and lay people are actively involved in a variety of ways – as governors, taking assemblies, helping to deliver the RE curriculum, *Open the Book*, and as reading volunteers.

Drayton

Drayton Community School

Since the retirement of the Reverend Meg Heywood in autumn 2022, there has been very limited engagement with Drayton School.

Milton

Links with Milton School are strong. Reverend Phil Sutton is a Governor of St Blaise School and leads whole school and class-based assemblies every week. Church based school services are not possible due to the cost and hazard of transporting children across the A34 roundabout. Class visits to the church have taken place during the year. St Blaise church reached out to the school at Easter, providing a knitted chick with Easter egg for every child.

A substantive support programme for families struggling with food and fuel poverty has operated throughout 2023 providing, food, financial assistance through the Milton Welfare Trust & VOWH grants and working with Citizens Advice and Christians Against Poverty to improve family budgeting and quality of home life. The parish outreach is the only charitable organisation that operates within the boundaries of Milton Heights.

Sutton Courtenay

A small team has continued to take Open the Book assemblies to Sutton Courtenay Primary School. These are always well received and the Year 6's have enjoyed taking on roles too. Year 6 have also come to All Saints' for a variety of Experiences, including Holy week, Post Easter and Pentecost. The children have time to reflect and talk about the events surrounding the easter stories. Years 3 and 4 came to the Church for the Christmas Experience.

The school also come to All Saints' for end of term services at Easter, Summer leavers service and Christmas. Bryony Landsbert stepped down as a Foundation Governor during the year and the Reverend Helen Kendrick (Safeguarding Governor) and Rita Atkinson (Chair of Governors) continue in post.

Steventon

St Michael's church continues to resource a whole school act of worship each week with alternating Open the Book and contemporary faith stories. The school's two foundation governors play an active part in safeguarding, family support, staff well-being and developing a robust and open Christian ethos and values based for all aspects of school life and governance.

Fabric

In all five churches routine maintenance has taken place, including clearance of drains and gutters and servicing of boilers, fire extinguishers, lightning conductors, roof alarms, CCTV, clocks, and organs. No quinquennial inspections took place in the Parish during 2023. For each church other specific activity related to maintaining the building and churchyard is given in the following paragraphs.

Drayton
An extensive part of the south boundary wall was repaired in February due to the previous storm damage. Further work to the south boundary wall became evident in October 2023, repairs are in hand. Repair of the guttering which was also damaged in the storms is still outstanding. There is still some work to be done to the tower, which is outstanding from the Quinquennial report, but this is in hand.

Appleford
Mr Field continues to as paid contractor to mow the churchyard. Jacob Shepherd and William Finch coordinate voluntary work parties on Sunday mornings after Breakfast Church and these are attempting to bring the undergrowth under control. No major work was carried out in 2023 to the building. The electricity meter was updated – thanks to the persistence of Nicola Turner.

Milton
The church building and its interior are in good condition following the major projects in recent years, so no major work has been necessary in 2023. The five-year electrical inspection recommended some minor modifications which were undertaken during 2023. Further work has been clearing ivy from the churchyard walls. We would like to record our thanks to Paul Browning for the many tasks he has ably and enthusiastically carried out to maintain the church; to all those involved in cutting the churchyard grass and to the Churchyard Working Group that has done so much to keep the churchyard tidy.

Sutton Courtenay
Thanks go to Brian Blakeman, All Saints' clerk of works, for continuing to help maintain the fabric of the church and the River Room. Lightning protection was upgraded to include the River Room with new surge protection. The Inner Church porch doors were refurbished by a member of the congregation. Thanks to the wider bell ringing community for installing soundproofing on the bell chamber floor to reduce the sound level in the ringing room in the church tower. The brick pier to the south-west corner of churchyard was repaired which was work identified as required in last Quinquennial report.
An Energy audit took place during the year which has given ideas for further work which will begin in 2024.

Two churchyard working parties helped with clearing the drainage channels around the church, general tidying, and ivy removal as per 2022 tree survey recommendations. John Napper continues to offer faithful service as our Groundsman and keeps the churchyard beautifully.

Steventon
Repairs to leaking guttering, damaged perimeter wall and fences, door locks and hinges have been carried out. The church hall, church doors and all guttering and down pipes have all been repainted. The process of obtaining surveys and specifications for the repointing of the south wall and tower, internal redecoration and internal lime mortar repairs has commenced in readiness for fund raising and grant application activities in 2024/5.

Deanery Synod

During the year Rev Rob Glenny from Radley, Sunningwell and Kennington parish stepped up to the role of Area Dean, with Rev Nick Weldon of Marcham assuming the role of his deputy. Some four meetings were held, with DAMASCUS hosting a “prayer and party” meeting at St Blaise in May which was very well received. Other meetings were held in February, October, and November at Radley, and on Zoom.

Synod was thanked by the Diocese for meeting its parish share in full which prompted our 2.5% rebate. The mission grants and parish support funds became more established during the year, to provide a potential resource / buffer against unexpected hardship or need, to allow for a level of resilience in the finances of the Deanery as a whole. As ever Martin Steele, the Deanery Treasurer performed sterling work in managing the ongoing parish share discussions with the Diocese and with parish treasurers.

Discussions in meetings were otherwise primarily focussed on mission activities (and the Deanery Mission Action Plan), and there was a presentation from our new Associate Archdeacon, Jane Haslam, who grew up locally in Kingston Bagpuize.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our five churches lively and vibrant communities. Particularly we thank welcomers, sidespeople, readers, intercessors, junior church leaders, refreshment providers and all those who assist with the financial processes, and all those who work behind the scenes who make for an efficient operation and ensuring we have well-presented buildings and churchyards.

Financial review

This financial review covers the period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023. Income has exceeded £250,000 so we continue to prepare and present the accounts using the accruals method. Income and expenditure are therefore recognised as soon as entitlement is established, e.g., gift aid must be recognised when the income is received even though the actual claim may be received in the subsequent year.

Accruals accounts consist of a SOFA (Statement of Financial Activities), a balance sheet, a cash flow statement, and further explanatory notes. The SOFA is on page 20, the balance sheet is on page 21, the cash flow statement is on page 22 and the notes on pages 23-33.

Total unrestricted income during 2023 was £178,793, a small increase on the previous year's income of £176,052 primarily due to an increase in tax efficient planned giving and a minor increase in collections at services. Total income from fund raising activities during 2023 was similar to 2022, but this year more of the money raised was for restricted funds. Total income from interest was higher in 2023 due to the high interest rates, but most of this income is in restricted funds.

Total unrestricted expenditure decreased slightly from £166,343 to £158,175, this is mainly because the Parish share we paid was reduced as the basis of the return of statutory fees reverted to the system in 2021 and was via a monthly reduction in the Parish Share; in addition we received a further £5,000 reduction in the payment of the Parish Share in 2023 as recompense for the Rector taking the role of Acting Assistant Archdeacon during a vacancy; finally our underlying Parish share was reduced because we did not replace the house for duty post that was vacated in autumn 2022, however, the Rector's term as Area Dean ended so the allowance for this role ceased meaning the underlying Parish share was very similar to 2022. There was a substantial increase in the cost of church utilities from £9,132 in 2022 to £16,401 in 2023.

In 2023 there was a net gain in unrestricted funds of £22,833. Consequently, the unrestricted funds carried forward to 2024 are £77,387. The increase in unrestricted funds means we have a small cushion above the limit set by our reserves policy (see below). As we review our ministry staffing for the future, the modest gains in the unrestricted fund for two years despite increasing utility costs, will allow us to consider whether an increase in the ministry team might be sustainable.

Two designated funds were established in 2022 to handle short term grants for warm spaces projects, taking place during December 2022 to March 2023, one fund was entirely spent, the other mostly spent in the period but a balance of £3,677 remains and subject to agreement from the funder will be spent on further warm spaces projects.

The overall income to the restricted funds during 2023 was £74,794, a small decrease on the previous year's income of £78,794, there were fewer voluntary donations and associated gift aid to restricted funds as the River Room appeal has been completed, but income from interest has been substantially higher. The expenditure from the restricted funds was higher than in 2023 at £46,400 than in 2022 when it was £35,194. This increase in expenditure in

the unrestricted funds is mostly in church running costs because of several minor fabric repair projects across the five churches. Overall, there was an increase in the balance of the restricted funds of £29,187, though this is largely an increase in the balance of two of the restricted funds. All the church fabric funds have an adequate balance for day-to-day expenditure, but most would require fund raising if there are essential building repairs required.

The River Room has been financed from restricted funds and was completed in 2021 thanks to some loan finance. At the start of 2023 there was £19,000 of loan finance still to be repaid. This was all repaid during 2023, so all loans for this project have now been cleared.

Investment funds, which are all endowment funds, increased in value from £631,097 to £674,784. For most of these funds only interest or dividends may be spent.

In summary, we have had a successful year with modest increases in the overall balances of both the restricted and unrestricted funds despite increasing utility costs and high inflationary increases in other costs. All loans have been repaid. However, we must continue to pay close attention to the level of unrestricted funds, particularly the five church fabric funds if we are to keep the churches in good repair.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on free reserves (net current assets) which equates to at least two months unrestricted payments. This is equivalent to £30,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. It is our policy to invest short term balances with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund and longer-term reserves in the CCLA Church of England Investment fund.

Structure, governance, and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. In the DAMASCUS Parish the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, other members of the clergy team, churchwardens, licensed lay ministers, and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the parish. All those who are members of the congregations are encouraged to register on the electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC met eight times during the year - a mixture of remote zoom meeting and in-person meetings in the River Room. The Local Church Committees (LCC), with responsibility for considering local activity and provide local church feedback to the PCC and who act as a forum for the PCC to consult with the congregations of each of the five churches continued to meet in the alternative months to the PCC. Again, a mixture of in-person and zoom meetings. Each of the five LCCs provide a report to every PCC meeting. For each church Pro-Wardens, elected at the APCM, carry out roles ensuring the smooth running of their church and maintain order in the church and grounds.

A Standing Committee consisting of the incumbent, the churchwardens, the PCC Secretary, the PCC Treasurer and two other members of the PCC meet bi-monthly (in the months between PCC meetings) to transact business delegated to them by the PCC.

Administrative information

The Ministry team

Clergy

Parish Rector – The Reverend Helen Kendrick
Associate Priest (Half-Time Stipendiary) – The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest (SSM) - The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Retired PTO – The Reverend Canon Dr Phillip Tovey
PTO – The Reverend Geoff Morgan

Licensed Lay Ministers

Dr Tim Budd (PTO)
Mr Jack Jarvis (PTO)
Mrs Alex Landsbert (PTO)

Authorised Preacher

Mr Paul James

The DAMASCUS Parish is part of the Abingdon Deanery within the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Parish Office, All Saints Church, The Green, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4AE. The PCC is a body corporate

(PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission, with registered charity number 1175551.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2023 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:
Incumbent: The Reverend Helen Kendrick (Chairman)
Associate Minister: The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest: The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Jack Jarvis
Licenced Lay Minister: Mrs Alex Landsbert
Churchwarden: Dr Hilary Otterburn
Mr Anton King representative in Deanery Synod
Mr Michael Murray representative in Deanery Synod
Mrs Sue Harris, Secretary
Mrs Sue Jenkins, Safeguarding Officer

Elected members:
Mrs Valerie Cross
Mrs Linda Johnson
Mrs Nicola Turner (Hon. Treasurer)
Dr Elaine Maxwell
Mrs Alison Budd
Professor David King
Mrs Caroline Miller
Mr Tony Sloggett

Local Church Committee members who have served at any time from 1 January 2023 until the date this report was approved are:
Appleford LCC: Elizabeth Duffield, William Finch, Sue Helby, Linda Payne, Iris Ramkissoon, Jacob Shepherd, Vicky Shepherd, and the Reverend Helen Kendrick. There are currently no pro-wardens in Appleford.
Drayton LCC: Valerie Cross (Pro-Warden), Gareth Davies, Sally Dixon, Sue Harris, Sue Icke, Linda Johnson (Pro-Warden), Anton King and the Reverend Helen Kendrick.
Milton LCC: Mike Blanch, Pat Capuzzimati, Elaine Maxwell (Pro-Warden), Janet Money, Janet Taylor, Nicola Turner (Pro-Warden) and the Reverend Helen Kendrick.
Sutton Courtenay: Brian Blakeman (Clerk of Works); Alison Budd (Pro-Warden), Sue Jenkins, David King, Alex Landsbert, Vivienne Maunders, Malcolm Ross; Phil Stubley, Mary Warrington, and the Reverend Helen Kendrick.
Steventon: Alan Binning (Pro-Warden), Diana Bowder, Doreen Goddard, Jack Jarvis, Andrew Loutit, Caroline Miller; Mike Murray; Hilary Otterburn (Pro-Warden), Terry Pearce; David Sandford, Tony Sloggett, and the Reverend Phil Sutton.

DAMASCUS PARISH
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 20 to 33.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement
I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed

Caroline Webster, FCA

UHY Ross Brooke
Suite I, Windrush Court, Abingdon Business Park, OX14 1SY

Date: 01/05/2024

DAMASCUS PARISH
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year to 31 December 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS							
Voluntary income	2a	137,013	-	23,224	-	160,237	178,461
Activities for generating funds	2b	15,868	-	19,952	-	35,820	35,659
Church activities	2c	18,291	-	5,705	-	23,996	19,218
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	2d	2,251	-	25,713	-	27,964	17,301
Other incoming resources	2e	5,370	-	200	-	5,570	13,116
TOTAL INCOME		**178,793**	**-**	**74,794**	**-**	**253,587**	**263,755**
EXPENDITURE							
Church activities	3a	117,609	-	3,395	-	121,004	136,162
Church expenses	3b	39,335	1,964	40,497	-	81,796	58,048
Costs of generating income	3c	514	-	2,508	-	3,022	3,450
Major capital expenditure	3d	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other expenditure	3e	717	-	-	-	717	4,137
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		**158,175**	**1,964**	**46,400**	**-**	**206,539**	**201,797**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE BEFORE INVESTMENT GAINS		**20,618**	**(1,964)**	**28,394**	**-**	**47,048**	**61,958**
NET GAINS ON INVESTMENTS					**43,687**	**43,687**	**(61,939)**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE		**20,618**	**(1,964)**	**28,394**	**43,687**	**90,735**	**19**
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS		2,215	(3,008)	793	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		**22,833**	**(4,972)**	**29,187**	**43,687**	**90,735**	**19**
Total funds brought forward		**54,554**	**8,649**	**153,359**	**631,097**	**847,659**	**847,640**
Total fund carried forward		**77,387**	**3,677**	**182,546**	**674,784**	**938,394**	**847,659**

DAMASCUS PARISH
BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible	6	-	203
Investments	7	674,784	631,097
		674,784	631,300
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and prepayments	8	13,271	11,511
Short-term deposits		170,402	99,018
Cash at bank and in hand		84,968	131,994
		268,641	242,523
LIABILITIES			
Creditors - amounts falling due in one year	9	5,031	10,164
NET CURRENT ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		263,610	232,359
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		938,394	863,659
Creditors - amounts falling due after one year	10	-	16,000
TOTAL NET ASSETS		938,394	847,659
PARISH FUNDS			
Unrestricted	11	81,064	63,204
Restricted	12	182,546	153,359
Endowment		674,784	631,097
		938,394	847,659

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 29 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

The Revd Helen Kendrick (Chair) ..... HGKendrick .....

Nicola Turner (Treasurer) ..... Nicola Turner .....

DAMASCUS PARISH
CASH FLOW STATEMENT AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
Net cash from operating activities		(3,606)		(11,885)
Cash flows from investing activities				
Dividends, interest and rent from investments	27,964		17,301	
Interest paid	-		-	
Proceeds from sale of:				
Tangible fixed assets	-		-	
Tangible fixed investments	-		-	
Purchase of:				
Tangible fixed assets for the use of the PCC	-		-	
Fixed asset investments	-		-	
Cash flows from financing activities				
Loans (outstanding balances)	-		19,000	
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities		27,964		36,301
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		24,358		48,186
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January		231,012		182,826
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December		255,370		231,012
Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) before investment gains				
Net income before investment gains 31 December		47,048		61,958
Adjustment for:				
Depreciation charges		203		203
Dividends, interest and rent from investments		(27,964)		(17,301)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors		(1,760)		9,587
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors		(21,133)		(42,562)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		(3,606)		(11,885)
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents				
Cash in hand		84,968		131,994
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		170,402		99,018
		255,370		231,012

DAMASCUS PARISH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Parish is a public benefit entity within the meaning of FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared under The Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and with the Regulations "true and fair view" provisions, together with FRS102 as the applicable accounting standard and the 2019 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP (FRS102). The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets, which are shown as fair value.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. There are no material uncertainties in respect of the charities ability to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

ASSETS

Consecrated and benefice property

Consecrated and beneficed property of any kind is excluded from the accounts by s.10(2) of the Charities Act 2011. All expenditure incurred during the year on such property is written off as expenditure in the SOFA and separately disclosed

Moveable church furnishings

These are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful economic life (normally 20 years) other than when insufficient cost information is available. In this case the item is not capitalised, but all items are included in the Church's inventory in any case.

Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £1,000. The Parish computer comes within this scope and has been depreciated over 5 years.

FUNDS

Unrestricted Funds

These represent the remaining income funds of the PCC available for spending on general purposes of the PCC. They include designated funds that have been set aside by the PCC for specific purposes.

Restricted Funds

These are income funds that must be spent on restricted purposes and details of funds held and restrictions provided are shown in the notes to the accounts.

Endowment Funds

These are restricted funds that must be retained as trust capital either permanently or subject to a discretionary power to spend capital as income.

INCOME

Collections and planned giving are recognised when received by or on behalf of the Parish. Income tax recoverable on covenants or gift aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised. Grants and legacies to the church are accounted for as soon as the Parish is notified of its legal entitlement and the amount due. Funds raised by fund-raising events are accounted for as gross. Sales of books and magazines are accounted for gross.

INVESTMENT INCOME

Interest on bank balances is accounted for on an accruals basis with interest recognised in the period to which the interest relates.

Dividend income is recognised on the date the share interest becomes ex-dividend or when the right to the dividend can be established.

EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal and constructive obligation and settlement is probable and quantifiable.

2 INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
2(a) Voluntary income						
All other giving and voluntary receipts, including Special Appeals (recurring and one-off)	7,512	-	9,644	-	17,156	31,185
Collections at services	15,706	-	870	-	16,576	16,410
Collections at services for charity	4,029	-	-	-	4,029	3,170
Gift Aid recovered	24,247	-	1,505	-	25,752	27,020
Grants (include recurring and one-off)	4,182	-	8,855	-	13,037	22,021
Other planned giving	2,216	-	-	-	2,216	1,880
Legacies received (capital value)	250	-	750	-	1,000	-
Tax efficient planned giving	78,871	-	1,600	-	80,471	76,775
	137,013	-	23,224	-	160,237	178,461
2(b) Activities for generating funds						
Gross income from fundraising activities	15,868	-	19,952	-	35,820	35,659
	15,868	-	19,952	-	35,820	35,659
2(c) Church activities						
Additional wedding and funeral fees	1,416	-	-	-	1,416	1,968
Gross income from trading (e.g. hall lettings, magazine, bookstall). NOT fundraising.	6,256	-	5,705	-	11,961	8,235
Statutory fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc)	10,619	-	-	-	10,619	9,015
	18,291	-	5,705	-	23,996	19,218
2(d) Dividends, interest, income from property etc.						
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	2,251	-	25,713	-	27,964	17,301
	2,251	-	25,713	-	27,964	17,301
2(e) Other incoming resources						
Other incoming resources	5,370	-	200	-	5,570	13,116
	5,370	-	200	-	5,570	13,116
TOTAL INCOME	178,793	-	74,794		253,587	263,755

3 EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£		£	£	£	£
3(a) Church activities						
Clergy and staff expenses	3,319	-	-	-	3,319	4,313
Diocesan parish share contribution	96,292	-	-	-	96,292	115,117
Mission giving and donations	11,278	-	165	-	11,443	9,311
Salaries, wages and honoraria	6,720	-	3,230	-	9,950	7,421
	117,609	-	3,395	-	121,004	136,162
3(b) Church expenses						
Mission and evangelism costs	335	1,964	3,663	-	5,962	4,481
Church running expenses	19,642	-	31,886	-	51,528	36,963
Church utility bills	18,195	-	4,730	-	22,925	16,401
Cost of trading	-	-	218	-	218	-
Independent examiner's costs	960	-	-	-	960	-
Depreciation on church equipment	203	-	-	-	203	203
	39,335	1,964	40,497	-	81,796	58,048
3(c) Costs of generating income						
Costs of fundraising activities	514	-	2,508	-	3,022	3,450
	514	-	2,508	-	3,022	3,450
3(d) Major capital expenditure						
Major repairs to the church building	-	-	-	-	-	-
New building work	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
3(e) Other expenditure						
Other outgoing resources/ payments	682	-	-	-	682	4,102
Governance costs	35	-	-	-	35	35
	717	-	-	-	717	4,137
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	158,175	1,964	46,400		206,539	201,797

4 STAFF COSTS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Parish administrator	6,720	4,876
Cleaner	1,515	630
Groundsman	615	615
Gravedigger	-	-
Organist	1,100	1,150
Vergers	-	30
Bell ringers	-	120
	9,950	7,421

Note: All staff above are self-employed

Parish administrator	1	1
Cleaner	1	2
Groundsman	1	1
Gravedigger	-	-
Organist	5	4
Vergers	-	1
Bellringers	-	6

None of the Trustees received any remuneration or employee benefits during the year. The lay trustees, where applicable, who acted as agents to the PCC in making approved payments on its behalf, were reimbursed for these expenses on presentation of suitable documentary evidence.

Clergy working expenses were reimbursed in accordance with Church of England guidelines.

There were no related party transactions.

5 TRANSFER OF FUNDS

	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	Total £
From Warm Spaces Grant (Designated Fund WARM) to General and restricted funds depending on the expenditure	2,215	(3,008)	793	0

6 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost of valuation		
At 1 January 2023	203	203
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
At 31 December 2023	203	203
Depreciation		
At 1 January 2023	-	-
Charge for the year	203	203
At 31 December 2023	203	203
Net book value at 31 December 2023	-	-
Net book value at 31 December 2022	203	203

7 INVESTMENTS

		Market value at 31st December 2022	Additions	Disposals	Market value at 31st December 2023	Change in value Jan 1 to Dec 31 2023
		£	£	£	£	£
Milton Milton - Church Lands CB3011996 (S) and CB3012096 (D)		563,949	-	-	601,309	37,360
Drayton Bradfield Trust CB3011545 (S)		9,695	-	-	10,607	912
Drayton Clerk's Piece CO3056670		854	-	-	933	79
Drayton Miss Emma Hyde for maintenance of church fabric CO3055160-001		2,381	-	-	2,600	219
Drayton Hyde's charity for psalmody CO3057211		818	-	-	893	75
Steventon CB3031650 - ENDOWMENT FUND		31,377	-	-	34,329	2,952
Steventon CB3031648 - N01 INVESTMENT FUND		22,012	-	-	24,101	2,090
DAMASCUS PCC CB3030966	*	11	-	-	12	1
		631,097	**-**	**-**	**674,784**	**43,687**

* This investment was purchased for £10.00 on 21 Aug 2018 by a parishioner for the Parish but was omitted from the investment list in 2018 to 2021 inclusive.

8 DEBTORS

	2023	2022
	£	£
HMRC Gift Aid	3,330	5,485
Statutory fees due	99	-
Collections to be banked	1,065	697
Fund raising to be banked	1,593	1,187
Parish share rebate	2,558	2,864
Grants from Oxford Diocese	-	1,070
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	4,402	-
Miscellaneous debtors	224	208
TOTAL	13,271	11,511

9 CREDITORS falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accounts examination costs	960	-
Individual 1 loan	-	1,000
Individual 2 loan	-	1,000
Individual 3 loan	-	1,000
Mission and evangelism costs	732	1,212
Clergy expenses	-	192
Church running expenses	812	1,234
Mission giving	1,627	3,226
Parish Administrator	560	560
Organist	175	150
Cleaner	165	-
Miscellaneous creditors	-	590
TOTAL	5,031	10,164

10 CREDITORS falling due after one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Individual 1 loan	-	7,000
Individual 2 loan	-	7,000
Individual 3 loan	-	2,000
TOTAL	-	16,000

11 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
General funds	54,554	178,793	158,175	2,215	77,387
Designated funds					
DAMASCUS Warm Spaces	8,034	-	1,349	(3,008)	3,677
Steventon Roots and Shoots	615	-	615	-	-
	8,649	-	1,964	(3,008)	3,677

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS IN 2022

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
General funds	45,539	176,052	166,343	(694)	54,554
Designated funds					
DAMASCUS Warm Spaces	-	8,130	96	-	8,034
Steventon Roots and Shoots	-	779	164	-	615
	-	8,909	260	-	8,649

12 RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
Drayton fabric	9,317	6,014	6,015	-	9,316
Drayton Carpenters legacy	1,269	45	-	-	1,314
Drayton Bells	3,244	358	-	-	3,602
Drayton Clerk's Piece	398	26	-	-	424
Drayton Hydes for Psalmody	665	25	-	-	690
Appleford fabric fund	10,498	4,308	1,027	-	13,779
Milton bells	13,224	1,302	65	-	14,461
Milton building	12,779	2,899	1,192	-	14,486
Milton Church Lands	54,084	21,632	5,723	85	70,078
* Sutton Courtenay Fabric	14,008	25,333	18,809	708	21,240
Sutton Courtenay Ringers	705	16	475	-	246
Sutton Courtenay Fun Day	8,732	4,573	5,143	-	8,162
** Steventon Fabric	6,880	7,144	7,003	-	7,021
Steventon Churchyard	14,871	516	600	-	14,787
Steventon Tower	2,685	603	348	-	2,940
	153,359	**74,794**	**46,400**	**793**	**182,546**

* During 2023 the Restricted Fund called Sutton Courtenay River Room was merged with Sutton Courtenay Fabric

** During 2023 the Restricted Fund called Steventon Church Repair was merged with Steventon Fabric

RESTRICTED FUNDS IN 2022

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
Drayton fabric	11,364	3,521	5,628	60	9,317
Drayton Carpenters legacy	1,269	-	-	-	1,269
Drayton Bells	2,871	355	-	18	3,244
Drayton Clerk's Piece	373	25	-	-	398
Drayton Hydes for Psalmody	641	24	-	-	665
Appleford fabric fund	11,089	999	1,652	62	10,498
Milton bells	12,799	943	593	75	13,224
Milton building	10,199	2,968	455	67	12,779
Milton Church Lands	45,241	14,300	5,745	288	54,084
Sutton Courtenay Fabric	4,553	8,048	9,775	21	2,847
Sutton Courtenay River Room	(20,688)	34,660	2,811	-	11,161
Sutton Courtenay Ringers	357	345	-	3	705
Sutton Courtenay Fun Day	10,859	2,783	4,964	54	8,732
Steventon Fabric	695	9,563	3,333	-	6,925
Steventon Churchyard	14,641	230	-	-	14,871
Steventon Tower	2,847	30	238	46	2,685
Steventon Church Repair	(45)	-	-	-	(45)
	109,065	**78,794**	**35,194**	**694**	**153,359**

SUMMARY OF ASSETS BY FUND

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	**TOTAL 2023** £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-
Investment fixed assets	-	-	674,784	674,784
Current assets	84,384	184,257	-	268,641
Liabilities				
Amounts falling due in one year	(3,320)	(1,711)	-	(5,031)
Amounts falling due after one year	-	-	-	-
	81,064	182,546	674,784	938,394

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

England & Wales - Charity number 1175551

Accounts

The DAMASCUS Parish

Drayton | Appleford | Milton
Sutton Courtenay | Steventon

2022 Report and accounts for the DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council

St Peter's, **D**rayton
St Peter & St Paul's, **A**ppleford
St Blaise, **M**ilton
All Saints', **S**utton **C**ourtenay
St Michael & All Angels', **S**teventon

Nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love

Registered charity number 1175551

Introduction to the DAMASCUS Parish

The DAMASCUS Parish is a single parish, formed from the five, growing, semi-rural villages of Drayton, Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon. The five parishes had been working together for over twenty years as a Group Ministry prior to the formation of the single parish in July 2017. We are continuing to build on growing together.

The Parish is situated between Abingdon and Didcot with boundaries abutting both towns. There are considerable numbers of professional people in the area, with Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, Harwell, Culham, Didcot Power Station and Milton Park Enterprise Zone all in the locality. The easy access to Didcot Parkway Station means that many parishioners commute to London, Oxford, Reading, Swindon and beyond.

Aim and Purposes

The DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Helen Kendrick, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the churches of St Peter's Drayton, St Peter and St Paul's Appleford, St Blaise Milton, All Saints' Sutton Courtenay and St Michael and All Angels' Steventon and St Michael's Hall Steventon.

Our Vision and Mission

Our vision is to be a living Christian presence at the heart of our communities nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love.

Through:

1. Reaching out to our existing communities and the influx of new residents.
2. Building a new community of faith within the Milton Heights development.
3. Re-invigorating our existing traditional churches to support mission and outreach.
4. Enabling outreach within our Schools to flourish and grow.
5. Developing a spirit of generosity and giving, where all the churches support mission where it is most needed.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the five churches in the parish.

It should be noted that Reverend Meg Heywood retired in October 2022 and the House for Duty post will not be replaced.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and prayer

Throughout 2022 our churches continued to recover from the impact of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020/21. The number of regular worshippers across the Parish has not yet returned to pre-2020 numbers – although the smaller churches of Appleford and Milton have recovered faster than the larger congregations. The PCC remain committed to offering a range of services during the week and over the course of the year, so the service pattern and tradition in the five churches offer variety across the Parish as a whole and enables the reduced clergy team to cover services in all five churches. The Ministry team and PCC will continue to review the pattern of services to ensure it is sustainable. Through 2022 we were still able to hold at least one service in each church every Sunday, except for the fifth Sunday when there is a DAMASCUS Parish service in one of the five churches. Mid-week services are held in two churches on different days of the week. All five churches are open during the day every day for our local community and visitors to enjoy and use for private prayer.

All Saints', Sutton Courtenay continue to offer live-streaming of the main Sunday services and other special services. Only one or two housebound worshippers participated on a regular basis.

The Ministry team continued to provide service sheets for people to worship at home where requested (five people still engaged with this).

During 2022 there were 197 people on the Parish Electoral Roll.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey of life. Throughout 2022 the requests for live-streaming of funerals continued to increase and live-streaming of weddings, particularly in All Saints', Sutton Courtenay was made available when requested. In the DAMASCUS parish we have celebrated 41 baptisms; 11 weddings and 33 funeral services in church during 2022.

Remembrance Sunday Services were held inside our church buildings in 2022 and they were well supported – with attendance similar to pre-COVID years.

We would like to thank our Rector, Reverend Helen Kendrick, our Associate Ministers Reverend Phil Sutton, Reverend Meg Heywood (retired October 2022), Reverend Rosie Bruce and Reverend Dr Phillip Tovey (retired PTO) and all the Licensed Lay Ministers for their hard work leading, nurturing, inspiring and teaching us during this year.

The following paragraphs present points about worship and ministry specific to each of the five churches in the parish.

Drayton

After Reverend Meg Heywood announced her retirement in the autumn of 2021, St Peter's started preparing for increased lay leadership. A new Drayton Team was set up; the team met monthly from January until October and followed a training programme which was led by David Heywood. The congregation were asked to choose who they would like to lead worship in St Peter's. Towards the end of our training two new teams were set up. The Worship Team and the Comms Team.

The Worship Team

The purpose of the team is to plan the shape of worship within the St Peter's community and ensure its continuity, by listening to God and to the congregation and being prepared to innovate. The team consists of five lay members of the congregation and Reverend Rosie Bruce (to provide priestly support). Within their individual roles the team sets out the format and content of the lay-led services (as scheduled in the DAMASCUS service rota), arranges musicians to provide appropriate accompaniment and sets the hymns and songs to match the service content. Special services e.g. Remembrance and Christmas are also the team's responsibility. Four team members have also been trained to deliver communion by extension when this is required.

Worship in Church

As Covid restrictions were lifted we were able to worship in church as normal. The Thursday morning service started again at the back of church or in the church room to save on heating costs, alternating between Holy Communion and Celtic Morning Prayer. The latter is lay led by David Hale.

Prayer meeting

We continued to have weekly virtual prayer meetings in our homes for the first three Mondays of the month. On the fourth Monday of the month we met up in the church room and in the autumn we started meeting at John Stevens home to avoid heating the church room. Being able to do this has encouraged us to have prayer as part of the church's life together.

The Comms Team

This team was set up in August 2022 and its aim is to connect St Peter's to the village community with God's love through different forms of media. Since then, a St Peter's Facebook page has been set up, and has advertised numerous services and events, including the All Souls' service, Remembrance Day service and Christmas events and services. These have been cross posted to the Families in Drayton Facebook page. It has an increasing number of followers. Church events are also advertised on the Drayton Pebbles Facebook

page, encouraging families to come along. Terry Mason kindly sanded down the outside noticeboard, ready to re-varnish in the spring. The noticeboard is regularly updated, advertising church services, events and contact details by Sue Icke who continues to put together the church page in the Drayton Chronicle each month.

Pebbles – Is a group for parents and carers with babies and toddlers. It is well attended and Is a group for parents and carers with babies and toddlers and some pre school children who join us. We have a wide age range to cater for. It is well attended and much appreciated by the families who come along. It is a friendly, welcoming, supportive group. It still takes place on Wednesday mornings, from 10-11.30 am during term time. The families enjoy singing, stories, including Bible stories, crafts and free play. We use the area at the back of church and the church room, due to growing numbers. Our Pebbles Nativity in December, was a joyful, happy time, followed by a fun party. Each child was given a book telling the Christmas story. 'Drayton Pebbles' Facebook page works well for communicating with families and advertising services and events. There is a small, dedicated team of helpers. Sue Icke leads the group; Cheryl Jarvis and Ali Bone provide weekly help and support.

First Tuesday Connections – The January and February meetings were cancelled due to Covid restrictions. Our meetings restarted in March. In April, exercises from the chair were offered, which proved popular. Our June meeting included a talk by the Oxford Museum staff on Bygone Days, mainly from 70 years ago which stirred many memories. A cream tea was served at our summer party. The September, October and November meetings were the usual coffee/tea and biscuits with the members chatting and catching up with each other. The Christmas party included music and singing, ending with us all singing carols.

The Care Team – Continue to visit people who need a listening ear and to share a cup of tea and a chat. Phone calls are often made to check that people not seen for a while are keeping well. Cards sent on the anniversary of a bereavement are much appreciated. Baptism and wedding anniversaries are also sent cards.

Healing Team – Healing Ministry continues to be well supported in St Peter's. The team meet up on the Saturday evening for a Preparation Service in The Lady Chapel. At this service prayer requests and cards left on the prayer board in St Peter's are offered for healing prayers. During the service the following morning after communion the congregation are invited to receive healing prayer by the laying on of hands.

Discipleship Group – The group met regularly until August 2022. Discussions continued as before on fund-raising, special services, and courses. St Peter's offered to help with the celebrations for the Queen's Jubilee but eventually this was all organised by the Parish Council. The group last met in August when all the members became part of the new Worship Team. However, the group continues to initiate any fund-raising events and can be re-convened to plan courses at St Peter's if necessary.

A shortened version of the course "Saints Alive" was held in September and October before Reverend Meg Heywood retired.

Appleford

During 2022 the congregations numbers have stabilised to pre-Covid 19 levels with continued growth in the Breakfast Church congregation. Breakfast Church is held on the first Sunday of every month with refreshments being served before the service starts and then a short, informal all age liturgy being followed. This continues to be well-supported by families and the WhatsApp group continues to be a useful method of promotion and communication as well as the parish Facebook page.

For Mothering Sunday flowers and prayer cards and for Easter, greeting cards and seeds, were distributed to every home in the village. These were very well received and helped to remind people that the church community was still active and praying for the wider community.

The Street Nativity was extremely well attended and once again a donkey (Diane) was supplied by The Donkey Sanctuary. The Appleford Community Project paid for the donkey and provided refreshments in the farmyard at the end which was much appreciated by all who attended.

Several people helped to knit stars which were then distributed around the village by the church families, for people to find and bring to church to decorate the tree. The carol service was well attended with children and adults all playing a part and the annual carol singing evening at a private home was very well supported and raised several hundred pounds for Oxfordshire MIND.

Milton

The typical attendance at the main Sunday service is 10 adults, but for family services typical attendance is 15 adults and seven children. One Sunday each month we have had a lay led service, Faith Conversations, this is a café style service and has been led by a variety of members of the congregation and a wide range of topics have been discussed. It has also been an opportunity to hear from a representative of our Lent charity. This service has been well supported. Our Family services have been particularly well supported and the young people have been very willing contributors.

We have resumed some joint services with Milton Methodists, the Palm Sunday procession began at St Blaise and walked to Milton Methodist church for the service. We were pleased to welcome some members of Milton Methodists to the service on Remembrance Sunday and on Christmas Eve.

Our Lent charity was Anti-slavery Oxford (ASIOX) and a representative from the charity talked with us about modern slavery in Oxfordshire and how ASIOX helps support the victims of such slavery.

At Easter many members of the congregation contributed to the paper and knitted daffodils that decorated a huge cross. A lovely focus for our Easter service. A celebration Songs of Praise held during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend was very well attended and much enjoyed by the Milton community and our recently arrived Ukrainian visitors. For Remembrance Sunday, a knitted poppy cascade was fixed around the porch entrance and in

church there was a display of information about those whose names appear on our war memorial, this was much appreciated by the Milton community.

We had a successful Christingle service, and the children (and adults!) enjoyed making their Christingles during this service. The crib service included a star hunt nativity play performed by the young people and very much enjoyed by the rest of the congregation. After the success of the carol service in 2021 we again held a Christmas Eve carol service by candle-light with a mix of traditional and contemporary readings and music. This year congregational singing was enhanced by the support of the Milton AHA Choir. The church was beautifully decorated and very full; everyone appreciated this beautiful service.

The difficulties of transporting children from Milton School to St Blaise Church have meant that Milton School have been unable to have services at St Blaise church this year, but we maintain links with the school and look forward to welcoming them to church in the future.

Sutton Courtenay

Overall congregation numbers were beginning to rise as we got further out of the pandemic. Apart from the regular pattern of services the major festivals are back with larger congregations.

Palm Sunday was the first service in 3 years with the donkey and procession through the village to the church. In Holy Week we held a reflective Tenebrae service and Maundy Thursday service with supper returned (although held in the River Room after the communion service rather than as an integral part of the service). It was well-supported by people from Sutton Courtenay and Drayton. Good Friday had the Family Hot Cross Bun service followed by Holy Hour. The Easter Sunday service was one of the highest attended services for several years.

The Platinum Jubilee Service with Abbey Brass accompanying the music, was held on the village green and was followed by a church organised community event. Harvest Festival was followed by a Harvest Lunch in The River Room which was enjoyed by all ages. Remembrance Sunday – this year we made the decision to suspend the Communion service to enable Helen to lead a service in Appleford so just had the silence at the memorial followed by a civic service the church. A good number attended the 2-minute silence but fewer came into the church for the service afterwards.

Christmas services all ran as usual thanks to Alex Landsbert, Tim Budd, Paul and Julia James and Phillip Tovey as Reverend Helen Kendrick was unable to take them due to illness.

Steventon

The numbers in the congregation are holding up and we have welcomed some new members from people newly arrived in the village, this includes a family with children. The midweek communion, early Sunday communion and Evening Prayer continue to be well supported and there has been an increase in numbers.

The Remembrance service was well attended as was the service on All Hallows. The church

was completely full for the crib service, midnight mass numbers remain steady, but the Christmas morning service has an increased attendance. The Christingle service was very well attended.

Social and fund raising

Social and fund-raising activities have increased in 2022 and almost returned to pre-COVID levels of activity. Many of the social activities provide outreach and mission opportunities within the village communities. Thanks to grant support we were able to offer a warm space and free activities and refreshments in some of our churches in November and December for a few hours each week. This has helped many who are struggling with heating and eating.

Drayton

It was decided at the beginning of the year to have a themed fund-raising event each month. These were a beetle drive, plant sales, cream teas, sales of homemade produce and cards and a Christmas Cracker weekend.

Appleford

The Coffee Mornings restarted in 2022 on a monthly basis and these continue to be very well supported by people from across the village – mainly retired and those at home during the day. It provides an invaluable point of social contact and is much appreciated. A Winter Warmer supper and quiz was held in the Village Hall, raising some much needed funds. Again, this was well-supported and the catering team, as usual, provided a delicious meal enjoyed by people of all ages.

Milton

Our twice monthly tea and chat afternoons offer an opportunity for companionship particularly for older villagers and these have run regularly through the year. We incorporated our craft group sessions into the Tea and Chat afternoons, and these became a hub of activity as we worked towards preparing daffodils for the Easter cross and then to making items for the craft fair.

On Shrove Tuesday we held a pancake event with many of pancakes and a variety of competitions and races. The young people had a great time and were probably surprised at how competitive parent races can be! Lots of pancakes were tossed and consumed.

In May we held the Milton Duck race for the first time since 2019. It was a lovely sunny day and lots of villagers turned up to support their duck and to share tea and cake in the church after the racing. We raised over £1000 for church funds and it was lovely to get this popular event restarted after a two year COVID interruption.

Working in partnership with the church, MICE (Miltonians in Community Events) have led in the promotion of a 100 Club and other events from which the ‘church’ benefitted, both financially and socially. In July MICE joined the church in running a food stall at TRUCK over a very hot weekend. They sold out and raised over £1000 for church funds.

The craft and jigsaw fair in November was well supported raised over £500 for the church funds and got our Advent and Christmas season off to an enjoyable and profitable start.

We ran monthly film nights from January to April although the number of people attending was small, these were then paused for the summer, but have not restarted for the time being. We will reconsider running film nights during 2023.

Our Lent Charity was Anti-slavery Oxford (ASIOX) and at Christmas we supported the Assisted Reading for Children in Oxfordshire (Arch).

There was good support for Oxford Historic Churches Ride and Stride – with three families visiting churches and all well sponsored. We also had welcomers at St Blaise all day, who did a grand job tidying the churchyard and cleaning the church during quiet periods!

Sutton Courtenay

Community Cafe has continued to flourish. Apart from raising money for the Fabric and River Room Funds we have raised money for a number of charities including Downs Oxford, Macmillan Cancer, as well as emergency funding for Ukraine. During November and December the Community Café was promoted as part of the 'Warm Space' initiative and this drew in some new faces.

Numbers attending the monthly Movie Matinee on the last Saturday of the month continued to grow slowly. During 2022 the idea of 'themed' refreshments to tie in with the subject of the film was born and this has proved very popular. During November and December the Movie Matinees were offered as a ''Warm Space' and this attracted some more people.

A Murder Mystery Evening was held in Village Hall as a joint fund raiser for the church and village hall funds. The English Music Festival was well attended, and the teas contributed to church funds.

A church organised community lunch on the village green for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee including a best decorated cake competition and fancy hat competition. Fun was had by all.

The annual Orwell weekend at the end of June once again drew many visitors to the church for the act of commemoration around the grave. We also had a small range of craft and bric a brac stalls and served cream teas and hosted a talk from Richard Blair (George Orwell's son).

For the third year in a row we sold Cream Teas from the River Room every Sunday in July / August – this is growing in popularity thanks to delicious food served by the catering team and wider publicity.

The Jumble sale in November plus further sales on ebay raised over £1000. The 200 Club continued to be run, raising ongoing funds for the River Room.

In addition, a 'WeCare2' Group is run by church volunteers twice a month in the River Room to offer support to people suffering from dementia and their carers. This is slowly growing in popularity and is a lifeline for those who come. We also launched a Knit and Natter Group in the afternoons and 'Together in Stitches' in the evenings on a monthly basis as social outreach to those suffering from social isolation and/or wanting to meet up with people interested in craft. Support for these is growing slowly.

Steventon

The Lent lunches, were well supported and over £1000 passed onto Christian Aid. We had a plant sale, a concert and a book sale. Two pasty parties and sale of cream teas proved popular and lucrative fund raising events.

Two exhibitions were put on by the History society in the church, one for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and one about the local people who died in the first World War. Donations were kindly given to the church. An Everest climbing event was a special fund-raising event for the 60th anniversary of the first successful ascent of Everest.

The church fete was very successful and this year able to run in the usual format. TRUCK also returned this year and with good weather welcomed thousands of people and the food stalls we ran were very busy making a generous contribution to church funds.

The church was instrumental in starting organising the events to celebrate the Jubilee with some financial help from the Friends of St Michaels. These included a beacon on the hill above the village with hot drinks and bacon butties and a concert on the green. The walk up to the beacon from the village was very successful.

The outdoor crib was installed in the school playground as term ended and was a great attraction. Further figures were put up in the church as part of the Christmas celebrations.

Music

There are choirs Steventon and Sutton Courtenay. Singers from Drayton, Appleford and Sutton Courtenay regularly combine forces for weddings and we strive to combine singers from across the parish for shared DAMASCUS Services.

Drayton

The former members of the choir have been supporting our singing in worship as part of the congregation this year. They have joined with those who sing in other DAMASCUS church choirs for joint services on particular occasions. Thank you to the rota of organists that come and play for the Sunday services at St Peter's and to Kay Davies for her help and support at the Praise services over the year.

Appleford

Iris Ramkisson continues to choose and upload the hymns to the church iPod and the sound system is used to good effect. Organist support is provided for special services (Christmas Carols and Midnight Mass)

Milton
We do not have a regular organist, so we have effectively used music from CDs. Through the year we have continued to experiment with using some of the less well-known hymns in our hymn book with the support of choirs from around the world via YouTube.

Sutton Courtenay
The Church Choir (the 'Singing Saints') continue to practise on Tuesday evenings, and to support the worship in Church. They are delighted to join with singers from the other churches for joint services and special occasions and were able to muster a choir of 20 for the Carol Service. They are very grateful to John Napper for playing the organ and to Barbara Vellacott for playing the piano for choir practices and some services. New members are welcomed with open arms. A Whats App group keeps the Singing Saints in touch with one another and enables efficient communication. They have proved to be great cake bakers and support the church in a variety of ways.

Steventon
There is a small church choir. Helen Pearce continues to serve as organist and Steventon Choral Society sings at weddings.

Bells
The bells in Drayton, Milton, Sutton Courtenay, and Steventon have all rung regularly for services during 2022. Practices have been held most weeks at Drayton and Milton and occasionally at Steventon and Sutton Courtenay. The bells at Appleford remain unringable.

In addition to services and weddings the bells have been rung for local and national events. This year there has been ringing for several royal events. In February Milton and Steventon rang the bells to mark the 70th anniversary of the Queen's ascension to the throne. There was also ringing over the Platinum Jubilee weekend in June. All the towers tolled a bell in September to mark the death of Queen Elizabeth II, and there was further tolling and chiming at Steventon on the day of the Queen's funeral. In November there was ringing at all the churches for Remembrance celebrations in our villages. At Steventon in March the bells were chimed in an Eastern European Style as a convoy of goods from Oxfordshire arrived in Ukraine.

We are pleased to report that we have recruited some learners at Drayton, Milton and Steventon and all have been making good progress. All four of our ringable towers have been pleased to again be able to welcome visiting bands and to host branch practices for ringers from the local area. During 2022 there were two peals rung at Drayton and twenty peals at Milton. Two quarter peals were rung at Steventon.

The quarter peal at Steventon in May was rung to mark Jack Jarvis's 75 years of membership of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers. Jack rang in the quarter peal, it was his first quarter on an inside bell as well as a first quarter peal for two other Steventon ringers.

Routine checks and maintenance of the bells has been carried out by the bellringers at each tower during the year. New bell muffles for Steventon and arrived in February 2022 and have been well used this year. Milton had an inspection by Whites of Appleton to check over the installation 20 years after the new bells were installed. Apart from a couple of worn pulleys that were replaced all is in good order. Sutton Courtenay bells are very loud in the ringing room as the scrap carpet under the bells had to be removed as part of the clear up when the pigeons got into the tower. Some sound insulation that meets fire regulations and that can be cleaned if pigeons get in again needs to be installed during next year to make ringing at Sutton Courtenay a safer and more enjoyable experience.

Flowers

All the churches in the Parish are decorated for festivals and special occasions. We thank the many volunteer flower arrangers and those who organise flower rotas for all their efforts to make our churches look so beautiful.

Drayton

Sally Dixon and Val Cross decorate the church for the festivals, Easter, Harvest and Christmas, they will also do a pedestal arrangement for St Peter's Day, our patronal festival, and for Remembrance Day. We do not do a pedestal arrangement on a regular basis but will do an arrangement if requested by a member of the congregation in memory of a loved one.

Appleford

A small, but very dedicated and talented team keep the church decorated throughout the year. The Christmas arrangements were particularly beautiful. We are grateful to Richard Mathews who maintains the two tubs outside the church door with all year around blooms.

Milton

Whilst there is no flower arranging group at St Blaise, a variety of volunteers organised decoration of the church for Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Day and Christmas.

Sutton Courtenay

The Flower arranging team, under the leadership of Ann White, have continued to provide a dedicated service, with most providing the flowers at their own expense despite their being funds available to compensate them. We are grateful to Richard Mathews who maintains the two tubs outside the church door with all year around blooms. The Easter Lilies continue to be very popular and a number of people support their purchase to dedicate lilies in memory of loved ones who have died.

Steventon

Steventon Church Flower Arrangers continue to work to provide flowers for all main festivals. There is a good group of volunteers and these prove pleasant social activities. There were fewer weddings at Steventon this year, but the services of the flower arrangers were called on by others, including Ardington church.

Schools

Within the DAMASCUS Parish there are four primary schools of which the three in Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon are Church of England schools. The clergy and lay people are actively involved in a variety of ways – as governors, taking assemblies, helping to deliver the RE curriculum, *Open the Book*, and as reading volunteers.

Drayton

Drayton Community School

Revd Meg Heywood was a governor at the school and attended governors' meetings until her retirement in October. She was also invited to lead school assemblies and the children were attentive in learning about their Christian heritage.

Sue Icke and Linda Johnson welcomed Puffins year one class to St Peter's in June and the children were very interested in looking at and finding out about the font, the pulpit and the stained glass windows in church, as well as the outside of the church building. It is a valuable way of strengthening our links with the school.

Milton

Links with Milton School are strong. Reverend Phil Sutton is a Governor of St Blaise School, he has been going into school regularly leading assemblies and other activity sessions. Class visits to the church have taken place during the year, but it has not been possible to hold School services in the church due to the complications of transporting the children to the church. Phil Sutton is continuing to work with the Headteacher and staff to use the church on a more regular basis as part its curriculum and community-based activities.

Sutton Courtenay

The weekly Open the Book assemblies have continued with the help of a team of 4 and involvement from the children. In the lead up to Easter the year 6 class came to church for the Holy week experience. This was followed by a Post Easter experience and a Pentecost experience allowing the children time to reflect at each stage. The end of term services have continued with the Christmas service being for KS2 only and taking the form of nine lessons and carols. The year finished with all 4 KS2 classes taking part in the Christmas Journey where they reflected on the Christmas story. Reverend Helen Kendrick, Rita Atkinson and Bryony Landsbert continue to serve as Foundation Governors.

Steventon

The church continues to maintain close links with the school. Reverend Phil Sutton continues to offer support and advice to the school and takes weekly assemblies. Open the book continues on a regular basis. There are two church nominated governors and the school has held services in the church during the year.

Fabric

In all five churches routine maintenance has taken place, including clearance of drains and gutters and servicing of boilers, fire extinguishers, lightning conductors, roof alarms, CCTV, clocks, and organs. Quinquennial inspections have taken place at Appleford and Milton during this year. For each church other specific activity related to maintaining the building and churchyard is given in the following paragraphs.

Drayton

There was a problem with the clock chimes and repair work was carried out to correct them.

There was storm damage in March, to the south boundary wall and 5 lengths of guttering came down off the church roof. A claim against Ecclesiastical was made. The Insurance Assessor's assessment was that the wall was already in a weak state and that the storm contributed, but was not the main factor, so the insurance company would not pay for the repair, so the work is still outstanding. The insurance claim for the guttering is still pending.

There is still some work to be done to the tower, which is outstanding from the Quinquennial report, but this is in hand.

Appleford

The churchyard continues to be maintained by Mr Field and voluntary helpers. Jacob Shepherd has initiated informal work parties on Sunday mornings after Breakfast Church and these are attempting to bring the undergrowth under control. No major work was carried out in 2022 to the building.

Milton

The church building and its interior are in good condition following the major projects in recent years, so no major work has been necessary in 2022. The quinquennial inspection identified that some work should be undertaken to the stonework and glass in the West window in the tower and that some repointing work should be untaken on the high churchyard wall on the north side of the church. The five year electrical inspection recommended some minor modifications which will be undertaken during 2023. Further work has been clearing ivy from the churchyard walls and brambles from the north corner of the churchyard. We would like to record our thanks to Paul Browning for the many tasks he has ably and enthusiastically carried out to maintain the church; to Alfie for cutting the hedge; to all those involved in cutting the churchyard grass and in the working group that has done so much to keep the churchyard tidy.

Sutton Courtenay

Thanks to Brian Blakeman, Clerk of Works for keeping the regular maintenance and servicing under control. The flagpole was finally replaced and sited on the side of the tower following the storm the previous year. A Tree Survey was completed in April and subsequent work including a fallen limb off one of the Yew Trees was removed in early summer. John Napper continues to offer faithful service as our Groundsman and keeps the churchyard beautifully.

Steventon
Nothing to report except some gutter cleaning and minor repairs to downpipes.

Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod met in March and September of last year and November and February of this year. The key event was at the September meeting when Bishop Gavin attended the start of the meeting in St Peter's Wootton to thank The Reverend Helen Kendrick for her nearly five years in post as area Dean, congratulate her on her appointment as temporary Acting Assistant Archdeacon. Sue Scott, Synod lay chairperson, added her thanks noting Helen's particular role in nurturing bonds between laity and clergy during her time in office. Bishop Gavin then presided over the licencing of The Reverend Keith Dunnett and The Reverend Rob Glenny as Area Dean and Associate Area Dean, noting how much he had enjoyed his own time as Rural Dean.

Keith continued Helen's leadership of the synod on a mission focussed path this year. We enjoyed a presentation by the Diocesan Director of Ministry and Mission Andrew Anderson-Gear, synod breakout groups exchanging their thoughts and experiences of mission (particularly during covid). Synod received a presentation on Mission Action Plans, particularly the workings of a supporting wire diagram, and all parishes have been encouraged to populate a mission summary spreadsheet with their mission activities ongoing and planned. It is intended that this will encourage cross-parish support and encouragement by means of sharing of ideas and experiences.

As ever, along with safeguarding, financial matters played a major role in synodial discussions, and it was enormously pleasing for Synod to hear that Abingdon was one of the five deaneries in the Archdeaconry area who had paid their parish share in full for 2022. This meant that we again qualified for our rebate, and we have been able to set aside a Parish Support fund to support parishes that may encounter occasional financial difficulty. Synod was also reminded of the mission grants fund that is available for parish applications for small scale support to initiatives such as Bibles for primary school leavers, and welcome packs for residents of new houses.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our five churches lively and vibrant communities. Particularly we thank welcomers, sidespeople, readers, intercessors, junior church leaders, refreshment providers and all those who assist with the financial processes, and all those who work behind the scenes who make for an efficient operation and ensuring we have well-presented buildings and churchyards.

Financial review

This financial review covers the period 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022. Income has exceeded £250,000 so we continue to prepare and present the accounts using the accruals method. Income and expenditure are therefore recognised as soon as entitlement is established, e.g., gift aid must be recognised when the income is received even though the actual claim may be received in the subsequent year.

Accruals accounts consist of a SOFA (Statement of Financial Activities), a balance sheet, a cash flow statement, and further explanatory notes. The SOFA is on page 20, the balance sheet is on page 21, the cash flow statement is on page 22 and the notes on pages 23-33.

Total unrestricted income during 2022 was £176,052 an increase on the previous year's income of £158,554 due partly to easing of COVID restrictions allowing better fund-raising opportunities, partly improved interest rates and because of the changed basis for the statutory fee return as a lump sum (appearing under other income) rather than as a monthly reduction in the parish share payment. Unrestricted expenditure rose from £151,090 to £166,343; this is mainly due to increased utility costs and an increase in Parish Share due mostly to the changed way in which return of statutory fees was handled in 2022 mentioned previously. This increase in unrestricted expenditure is less than the improvement in unrestricted income in 2022 and has led to a small net gain in unrestricted funds of £9,015. Consequently, the unrestricted funds carried forward to 2023 are £54,554. During 2022 two designated funds were established to handle short term grants for warm spaces projects, these funds will be spent during 2023 on their designated purpose.

The increase in unrestricted funds means we have a small cushion above the limit set by our reserves policy (see below). With anticipated further increases in energy costs and a possible reduction in voluntary giving during the cost of living crisis it is unfortunately likely we will see our unrestricted funds decrease during 2023.

Some of the restricted funds end the year with balances that will be too low for the anticipated 2023 expenditure, and fund raising for some church fabric funds is essential to allow for building repair work.

The River Room has been financed from restricted funds. A generous donation and successful fund raising and letting income means that the River Room fund which began the year with a negative balance now has a healthy balance of £11,161. The largest of the four loans taken to complete the building project has been fully repaid during 2022 and by the end of 2022 there was £19,000 of loan finance still to be repaid.

Investment funds, which are all endowment funds, reduced in value from £693,036 to £631,097. For most of these funds only interest or dividends may be spent.

In summary, we have successfully raised sufficient finance to meet the cost of the River Room and bring that fund into credit well within the period of the loans which are now being repaid. However, with increasing utility costs and high inflationary increases in other

costs we must continue to pay close attention to the level of unrestricted funds and to the five church fabric funds.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on free reserves (net current assets) which equates to at least two months unrestricted payments. This is equivalent to £30,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. It is our policy to invest short term balances with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund and longer-term reserves in the CCLA Church of England Investment fund.

Structure, governance, and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. In the DAMASCUS Parish the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, other members of the clergy team, churchwardens, licensed lay ministers and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the parish. All those who are members of the congregations are encouraged to register on the electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC met eight times during the year - a mixture of remote zoom meeting and in-person meetings in the River Room. The Local Church Committees (LCC), with responsibility for considering local activity and provide local church feedback to the PCC and who act as a forum for the PCC to consult with the congregations of each of the five churches continued to meet in the alternative months to the PCC. Again, a mixture of in-person and zoom meetings. Each of the five LCCs provide a report to every PCC meeting. For each church Pro-Wardens, elected at the APCM, carry out roles ensuring the smooth running of their church and maintain order in the church and grounds.

A Standing Committee consisting of the incumbent, the churchwardens, the PCC Secretary, the PCC Treasurer and two other members of the PCC meet bi-monthly (in the months between PCC meetings) to transact business delegated to them by the PCC.

Administrative information

The Ministry team

Clergy

Parish Rector – The Reverend Helen Kendrick
Associate Priest (Half-Time Stipendiary) – The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest (House for Duty) – The Reverend Meg Heywood (until Oct 2022)
Associate Priest (SSM) - The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Retired PTO – The Reverend Canon Dr Phillip Tovey
PTO – The Reverend Geoff Morgan

Licensed Lay Ministers
Dr Tim Budd (PTO)
Mr Jack Jarvis (PTO)
Mrs Alex Landsbert (PTO)

Authorised Preacher
Mr Paul James

The DAMASCUS Parish is part of the Abingdon Deanery within the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Parish Office, All Saints Church, The Green, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4AE. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission, with registered charity number 1175551.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2022 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:
Incumbent: The Reverend Helen Kendrick (Chairman)
Associate Minister: The Reverend Meg Heywood (until October 2022)
Associate Minister: The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest: The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Jack Jarvis
Licenced Lay Minister: Mrs Alex Landsbert
Churchwarden: Dr Hilary Otterburn
Mr Anton King representative in Deanery Synod
Mr Michael Murray representative in Deanery Synod

Elected members:
Mrs Valerie Cross
Mrs Linda Johnson
Mrs Nicola Turner (Hon. Treasurer)
Dr Elaine Maxwell
Mrs Alison Budd
Professor David King
Mrs Caroline Miller
Mr Tony Sloggett

Non-voting members
Mrs Sue Harris, Secretary
Mrs Sue Jenkins, Safeguarding Officer

Local Church Committee members who have served at any time from 1 January 2022 until the date this report was approved are:
Appleford LCC: Elizabeth Duffield, William Finch, Sue Helby, Linda Payne, Iris Ramkissoon, Jacob Shepherd, Vicky Shepherd and the Reverend Helen Kendrick. There are currently no pro-wardens in Appleford.
Drayton LCC: Valerie Cross (Pro-Warden), Gareth Davies, Sally Dixon, Sue Harris, Sue Icke, Linda Johnson (Pro-Warden), Anton King and the Reverend Meg Heywood (until Oct 2022).
Milton LCC: Mike Blanch, Pat Capuzzimati, Elaine Maxwell (Pro-Warden), Janet Money, Janet Taylor, Nicola Turner (Pro-Warden) and the Reverend Helen Kendrick.
Sutton Courtenay: Brian Blakeman (Clerk of Works); Alison Budd (Pro-Warden), James Bye (until March 2022), Sue Jenkins, David King, Alex Landsbert, Vivienne Maunders, Malcolm Ross; Phil Stubley, Mary Warrington and the Reverend Helen Kendrick.
Steventon: Alan Binning (Pro-Warden), Diana Bowder, Doreen Goddard, Jack Jarvis, Andrew Loutit, Caroline Miller; Mike Murray; Hilary Otterburn (Pro-Warden), Terry Pearce; David Sandford, Tony Sloggett, and the Reverend Phil Sutton.

DAMASCUS PARISH
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity (the 'Trust') for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of CIPFA, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed

Nicholas Clarke CPFA

1 Lockton Barns, Church Lane
Harwell, Didcot OX11 0EZ

Date: 9/5/23

DAMASCUS PARISH
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ending 31 December 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS							
Voluntary income	2a	129,504	8,909	40,048	-	178,461	182,602
Activities for generating funds	2b	20,080	-	15,579	-	35,659	20,966
Church activities	2c	13,735	-	5,483	-	19,218	18,897
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	2d	2,555	-	14,746	-	17,301	13,541
Other incoming resources	2e	10,178	-	2,938	-	13,116	2,375
TOTAL INCOME		**176,052**	**8,909**	**78,794**	**-**	**263,755**	**238,381**
EXPENDITURE							
Church activities	3a	133,567	-	2,595	-	136,162	129,995
Church expenses	3b	30,171	260	27,617	-	58,048	42,913
Costs of generating income	3c	1,820	-	1,630	-	3,450	1,093
Major capital expenditure	3d	-	-	-	-	-	33,470
Other expenditure	3e	785	-	3,352	-	4,137	2,520
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		**166,343**	**260**	**35,194**	**-**	**201,797**	**209,991**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE BEFORE INVESTMENT GAINS		**9,709**	**8,649**	**43,600**	**-**	**61,958**	**28,390**
NET GAINS ON INVESTMENTS					**- 61,939**	**- 61,939**	**66,631**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE		**9,709**	**8,649**	**43,600**	**- 61,939**	**19**	**95,021**
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS		- 694	-	694	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		**9,015**	**8,649**	**44,294**	**- 61,939**	**19**	**95,021**
Total funds brought forward		**45,539**	**-**	**109,065**	**693,036**	**847,640**	**752,619**
Total fund carried forward		**54,554**	**8,649**	**153,359**	**631,097**	**847,659**	**847,640**

DAMASCUS PARISH
BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Notes	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible	6	203	405
Investments	7	631,097	693,036
		631,300	693,441
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and prepayments	8	11,511	21,097
Short-term deposits		99,018	89,160
Cash at bank and in hand		131,994	93,666
		242,523	203,923
LIABILITIES			
Creditors - amounts falling due in one year	9	10,164	15,724
NET CURRENT ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		232,359	188,199
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		863,659	881,640
Creditors - amounts falling due after one year	10	16,000	34,000
TOTAL NET ASSETS		847,659	847,640
PARISH FUNDS			
Unrestricted	11	63,203	45,539
Restricted	12	153,359	109,065
Endowment		631,097	693,036
		847,659	847,640

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 9/5/2023 and signed on its behalf by:

The Revd Helen Kendrick (Chair) HGKendrick

Nicola Turner (Treasurer) Nicola Turner

DAMASCUS PARISH
CASH FLOW STATEMENT AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
Net cash from operating activities		11,885		- 34,813
Cash flows from investing activities				
Dividends, interest and rent from investments	17,301		13,541	
Interest paid	-		-	
Proceeds from sale of:				
Tangible fixed assets	-		-	
Tangible fixed investments	-		-	
Purchase of:				
Tangible fixed assets for the use of the PCC	-		-	
Fixed asset investments	-		-	
Cash flows from financing activities				
Loans (outstanding balances)	19,000		43,000	
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities		36,301		56,541
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		48,186		21,728
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January		182,826		161,098
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December		231,012		182,826
Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) before investment gains				
Net income before investment gains 31 December		61,958		28,390
Adjustment for:				
Depreciation charges		203		203
Dividends, interest and rent from investments		- 17,301		- 13,541
Decrease/(increase) in debtors		9,587		1,655
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors		- 42,562		- 51,520
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		11,885		- 34,813
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents				
Cash in hand		131,994		93,666
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		99,018		89,160
		231,012		182,826

DAMASCUS PARISH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Parish is a public benefit entity within the meaning of FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared under The Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and with the Regulations "true and fair view" provisions, together with FRS102 as the applicable accounting standard and the 2019 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP (FRS102). The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets, which are shown as fair value.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. There are no material uncertainties in respect of the charities ability to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

ASSETS

Consecrated and benefice property

Consecrated and beneficed property of any kind is excluded from the accounts by s.10(2) of the Charities Act 2011. All expenditure incurred during the year on such property is written off as expenditure in the SOFA and separately disclosed

Moveable church furnishings

These are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful economic life (normally 20 years) other than when insufficient cost information is available. In this case the item is not capitalised, but all items are included in the Church's inventory in any case.

Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £1,000. The Parish computer comes within this scope and has been depreciated over 5 years.

FUNDS

Unrestricted Funds

These represent the remaining income funds of the PCC available for spending on general purposes of the PCC. They include designated funds that have been set aside by the PCC for specific purposes.

Restricted Funds

These are income funds that must be spent on restricted purposes and details of funds held and restrictions provided are shown in the notes to the accounts.

Endowment Funds

These are restricted funds that must be retained as trust capital either permanently or subject to a discretionary power to spend capital as income.

INCOME

Collections and planned giving are recognised when received by or on behalf of the Parish. Income tax recoverable on covenants or gift aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised. Grants and legacies to the church are accounted for as soon as the Parish is notified of its legal entitlement and the amount due. Funds raised by fund-raising events are accounted for as gross. Sales of books and magazines are accounted for gross.

INVESTMENT INCOME

Interest on bank balances is accounted for on an accruals basis with interest recognised in the period to which the interest relates.

Dividend income is recognised on the date the share interest becomes ex-dividend or when the right to the dividend can be established.

EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal and constructive obligation and settlement is probable and quantifiable.

2 INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
2(a) Voluntary income						
All other giving and voluntary receipts, including Special Appeals (recurring and one-off)	6,772	-	24,413	-	31,185	45,633
Collections at services	14,811	-	1,599	-	16,410	15,174
Collections at services for charity	3,170	-	-	-	3,170	1,557
Gift Aid recovered	21,811	-	5,209	-	27,020	27,005
Grants (include recurring and one-off)	7,235	8,909	5,877	-	22,021	17,397
Other planned giving	1,880	-	-	-	1,880	1,973
Legacies received (capital value)	-	-	-	-	-	1,000
Tax efficient planned giving	73,825	-	2,950	-	76,775	72,863
	129,504	8,909	40,048	-	178,461	182,602
2(b) Activities for generating funds						
Gross income from fundraising activities	20,080	-	15,579	-	35,659	20,966
	20,080	-	15,579	-	35,659	20,966
2(c) Church activities						
Additional wedding and funeral fees	1,968	-	-	-	1,968	2,422
Gross income from trading (e.g. hall lettings, magazine, bookstall). NOT fundraising.	2,752	-	5,483	-	8,235	4,226
Statutory fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc)	9,015	-	-	-	9,015	12,249
	13,735	-	5,483	-	19,218	18,897
2(d) Dividends, interest, income from property etc.						
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	2,555	-	14,746	-	17,301	13,541
	2,555	-	14,746	-	17,301	13,541
2(e) Other incoming resources						
Other incoming resources	10,178	-	2,938	-	13,116	2,375
	10,178	-	2,938	-	13,116	2,375
TOTAL INCOME	176,052	8,909	78,794		263,755	238,381

3 EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
	£		£	£	£	£
3(a) Church activities						
Clergy and staff expenses	4,113	-	200	-	4,313	4,263
Diocesan parish share contribution	115,117	-	-	-	115,117	107,093
Mission giving and donations	9,311	-	-	-	9,311	8,527
Salaries, wages and honoraria	5,026	-	2,395	-	7,421	10,112
	133,567	-	2,595	-	136,162	129,995
3(b) Church expenses						
Mission and evangelism costs	-	260	4,221	-	4,481	6,327
Church running expenses	16,440	-	20,523	-	36,963	26,351
Church utility bills	13,528	-	2,873	-	16,401	9,132
Costs of trading	-	-	-	-	-	-
Independent examiner's costs	-	-	-	-	-	900
Depreciation on church equipment	203	-	-	-	203	203
	30,171	260	27,617	-	58,048	42,913
3(c) Costs of generating income						
Costs of fundraising activities	1,820	-	1,630	-	3,450	1,093
	1,820	-	1,630	-	3,450	1,093
3(d) Major capital expenditure						
Major repairs to the church building	-	-	-	-	-	4,839
New building work	-	-	-	-	-	28,631
	-	-	-	-	-	33,470
3(e) Other expenditure						
Other outgoing resources/ payments	750	-	3,352	-	4,102	2,485
Governance costs	35	-	-	-	35	35
	785	-	3,352	-	4,137	2,520
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	166,343	260	35,194		201,797	209,991

4 STAFF COSTS

	2022	2021
	£	£
Parish administrator	4,876	4,992
Cleaner	630	1,557
Groundsman	615	1,230
Gravedigger	-	210
Organist	1,150	1,913
Vergers	30	210
Bell ringers	120	-
	7,421	10,112

Note: All staff above are self-employed

The number of individuals in receipt of staff payments was as follows:

Parish administrator	1	1
Cleaner	2	3
Groundsman	1	1
Gravedigger	-	2
Organist	4	5
Vergers	1	4
Bellringers	6	-

None of the Trustees received any remuneration or employee benefits during the year. The lay trustees, where applicable, who acted as agents to the PCC in making approved payments on its behalf, were reimbursed for these expenses on presentation of suitable documentary evidence.

Clergy working expenses were reimbursed in accordance with Church of England guidelines.

There were no related party transactions.

5 TRANSFER OF FUNDS

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
Apportionment of deposit fund interest	- 664	664	-
Wedding money held in General Fund from 2020 until wedding took place in 2022	-30	30	-

6 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost of valuation		
At 1 January 2022	406	406
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
At 31 December 2022	406	406
Depreciation		
At 1 January 2022	-	-
Charge for the year	203	203
At 31 December 2022	203	203
Net book value at 31 December 2022	203	203
Net book value at 31 December 2021	406	406

7 INVESTMENTS

		Market value at 31st December 2021	Additions	Disposals	Market value at 31st December 2022	Change in value Jan 1 to Dec 31 2022
		£	£	£	£	£
Milton Milton - Church Lands		616,930	-	-	563,949	- 52,981
Drayton Bradfield Trust		10,988	-	-	9,695	- 1,293
Drayton Clerk's Piece		967	-	-	854	- 113
Drayton Miss Emma Hyde for maintenance of church fabric		2,694	-	-	2,381	- 313
Drayton Hyde's charity for psalmody		925	-	-	818	- 107
Steventon 627485002S - ENDOWMENT FUND		35,564	-	-	31,377	- 4,187
Steventon 627485001 S - N01 INVESTMENT FUND		24,968	-	-	22,012	- 2,956
DAMASCUS PCC 627101001S	*	-	-	-	11	11
		693,036	**-**	**-**	**631,097**	**- 61,939**

* This investment was purchased for £10.00 on 21 Aug 2018 by a parishioner for the Parish but was omitted from the investment list in 2018 to 2021 inclusive, however the valuation in 2021 should have been £13.35

8 DEBTORS

	2022	2021
	£	£
HMRC Gift Aid	5,485	13,317
Gift aid acrued in 2020 not yet received	-	368
Statutory fees due	-	15
Collections to be banked	697	1,771
Fund raising to be banked	1,187	1,074
Parish share rebate	2,864	2,164
Grants from Oxford Diocese	1,070	1,034
Miscellaneous debtors	208	1,354
TOTAL	11,511	21,097

9 CREDITORS falling due within one year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Accounts examination costs	-	900
Diocesan Loan repayment	-	6,000
Individual 1 loan	1,000	1,000
Individual 2 loan	1,000	1,000
Individual 3 loan	1,000	1,000
Mission and evangelism costs	1,212	942
Clergy expenses	192	72
Church running expenses	1,234	583
Mission giving	3,226	2,035
Parish Administrator	560	-
Organist	150	175
Miscellaneous creditors	590	2,017
TOTAL	10,164	15,724

10 CREDITORS falling due after one year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Diocesan Loan repayment	-	15,000
Individual 1 loan	7,000	8,000
Individual 2 loan	7,000	8,000
Individual 3 loan	2,000	3,000
TOTAL	16,000	34,000

11 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
General funds	45,539	176,052	166,343	- 694	54,554
Designated funds					
DAMASCUS Warm Spaces	-	8,130	96	-	8,034
Steventon Roots and Shoots	-	779	164	-	615
	-	8,909	260	-	8,649
TOTAL Unrestricted Funds	45,539	184,961	166,603	- 694	63,203

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS IN 2021

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
General funds	38,094	158,554	151,090	- 19	45,539
Designated funds					
Drayton pew removal	6,664	-	-	- 6,664	-
River room (designated)	705	-	705	-	-
	7,369	-	705	- 6,664	-
TOTAL Unrestricted Funds	45,463	158,554	151,795	- 6,683	45,539

12 RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
Drayton fabric	11,364	3,521	5,628	60	9,317
Drayton Carpenters legacy	1,269	-	-	-	1,269
Drayton Bells	2,871	355	-	18	3,244
Drayton Clerk's Piece	373	25	-	-	398
Drayton Hydes for Psalmody	641	24	-	-	665
Appleford fabric fund	11,089	999	1,652	62	10,498
Milton bells	12,799	943	593	75	13,224
Milton building	10,199	2,968	455	67	12,779
Milton Church Lands	45,241	14,300	5,745	288	54,084
Sutton Courtenay Fabric	4,553	8,048	9,775	21	2,847
Sutton Courtenay River Room	- 20,688	34,660	2,811	-	11,161
Sutton Courtenay Ringers	357	345	-	3	705
Sutton Courtenay Fun Day	10,859	2,783	4,964	54	8,732
Steventon Fabric	695	9,563	3,333	-	6,925
Steventon Churchyard	14,641	230	-	-	14,871
Steventon Tower	2,847	30	238	46	2,685
Steventon Church Repair	- 45	0	-	-	- 45
	109,065	**78,794**	**35,194**	**694**	**153,359**

RESTRICTED FUNDS IN 2021

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
Drayton fabric	4,296	4,705	4,302	6,665	11,364
Drayton Carpenters legacy	1,269	-	-	-	1,269
Drayton Bells	2,870	-	-	1	2,871
Drayton Clerk's Piece	348	25	-	-	373
Drayton Hydes for Psalmody	617	24	-	-	641
Appleford fabric fund	8,759	3,661	1,333	2	11,089
Milton bells	12,320	675	198	2	12,799
Milton building	8,914	1,557	274	2	10,199
Milton Church Lands	37,648	11,509	3,924	8	45,241
Sutton Courtenay Fabric	5,701	3,117	4,266	1	4,553
Sutton Courtenay River Room	- 32,282	41,709	30,115	-	- 20,688
Sutton Courtenay Ringers	2,528	457	2,628	-	357
Sutton Courtenay Fun Day	7,580	9,512	6,235	2	10,859
Steventon Fabric	3,105	2,511	4,921	-	695
Steventon Churchyard	14,632	9	-	-	14,641
Steventon Tower	2,492	355	-	-	2,847
Steventon Church Repair	- 46	1	-	-	- 45
	80,751	**79,827**	**58,196**	**6,683**	**109,065**

SUMMARY OF ASSETS BY FUND

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	**TOTAL 2022** £
Tangible fixed assets	203	-	-	203
Investment fixed assets	-	-	631,097	631,097
Current assets	89,164	153,359	-	242,523
Liabilities				
Amounts falling due in one year	- 10,164	-	-	- 10,164
Amounts falling due after one year	- 16,000	-	-	- 16,000
	63,203	153,359	631,097	847,659

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

England & Wales - Charity number 1175551

Accounts

The DAMASCUS Parish

Drayton | Appleford | Milton
Sutton Courtenay | Steventon

2021 Report and accounts for the DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council

St Peter's, **D**rayton
St Peter & St Paul's, **A**ppleford
St Blaise, **M**ilton
All Saints', **S**utton **C**ourtenay
St Michael & All Angels', **S**teventon

Nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love

Registered charity number 1175551

Introduction to the DAMASCUS Parish

The DAMASCUS Parish is a single parish, formed from the five, growing, semi-rural villages of Drayton, Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon. The five parishes had been working together for over twenty years as a Group Ministry prior to the formation of the single parish in July 2017. Since the formation of the DAMASCUS Parish we have been building on the opportunities to work more collaboratively.

The Parish is situated between Abingdon and Didcot with boundaries abutting both towns. There are considerable numbers of professional people in the area, with Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, Harwell, Culham, Didcot Power Station and Milton Park Enterprise Zone all in the locality. The easy access to Didcot Parkway Station means that many parishioners commute to London, Oxford, Reading, Swindon and beyond.

Aim and Purposes

The DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Helen Kendrick, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the churches of St Peter's Drayton, St Peter and St Paul's Appleford, St Blaise Milton, All Saints' Sutton Courtenay and St Michael and All Angels' Steventon and St Michael's Hall Steventon.

Our Vision and Mission

Our vision is to be a living Christian presence at the heart of our communities nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love.

Through:

1. Reaching out to our existing communities and the huge influx of new residents.
2. Building a new community of faith within the Milton Heights development.
3. Re-invigorating our existing traditional churches to support mission and outreach.
4. Enabling outreach within our Schools to flourish and grow.
5. Developing a spirit of generosity and giving, where all the churches support mission where it is most needed.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the five churches in the parish.

It should be noted that for the first three months of 2021 the Rector, the Reverend Helen Kendrick was on sabbatical, followed almost immediately by an extended period of sick-leave.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and prayer

2021 was another year dominated by the Global Covid-19 Pandemic and our life of worship and prayer has been greatly impacted by this. For the first three months of 2021 our churches were once again closed for public worship and only re-opened on Palm Sunday. The PCC remained committed to offering a range of services during the week and over the course of the year, so the service pattern and tradition in the five churches offer variety across the Parish as a whole and to enable the clergy team to cover services in all five churches. The Clergy team and PCC will continue to review the pattern of services – particularly in the light of a reduction in the ministry team (through retirement). Our intention at the beginning of 2021 was that at least one service is held in each church every Sunday, except for the fifth Sunday when there is a DAMASCUS Parish service in one of the five churches. Also, that mid-week services are held in two churches on different days of the week. All five churches are open during the day every day for our local community and visitors to enjoy and use for private prayer. (Subject to Covid-19 restrictions).

Online worship was again offered on a weekly basis for the whole parish during the period of lockdown and, as we re-emerged from the lockdown, we combined both online and in-person worship where we had the technology. We offered a combination of pre-recorded and live-streamed services where possible.

The Ministry team continued to provide service sheets for people to worship at home where requested. For all those with internet access, in addition to the DAMASCUS online worship they were directed to the Oxford Diocese online worship which gave an opportunity to explore how other churches worship.

All are welcome to attend our regular services, but for much of 2021 numbers at in-person services remained lower than previously due to individual caution about gathering in buildings. We continued to follow government guidelines and follow all Covid-19 precautions as instructed or guided.

During 2021 there were 200 people on the Parish Electoral Roll.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey of life, though Covid-19 restrictions meant that baptisms and weddings could not take place in the first quarter of the year, so the number of these events was lower than usual. Funerals have continued throughout the year, though with some limitations, because of the COVID restrictions. We have been able to offer a live stream for some funerals so that wider family could safely be connected to the funeral. In the DAMASCUS parish we have celebrated 26 baptisms; 16 weddings and 30 funeral services in church during 2021.

Remembrance Sunday Services were once again held inside our church buildings in 2021 and they were well supported – although attendance was not as high as in previous years.

We also ran a parish wide in-person Advent Course using the 'And They Sang' material looking at the songs of Advent. This was much appreciated by all that attended.

We would like to thank our Rector, Reverend Helen Kendrick, our Associate Ministers Reverend Phil Sutton, Reverend Meg Heywood, Reverend Rosie Bruce and Reverend Dr Karen Hyde and all the Licensed Lay Ministers for their hard work leading, nurturing, inspiring and teaching us during this year. In 2021 The Reverend Dr Karen Hyde successfully completed her curacy in the DAMASCUS Parish in July and took up her new post as part-time Chaplain to St Helen's and St Katherine's School in Abingdon.

The following paragraphs present points about worship and ministry specific to each of the five churches in the parish, but are necessarily more limited than usual because of the restrictions in place through the early part of 2021.

Drayton

It has been so encouraging to see how well St Peter's has risen to the challenge again this year of being the scattered church worshipping in our homes, to the gathered church worshipping in the building. Well done everyone!

<u>Worship via Zoom</u>

At the beginning of the year, it was decided by the PCC to close our churches for Sunday and midweek worship. In St Peter's we still wanted to meet as a congregation, so we rose to the challenge of Zoom services! It was so good to sing, share our thoughts on the Bible passage with one another in breakout rooms, and have a weekly agape together. Thanks to David Heywood and Victoria Griffiths who learnt about the technical side, provided us with an order of service on the screen! And naturally many of us stayed online to share a cup of tea of coffee 'after the service'!

This service was open to everyone in the parish, and it was especially good when we did it for the DAMASCUS service on the 5th Sunday of the month.

Worship online
The ministry team and Oxford Diocese continued to provide online recorded services until the middle of the year. The high light for me was interviewing Malcolm Ross and finding out about his faith and work, as he was usually behind the camera videoing everything and editing it afterwards.

Worship in Church
When we came back at Easter, we still wanted to sing and offer communion in both kinds. We decided to keep many of the restrictions in place to do this in order to keep everyone as risk free as possible. As the year went on, we were able to ease the restrictions.
The numbers have been lower since before lockdown, but it has been a joy to see familiar faces come back – and one or two new faces added too.

Thursday Morning Communion
This service was cancelled throughout 2021 but plans were laid to have a new look, place, time and format beginning in 2022.

Prayer meeting
We continued to have weekly virtual prayer meetings in our homes for most of the year. In the summer we decided to start monthly prayer meetings in the church room again, as well the weekly home prayer meetings. The same format is used for both, so that those at home can join in with those in the church room. Being able to do this has encouraged us to have prayer as part of the church's life together.

Healing Team – Whilst church was closed, we held our Saturday evening Prayer meeting over Zoom. After Easter when we returned to church, we offered healing prayers in a socially distanced way at the back of church. As restrictions eased, we have resumed healing prayers with the laying on of hands on the second Sunday of the month in the Lady Chapel. The Healing Group meet on the day before that in prayer and preparation.

Discipleship Group – The group has met regularly throughout the year, initially via Zoom and since June, in person. Many topics have been discussed such as the various courses which have been held throughout the year, different types of retreat and fund raising both for the whole parish as well as St Peter's Fabric Fund.

Special services, called "Brolly Days", were held in July, August and September when different types of worship were explored. We had a Taizé service, one where music played a special role and one where Herman Stewart led us in Caribbean worship. They were all enjoyed by the congregation. We raised in excess of £2,500 by holding a gift day and Christmas Cracker weekend. This money was needed as the parish general fund has become seriously depleted. We have also been looking at ways to increase lay participation in church activities, for when Meg leaves. Some members of the congregation have attended a course on lay administration of communion. David Heywood attended one of our meetings to discuss an LCC Leadership Course which would be aimed at nurturing and sustaining St Peter's for the future. This will start in January 2022 and will be aimed at the LCC members as well as other people from the congregation.

We are in the process of updating our welcome leaflets, which will be distributed in the village as well as being available in church.

Pebbles – Is a group for parents and carers with babies and toddlers. It is well attended and much appreciated by the families who come along. It is a friendly, welcoming, supportive group. It still takes place on Wednesday mornings, from 10-11.30 am during term time. During 2021, we have had to be 'creative' in the ways we have reached out and connected families. From January-March 2021, we met on 'Zoom', then from April-July, our weekly meetings took place on the Millennium Green in Drayton and God blessed us with dry weather, except for one wet Wednesday! With easing of restrictions, we moved back into St Peter's for our sessions in September. The families enjoy singing, stories, including Bible stories, crafts and free play. Meg joined us for the 'Pebbles Nativity' in December and each child was given a lovely, knitted heart and a book telling the Christmas Story. 'Drayton Pebbles' Facebook page has also been set up. There is a great team of helpers. Sue Icke leads the group.

First Tuesday Connections – No meetings were held from January to November due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, we did contact our members by 'phone to check how they were during this period. In December we came together for a Christmas Party. The back of the Church was decorated, and seasonal food was served. Rosie and Kay entertained us with Christmas music, and we all enjoyed singing the carols. This meeting was very popular as most members had not been in touch with each for almost a year.

The Care Team – During the first six months of 2021 the Care Team had been unable to carry out any visits. In August things became easier and visits began again, with masks and social distancing. Cards continued to be sent marking, baptism, wedding and bereavements.

Appleford

Under usual circumstances the typical attendance at the main Sunday service is 12 adults and three children. For Breakfast Church the congregation is usually much larger, this service is always lively including action hymns, short readings, family prayers and a thought for the day talk and breakfast. The Breakfast Church congregation grew through 2021 and has attracted new families, recently arrived in the village. A WhatsApp group has been created and communication between families is improving. We hope to build on this success in 2022.

For Mothering Sunday flowers and prayer cards were distributed widely across the village and for Easter, greeting cards and seeds were delivered to each home in the village. These were very well received and helped to remind people that the church community was still active and praying for the wider community.

The Street Nativity was extremely well attended, after a year's break because of Covid-19. The Appleford Community Project paid for the donkey and provided refreshments in the farmyard at the end which was much appreciated by all who attended.

Several people helped to knit hearts which were then distributed around the village for people to find and to be reminded of what lies at the heart of Christmas. The carol service was well attended with children and adults all playing a part, although some older members of the community continued to be cautious about church attendance with Covid-19 numbers rising in the local area at the end of the year.

Milton

Under usual circumstances the typical attendance at the main Sunday service is 10 adults, but for family services typical attendance is 15 adults and seven children. In March 2020, due to COVID, our Thought for the Day (Café church service) was changed to a short Morning Worship service, this continued through 2021, we hope to revert to a café church style in 2022. Our Family services have been particularly well supported and the children have been very willing contributors, we especially enjoy the thought-provoking prayers that they write for us.

We have continued to work with Milton Methodists, but with the restrictions of the COVID pandemic it was difficult for most of the year to hold joint services. We were pleased to welcome some members of Milton Methodists to the service on remembrance Sunday and we hope that in 2022 we can resume our programme of shared services.

Our Lent charity was Wateraid and members of the congregation took on a variety of water or health or environmental challenges to raise donations for Wateraid and contributed to their Jars for Change appeal.

The church was decorated for Remembrance Sunday, and the knitted poppy cascade around the porch door was much appreciated by the Milton community. We were pleased to welcome representatives the British legion and Milton Methodists to join in this well attended service.

We had a successful Christingle service, and the children (and adults!) enjoyed making their Christingles during this service. The crib service included a nativity play performed by the children and very much enjoyed by the rest of the congregation. It is many years since there have been enough children in the congregation to be able to have a nativity play. After the success of the carol service in 2020 we again held a Christmas Eve carol service by candle light with a mix of traditional and contemporary readings and music. This year congregational singing was possible even if it was muffled by masks. The church was beautifully decorated and as full as social distancing permitted; everyone appreciated this beautiful service.

Unfortunately, COVID restrictions have meant that Milton School have been unable to have services at St Blaise church this year, but we maintain links with the school and look forward to welcoming them to church in the future. The Reverend Phil Sutton has continued to lead weekly assemblies in the school and serves on the governing body. Sadly we have had no contact with Milton Park during 2021, as many companies continue to have most of their staff working away from the office.

Sutton Courtenay

During the first quarter of the year a couple of funerals took place with a zoom link for those who were unable to attend. As we were not open for Mothering Sunday, flowers and a card were delivered to the female members of the congregation. Services resumed, with restrictions, on 21st March which meant we could have the Easter services. We were grateful to Phillip Tovey who took the Palm Sunday and Easter Day services, both of which started outside before coming into the church building. During Holy Week there was a Tenebrae service on Zoom, a reflective Maundy Thursday service in church and Holy Hour on Good Friday. Helen was welcomed back on Sunday 11th April following her 3-month Sabbatical. The rest of the year continued with our normal pattern of worship of 1st Sunday Family Service, 2nd and 4th Sunday's Holy Communion, 3rd Sunday Morning Worship. Sunday 18th July was a beautiful leaving service for Rev Karen Hyde in the churchyard. Harvest Festival was followed by a community lunch served in the River Room. All Souls' Service was moved to the afternoon on 31st October followed by an afternoon tea which was very successful. Christmas services included a Carol Service, shared with Drayton, which was very atmospheric. Crib service was on Christmas Eve followed by a very wet Torchlight Procession in the early evening. Christmas Morning was well attended. Overall congregation numbers were beginning to get back to pre-pandemic level and there was a high level of community engagement with our 'What lies at the heart of Christmas' initiative tying into the national campaign.

Steventon

The church was closed for services for the early part of the year but once services started a greater part of the congregation returned. Some older members were naturally hesistant. Several young children continue to attend regularly and we have also welcomed some new regular attenders , people new to the village. The midweek service led by Jack Jarvis continues with regular attenders and the monthly Evening Prayer led by Mike Murray continues with an increasing attendence.

The Remembrance service was well attended and the service on All hallows was especially appreciated by the bereaved who were prevented from having an unrestricted funeral in church. Both Christmas and Easter services saw attendances above that of pre Covid levels.

Social and fund raising

Social and fund-raising activities have been very much reduced in 2020 because of the COVID restrictions in place for much of the year. Many of the social activities provide outreach and mission opportunities within the village communities.

Drayton

The Lent appeal was for "Send a Cow". Money was raised by preparing and delivering soup for the 5 weeks of Lent. Simnel cakes and Easter cards were also made and delivered. This proved to be very successful and a well-oiled operation, raising £1,770.

Later in the year the churches were asked to organise events to fund raise. A very successful prayer vigil and gift day was held on 26th October.

A "Christmas Cracker" weekend was held on Saturday/Sunday 27/28th November. The main event was on the Saturday and there was a lovely warm atmosphere enhanced by Christmas lights and the aroma of glühwein. It was lovely to see friends and especially some Pebbles families.

Appleford

Due to Covid-19 restrictions only one or two coffee mornings were held during the summer months and due to illness and lack of volunteers no social or fundraising events were run during the year.

Milton

Our twice monthly tea and chat afternoons and offer an opportunity for companionship particularly for older villagers and we were pleased to be able resume these sessions in August. We incorporated our craft group sessions into the Tea and Chat afternoons and these became a hub of activity as we worked towards a craft fair at the end of November.

The craft and jigsaw fair in November was well supported and raised over £500 for the church funds, it reminded people what life was like before we had COVID and got our Advent and Christmas season off to an enjoyable and profitable start.

We restarted monthly film nights in September and although the number of people attending was small, the chance to watch a film with other people in a safe space without the need to travel was much appreciated.

Our Lent Charity was Wateraid and at Christmas we supported the Children's Society.

There was good support for Oxford Historic Churches Ride and Stride – with a family visiting churches and well sponsored. We also had welcomers at St Blaise all day, who did a grand job tidying the churchyard and cleaning the church during quiet periods!

Working in partnership with the church, MICE (Miltonians in Community Events) have led in the promotion of a 100 Club from which the 'church' benefitted, both financially and socially. The 100 Club draw was one of the bits of normal life that continued inspite of the pandemic.

Sutton Courtenay

Again this was limited due to the pandemic. The regular twice monthly Community Cafe restarted in July and has attracted a lot of new people in the past 6 months. Money raised at these events either go into the Fabric Fund or the River Room Fund. In September money was raised for Macmillan Cancer and December's Charity was Flexicare. During August the now annual cream teas were very successful, raising funds for the River Room.

On October 2nd, Tim Budd gave a moving talk – In the Eye of the Storm – about the Air Disaster in which his father died. Funds raised were split between the Church and the Norwegian Red Cross.

On September 18th we finally had the Grand Opening of the River Room with Bishop Gavin, the Bishop of Dorchester.

In November a successful Jumble Sale was run in the Village Hall for the General Fund raising over £1000. Movie Matinees restarted in the Autumn.

In the Autumn the church was used for a variety of Concerts. Sunday 24th October was SYRINX led by Simon Salisbury. Saturday 11th December, a classical concert for young children led by Noriko Shorney, with a Christian theme. Finishing the year with an excellent concert by Nadia Edie on Saturday 18th December.

Once again we bought food and packed and delivered Christmas Hampers to nearly 100 individuals, couples and families in the week before Christmas. Money for this comes from a private donation.

The 200 Club continues to be run to raise money for the River Room. Hirings of the River Room continued to increase during the latter part of 2021 and are beginning to bring in new people to the church building for a variety of activities – from art classes to bridge. From a Dementia Café to private parties.

Steventon

Despite Covid restrictions there was a significant amount of fund raising and social activity albeit at a distance. The Lent lunches ,takeaway or eaten outside, were well supported and over £600 passed onto Christian Aid. We had a plant sale and book sale. A pasty sale raised about £300 for the church and other charities.

Some local professional singers used the church for a concert, very effective and gave the church a donation .

The newly formed Local History society held a very popular exhibition. Donations were requested rather than an admission fee and they kindly passed the money on to the Damascus parish.

The church fete was held in the churchyard where cream teas proved to be very popular. The theme of turning the church inside out continued with the crib mounted as a tableau on a flat bed truck. 50 lit stars were placed along the causeway and there was a good response to putting Advent window displays around the village. The crib was taken to two different sites on the new estates for carol singing. It was felt that this could have been better advertised but the stars and the tableau were much appreciated and many thanks to all those who helped to arrange these.

Music

There are choirs at Drayton, Steventon and Sutton Courtenay. The choirs at Drayton and Sutton Courtenay regularly combine forces for weddings and all three combine together for shared DAMASCUS Services.

Drayton
Singing in worship has gradually been restored over the year, as restrictions have been lifted. Choir members have joined with others singers to form a joint DAMASCUS choir for special services throughout the year. This included, for the first time, a shared carol service between Drayton and Sutton Courtenay. We also repeated our carol singing around the village, visiting those who are unable to worship in church. Kay Davis has led the music for several Morning Praise services and has brought some new songs into our worship. We continue to have a rota of willing and very accomplished organists. Many thanks to David K. Richard H. John N. Peter S. Andrew W. and also to William J., Matthew V. who play for special occasional services.

Appleford
Iris Ramkisson continues to choose and upload the hymns to the church iPod and the sound system is used to good effect. We do endeavour to book an organist for occasional special services (Christmas Carols etc).

Milton
We no longer have a regular organist so we effectively use music from CDs. Through the year we have experimented with some of the less well known hymns in our hymn book with the support of choirs from around the world via YouTube.

Sutton Courtenay
Singing Saints' have grew in number through 2021 and continued to enhance our worship including an excellent performance at the Carol Service in December, combined with singers from St Peter's Drayton. The church continues to be indebted to David King, John Napper and Patrick Salisbury for providing musical accompaniment. Patrick Salisbury stepped down in the Autumn and Barbara Vellacott has agreed to play the piano for some services.

Steventon
Steventon Church Choir consists of 6 sopranos, 2 altos 1 tenor and 2 basses. The organist is Helen Pearce. Keeping music going during the second lockdown and after was quite difficult. For services we had to have a rota of 6 singers per service spaced 2 metres apart. Since then we have remained very careful keeping our distance so that we are as safe as possible. We sing the communion hymn in front of the vestry so that we are not breathing any germs on the congregation as they pass to receive communion. We have limited our practices to one a month. For the Christmas carol service we were augmented by a few members of Steventon Choral Society and were able to put on a nice service with all the members being at least 1 metre apart. We would like to thank Rev Phil Sutton for all his support, and to all the members of the choir during a very difficult time. I hope that next years report will be a little more positive.

Bells

The bells in Drayton, Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon were all rung regularly once COVID restriction were eased in the summer, with service ringing and some practices resuming. The bells at Appleford remain unringable.

In February Milton and Steventon tolled a bell 100 times to mark the death of Captain Sir Tom Moore. A bell was tolled at Milton in March for the National Day of Reflection. In April again bells tolled at Milton and Steventon this time to mark the passing of Claire Ward, the Tower Captain at Steventon and a ringer at all the DAMASCUS towers. Then in April a bell was tolled at Drayton, Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon to mark the death of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh and also on the day of his funeral.

We are fortunate that three of our towers are ground floor so we can easily ensure good ventilation by opening an outside door allowing practices and longer periods of ringing to resume. By the end of the year 15 peals had been rung at Milton though ringing peals with outside doors open in December was pretty cold!

Following the long period of no ringing a few ringers have not returned and teaching learners has been impacted by the continuing need to consider social spacing which is not easy when teaching learners, however Steventon did have one new recruit in 2021.

In September 2021, for the first time in over 50 years, Steventon hosted the Branch striking competition. It was attended by 50 or 60 people and was one of the first large gatherings of ringers from the area in 18 months. It was a glorious day, with many enjoying the ability to socialise outside between the church hut, where afternoon tea was available, and the church. The ringers' service was led by Jack Jarvis. The small home band were delighted to be awarded third place out of six competing teams.

During the long period with no significant ringing, pigeons have got into both Steventon and Sutton Courtenay bell chambers. At Steventon this was cleared up by the ringers during 2020 one window was re-netted then, during 2021 two further windows have been re-netted and hopefully this will keep the pigeons out. At Sutton Courtenay the clean-up required was more extensive and complicated and was carried out in Jan 2021 by a professional company who also re-netted the windows.

New bell muffles were ordered for Steventon and should arrive in Spring 2022.

As we continued to struggle with the restriction of the pandemic through 2021 we had very few visiting ringers. None of the towers had any quarter peals rung and only Milton had any peals rung (15). There was ringing for quite a number of weddings during the summer months, many deferred from 2020. Income to all the bell funds continues to be much reduced because they rely on the generous donations of visiting ringers and peal bands as well as from weddings.

Flowers

All the churches in the Parish are decorated for festivals and special occasions. We thank the many volunteer flower arrangers and those who organise flower rotas for all their efforts to make our churches look so beautiful.

Drayton

The church has been decorated for the festivals but kept simple with a pedestal arrangement and daffodils on the window sills at Easter. Harvest was a small arrangement on the chancel step and hops on the window sills and pillars.

For Christmas there were wreaths of the Advent and Pascal candles with holly and yew on the pillars and also on the window sills with candles.

Small arrangements are in the Lady Chapel and on the welcome table throughout the year. Pedestal arrangements at other times have only been done when requested by members of the congregation in memory of a loved one.

Appleford

The flower arrangers were delighted to begin flower arranging in church following the re-opening of the building at Easter and a small team keep the church decorated throughout the year. The Christmas arrangements were particularly beautiful. We are grateful to Richard Mathews who maintains the two tubs outside the church door with all year around blooms.

Milton

Whilst there is no flower arranging group at St Blaise, a variety of volunteers organised decoration of the church for Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Day and Christmas.

Sutton Courtenay

The Flower arranging team, under the leadership of Ann White, have continued to provide a dedicated service, with most providing the flowers at their own expense despite their being funds available to compensate them. We are grateful to Richard Mathews who maintains the two tubs outside the church door with all year around blooms.

Steventon

Steventon Church Flower Arrangers team have continued to provide flowers for the Church every Sunday. Around twelve volunteers join together to decorate the church for the main festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas. During 2021 there were seven weddings and two baptisms for which the team joined with the families to provide floral decorations. In October Mrs Liz Stork led a workshop to introduce some new volunteers to flower arranging in church. We are continuing to reduce the use of floral foam.

Schools

Within the DAMASCUS Parish there are four primary schools of which the three in Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon are Church of England schools. The clergy and lay people are actively involved in a variety of ways – as governors, taking assemblies, helping to deliver the RE curriculum, *Open the Book*, and as reading volunteers.

Drayton

Drayton Community School

Over the year it was not possible to visit the school due to lockdown and restrictions put in place by Oxford County Council to stop the spread of Covid in the school. All the governors' meetings were online. But we did manage to participate in the Scarecrow trail that the school organized having a Mr Happy outside the church room and invited the families to the Christingle. We continue to hold them in our prayers.

Milton

Links with Milton School are strong. Reverend Phil Sutton is a Governor of St Blaise School, he has been going into school regularly leading assemblies and other activity sessions when Covid restrictions have permitted. Unfortunately, it has not been possible for the school to use or visit St Blaise this year because of COVID restrictions. Phil Sutton is continuing to work with the Headteacher and staff to use the church on a more regular basis as part its curriculum and community-based activities.

Sutton Courtenay

During the first part of the year we were unable to go into the school to do the OTB assemblies. Alison Budd went into the school on two occasions to record some of the OTB stories including the set of Easter stories for the school to use in their assembly slot. The OTB assemblies restarted in school on September 16th when the team were given a warm welcome back. Helen had Year 6 attend the River Room to do a workshop on Pilgrimage and Prayer and went to the school for the End of year service. Finally Year 3, 4 and 5 came to the Church for the Christmas Experience. Year 6 had a separate session in school. Helen Kendrick, Rita Atkinson and Bryony Landsbert continue to serve as Foundation Governors.

Steventon

Rev Sutton continues as a governor and continues to offer support and advice to the school and takes weekly assemblies. Open the book continues on a regular fortnightly basis. The Children's Ministry Team continue to plan the family breakfast service , held once a month. The school Christmas service was held outside by the village hall. The crib, on a truck was taken down and much appreciated. The Christingle service was initially cancelled as the school had been unable to prepare it. A notice put on the Steventon Community Facebook page prompted a lot of requests for it to be put on and a service was duly held which was very well attended.

The Steventon Community Facebook page has proved a very valuable tool in spreading information about what events and things the church is offering and is being used more and more.

Fabric

In all five churches routine maintenance has taken place, including clearance of drains and gutters and servicing of boilers, fire extinguishers, lightning conductors, roof alarms, CCTV, clocks, and organs. No quinquennial inspections have taken place this year. For each church other specific activity related to maintaining the building and churchyard is given in the following paragraphs.

Drayton

Throughout the year regular maintenance agreements were carried out. Smith of Derby replaced a motor in the clock winding mechanism and boiler needed a repair at the end of the year. We also carried out extensive work on all our yew trees. This has enabled better access to some of the graves. It has also improved the light and security in the churchyard.

Appleford

The churchyard continues to be maintained by Mr Field and voluntary helpers. No major work was carried out in 2021 to the building.

Milton

The church building and its interior are in good condition following the major projects in recent years, so no major work has been necessary in 2021. We have undertaken some major clearing work in the churchyard to reclaim the north corner of the churchyard from brambles and ivy. We would like to record our thanks to Paul Browning for the many tasks he has ably and enthusiastically carried out to maintain the church and churchyard; to all those involved in cutting the churchyard grass and in the working group that got the hedge under control.

Sutton Courtenay

We would like to thank David McKenzie for all the work he has done over the past few years as he stepped down from the role during the Autumn. We have appointed a new Clerk of Works, Brian Blakeman. The major incident this year was the flagpole coming down from the Tower roof in a storm on 31st October 2021. Most work this year has been general maintenance. We continue to be very grateful for all the hours John Napper contributes to the upkeep of the churchyard and to our team of volunteer church and River Room cleaners.

Steventon

Nothing to report except some gutter cleaning and minor electrical repairs.

Deanery Synod

We have had only two representatives on Deanery Synod in 2021 (permitted number 4). These members provide the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. The Revd Helen Kendrick is the Area Dean.

Five meetings of the Deanery Synod have been held over the past twelve months, and I am sure the synod is glad to be back to meeting in person, and to have Helen back firing on all cylinders. The most recent meeting was held in St Swithun's Church in Kennington, a fascinating church built in the 1950s to replace the (now deconsecrated) smaller Norman church next door. Unusually for an Anglican parish church it has an central altar on a dais, surrounded by a circular communion rail with a large crucifix with a suffering Christ suspended over.

The highlight of the year was a visit by Bishop Gavin, Bishop of Dorchester to a meeting held in person in Cumnor and on zoom. Following his presentation, in response to questions from the floor he reiterated the Diocese's support for the rich network of rural churches in Oxfordshire, and the importance that he places on the role of the parish church and its physical and spiritual function, as the *bedrock, the basic unit of unit of mission and worship* in the heart of rural villages. He also recognised the increasing challenges of funding churches' parish share, and announced that the Diocese was reviewing finances to ensure that they are sustainable, understandable, fair (with an element of resource sharing) and as simple as possible.

The Diocesan treasurer, Martin Steel, has put in a lot of hard work to make the arrangements for the parish share in the deanery much clearer, so that the relationship between cost and provision of clergy and parish share contribution is much more transparent. Changes to make the payment of occasional office fees back to parishes more timely, and to allow for a shared contingency fund to provide emergency relief to parishes in particular need. Synod members also had the opportunity to vote for Diocesan reps to General Synod.

Discussions were also held in meetings in small breakout sessions, discussing matters such as online provision of services during covid restrictions, and parishes reported on progress of their exploration of the Living in Love and Faith initiative. A presentation was also received from the Diocesan New Congregations Enabler with regard to the greenhouse initiative, supporting new mission opportunities for spiritual engagement with those who might not typically attend a regular church service, perhaps via shared spaces meeting such as parent and toddler / foodbank / cream tea café.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our five churches lively and vibrant communities. Particularly we thank welcomers, sidespersons, readers, intercessors, junior church leaders, those who assist with the financial processes, and all those who work behind the scenes who make for an efficient operation and ensuring we have well-presented buildings and churchyards.

Financial review

This financial review covers the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021. Whilst income has not exceeded £250,000 we continue to prepare and present the accounts using the accruals method. Income and expenditure are therefore recognised as soon as entitlement is established, e.g., gift aid must be recognised when the income is received even though the actual claim may be received in the subsequent year.

Accruals accounts consist of a SOFA (Statement of Financial Activities), a balance sheet, a cash flow statement, and further explanatory notes. The SOFA is on page 21, the balance sheet is on page 22, the cash flow statement is on page 23 and the notes on pages 24-34.

Total unrestricted income during 2021 was £158,554 an increase on the previous year's income of £132,930 due partly to easing of COVID restrictions and partly to some success with a stewardship campaign. Unrestricted expenditure fell from £156,267 to £151,090, following a review of expenditure that allocated some building specific expenditure to restricted funds rather than unrestricted funds. This small decrease in unrestricted expenditure together with the improvement in unrestricted income in the last quarter of 2021 has led to a small net gain in unrestricted funds of £7,445. Consequently, the unrestricted funds carried forward to 2022 are £45,539. During 2021 all designated funds were either spent on their designated purpose or transferred to a restricted fund. This resolves a difference in practice that was inherited when the five individual church PCCs were brought together as the DAMASCUS Parish.

This is the first year since the new parish was formed that the balance of unrestricted funds has not fallen. However, the balance remains close to the limit set by our reserves policy (see below). With anticipated increases in energy costs and as some of the donations received in response to the stewardship campaign were one off donations, it is unfortunately likely we will see our unrestricted funds decrease again in 2022 and we will face some difficult challenges with regard to further cost cutting.

Some of the restricted funds also have balances that will be too low for the anticipated 2022 expenditure and fund raising for some church fabric funds is essential.

The River Room has been financed from restricted funds. This shortfall now reduced to £20,688 has been covered by four loans which are being repaid over the next 9 years. The final bills for the building work were paid in 2021 and the final grants were claimed. By the end of 2021 there was £43,000 of loan finance to be repaid. The loan repayment is being financed through a 200 club, lettings and other fund raising. Lettings are growing and the River Room is being well used.

Investment funds, which are all endowment funds, improved from £626,405 to £693,036. For most of these funds only interest or dividends may be spent.

In summary, it is likely that sufficient finance will be raised to meet the cost of the River Room and bring that fund into credit within the period of the loans. However, close

attention will need to be paid to the level of unrestricted funds. Significant changes will be required during 2022 to increase day to day income or reduce expenditure.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on free reserves (net current assets) which equates to at least two months unrestricted payments. This is equivalent to £30,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies.

It is our policy to invest short term balances with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund and longer-term reserves in the CCLA Church of England Investment fund.

Structure, governance, and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. In the DAMASCUS Parish the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, other members of the clergy team, churchwardens, licensed lay ministers and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the parish. All those who are members of the congregations are encouraged to register on the electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC met eight times during the year - a mixture of remote zoom meeting and in-person meetings in the River Room. The Local Church Committees (LCC), with responsibility for considering local activity and provide local church feedback to the PCC and who act as a forum for the PCC to consult with the congregations of each of the five churches continued to meet in the alternative months to the PCC. Again, a mixture of in-person and zoom meetings. Each of the five LCCs provide a report to every PCC meeting. For each church Pro-Wardens, elected at the APCM, carry out roles ensuring the smooth running of their church and maintain order in the church and grounds.

A Standing Committee consisting of the incumbent, the churchwardens, the PCC Secretary, the PCC Treasurer and the two Associate Priests with parochial responsibility meet bi-monthly (in the months between PCC meetings) to transact business delegated to them by the PCC.

Administrative information

The Ministry team

Clergy

Parish Rector – The Reverend Helen Kendrick
Associate Priest (Half-Time Stipendiary) – The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest (House for Duty) – The Reverend Meg Heywood
Associate Priest (SSM) - The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Assistant Priest (SSM) – The Reverend Dr Karen Hyde (until July 2021)

Licensed Lay Ministers

Dr Tim Budd (Licensed until September 2021 and then PTO)
Mr Jack Jarvis (PTO)
Mrs Alex Landsbert (PTO)

Authorised Preacher

Mr Paul James

The DAMASCUS Parish is part of the Abingdon Deanery within the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Rectory, 3 Tullis Close, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4BD. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission, with registered charity number 1175551.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2021 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent: The Reverend Helen Kendrick (Chairman)
Associate Minister: The Reverend Meg Heywood
Associate Minister: The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest: The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Assistant Priest: The Reverend Dr Karen Hyde (until 18th July 2021)
Licensed Lay Minister: Dr Tim Budd (until September 2021)
Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Jack Jarvis
Licenced Lay Minister: Mrs Alex Landsbert
Churchwarden: Dr Hilary Otterburn
Mr Anton King representative in Deanery Synod
Mr Michael Murray representative in Deanery Synod

Elected members:

Mrs Valerie Cross
Mrs Linda Johnson
Mrs Nicola Turner (Hon. Treasurer)
Dr Elaine Maxwell
Mrs Alison Budd
Professor David King

Mrs Caroline Miller
Mr Tony Sloggett

Non-voting members
Mrs Sue Harris, Secretary
Mrs Sue Jenkins, Safeguarding Officer

Local Church Committee members who have served at any time from 1 January 2021 until the date this report was approved are:
Appleford LCC: Elizabeth Duffield, William Finch, Sue Helby, Linda Payne, Iris Ramkissoon, Jacob Shepherd and the Reverend Helen Kendrick. There are currently no pro-wardens in Appleford.
Drayton LCC: Valerie Cross (Pro-Warden), Sally Dixon, Sue Harris, Sue Icke, Linda Johnson (Pro-Warden), Anton King and the Reverend Meg Heywood
Milton LCC: Mike Blanch, Pat Capuzzimati, Elaine Maxwell (Pro-Warden), Janet Money, Janet Taylor, Nicola Turner (Pro-Warden) and the Reverend Helen Kendrick
Sutton Courtenay: Brian Blakeman (Clerk of Works); Alison Budd (Pro-Warden), James Bye, Tim Budd (until May 2021), Fred Cubbage (Pro-Warden until March 2021), Sue Jenkins, David King, Alex Landsbert, David McKenzie (until November 2021), Vivienne Maunders, Malcolm Ross; Phil Stubley, Mary Warrington and the Reverend Helen Kendrick
Steventon: Alan Binning (Pro-Warden), Diana Bowder, Doreen Goddard, Jack Jarvis, Andrew Loutit, Caroline Miller; Mike Murray; Hilary Otterburn (Pro-Warden), Terry Pearce; David Sandford, Tony Sloggett, the Reverend Phil Sutton

DAMASCUS PARISH
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2021 which are set out on pages 21 to 34.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement
I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed

Caroline Webster, FCA

UHY Ross Brooke
Suite I, Windrush Court, Abingdon Business Park, OX14 1SY

Date: 24 May 2022

DAMASCUS PARISH
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ending 31 December 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS							
Voluntary income	2a	128,904	-	53,698	-	182,602	472,834
Activities for generating funds	2b	9,668	-	11,298	-	20,966	10,958
Church activities	2c	16,084	-	2,813	-	18,897	9,562
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	2d	1,603	-	11,938	-	13,541	13,948
Other incoming resources	2e	2,295	-	80	-	2,375	6,772
TOTAL INCOME		**158,554**	**-**	**79,827**	**-**	**238,381**	**514,074**
EXPENDITURE							
Church activities	3a	125,265	-	4,730	-	129,995	122,833
Church expenses	3b	23,656	-	19,257	-	42,913	47,703
Costs of generating income	3c	133	-	960	-	1,093	764
Major capital expenditure	3d	-	705	32,765	-	33,470	403,697
Other expenditure	3e	2,036	-	484	-	2,520	2,130
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		**151,090**	**705**	**58,196**	**-**	**209,991**	**577,127**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE BEFORE INVESTMENT GAINS		**7,464**	**- 705**	**21,631**	**-**	**28,390**	**- 63,053**
NET GAINS ON INVESTMENTS					**66,631**	**66,631**	**27,818**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE		**7,464**	**- 705**	**21,631**	**66,631**	**95,021**	**- 35,235**
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS		- 19	- 6,664	6,683	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		**7,445**	**- 7,369**	**28,314**	**66,631**	**95,021**	**- 35,235**
Total funds brought forward		**38,094**	**7,369**	**80,751**	**626,405**	**752,619**	**787,854**
Total fund carried forward		**45,539**	**-**	**109,065**	**693,036**	**847,640**	**752,619**

DAMASCUS PARISH
BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Notes	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible	6	405	608
Investments	7	693,036	626,405
		693,441	627,013
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and prepayments	8	21,097	22,753
Short-term deposits		89,160	77,543
Cash at bank and in hand		93,666	83,555
		203,923	183,851
LIABILITIES			
Creditors - amounts falling due in one year	9	15,724	15,245
NET CURRENT ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		188,199	168,606
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		881,640	795,619
Creditors - amounts falling due after one year	10	34,000	43,000
TOTAL NET ASSETS		847,640	752,619
PARISH FUNDS			
Unrestricted	11	45,539	45,463
Restricted	12	109,065	80,751
Endowment		693,036	626,405
		847,640	752,619

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 9 May 2022 and signed on its behalf by:

The Revd Helen Kendrick (Chair) ..... HGKendrick .....

Nicola Turner (Treasurer) ..... Nicola Turner .....

DAMASCUS PARISH
CASH FLOW STATEMENT AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
Net cash from operating activities		- 34,813		- 128,236
Cash flows from investing activities				
Dividends, interest and rent from investments	13,541		13,948	
Interest paid	-		-	
Proceeds from sale of:				
Tangible fixed assets	-		-	
Tangible fixed investments	-		-	
Purchase of:				
Tangible fixed assets for the use of the PCC	-		-	
Fixed asset investments	-		-	
Cash flows from financing activities				
Loans (outstanding balances)	43,000		52,000	
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities		56,541		65,948
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		21,728		- 62,288
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January		161,098		223,386
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December		182,826		161,098
Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) before investment gains				
Net income before investment gains 31 December		28,390		- 63,053
Adjustment for:				
Depreciation charges		203		203
Dividends, interest and rent from investments		- 13,541		- 13,948
Decrease/(increase) in debtors		1,656		2,612
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors		- 51,521		- 54,050
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		- 34,813		- 128,236
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents				
Cash in hand		93,666		83,555
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		89,160		77,543
		182,826		161,098

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Parish is a public benefit entity within the meaning of FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared under The Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and with the Regulations "true and fair view" provisions, together with FRS102 as the applicable accounting standard and the 2019 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP (FRS102). The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets, which are shown as fair value.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. There are no material uncertainties in respect of the charities ability to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

ASSETS

Consecrated and benefice property

Consecrated and beneficed property of any kind is excluded from the accounts by s.10(2) of the Charities Act 2011. All expenditure incurred during the year on such property is written off as expenditure in the SOFA and separately disclosed

Moveable church furnishings

These are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful economic life (normally 20 years) other than when insufficient cost information is available. In this case the item is not capitalised, but all items are included in the Church's inventory in any case.

Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £1,000. The Parish computer comes within this scope and has been depreciated over 5 years.

FUNDS

Unrestricted Funds

These represent the remaining income funds of the PCC available for spending on general purposes of the PCC. They include designated funds that have been set aside by the PCC for specific purposes.

Restricted Funds

These are income funds that must be spent on restricted purposes and details of funds held and restrictions provided are shown in the notes to the accounts.

Endowment Funds

These are restricted funds that must be retained as trust capital either permanently or subject to a discretionary power to spend capital as income.

INCOME

Collections and planned giving are recognised when received by or on behalf of the Parish. Income tax recoverable on covenants or gift aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised. Grants and legacies to the church are accounted for as soon as the Parish is notified of its legal entitlement and the amount due. Funds raised by fund-raising events are accounted for as gross. Sales of books and magazines are accounted for gross.

INVESTMENT INCOME

Interest on bank balances is accounted for on an accruals basis with interest recognised in the period to which the interest relates.

Dividend income is recognised on the date the share interest becomes ex-dividend or when the right to the dividend can be established.

EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal and constructive obligation and settlement is probable and quantifiable.

2 INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
2(a) Voluntary income					
All other giving and voluntary receipts, including Special Appeals (recurring and one-off)	16,825	28,808	-	45,633	46,652
Collections at services	12,691	2,483	-	15,174	10,216
Collections at services for charity	1,557	-	-	1,557	1,181
Gift Aid recovered	21,646	5,359	-	27,005	29,057
Grants (include recurring and one-off)	5,034	12,363	-	17,397	316,135
Other planned giving	1,973	-	-	1,973	3,291
Legacies received (capital value)	-	1,000	-	1,000	-
Tax efficient planned giving	69,178	3,685	-	72,863	66,302
	128,904	53,698	-	182,602	472,834
2(b) Activities for generating funds					
Gross income from fundraising activities	9,668	11,298	-	20,966	10,958
	9,668	11,298	-	20,966	10,958
2(c) Church activities					
Additional wedding and funeral fees	2,392	30	-	2,422	511
Gross income from trading (e.g. hall lettings, magazine, bookstall). NOT fundraising.	1,443	2,783	-	4,226	1,834
Statutory fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc)	12,249	-	-	12,249	7,217
	16,084	2,813	-	18,897	9,562
2(d) Dividends, interest, income from property etc.					
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	1,603	11,938	-	13,541	13,948
	1,603	11,938	-	13,541	13,948
2(e) Other incoming resources					
Other incoming resources	2,295	80	-	2,375	6,772
	2,295	80	-	2,375	6,772
TOTAL INCOME	158,554	79,827		238,381	514,074

3 EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£		£	£	£	£
3(a) Church activities						
Clergy and staff expenses	4,252	-	11	-	4,263	7,299
Diocesan parish share contribution	107,093	-	-	-	107,093	103,957
Mission giving and donations	8,270	-	257	-	8,527	2,730
Salaries, wages and honoraria	5,650	-	4,462	-	10,112	8,847
	125,265	-	4,730	-	129,995	122,833
3(b) Church expenses						
Mission and evangelism costs	-	-	6,327	-	6,327	1,043
Church running expenses	14,551	-	11,800	-	26,351	38,665
Church utility bills	8,002	-	1,130	-	9,132	6,832
Costs of trading	-	-	-	-	-	-
Independent examiner's costs	900	-	-	-	900	960
Depreciation on church equipment	203	-	-	-	203	203
	23,656	-	19,257	-	42,913	47,703
3(c) Costs of generating income						
Costs of fundraising activities	133	-	960	-	1,093	764
	133	-	960	-	1,093	764
3(d) Major capital expenditure						
Major repairs to the church building	-	-	4,839	-	4,839	2,856
New building work	-	705	27,926	-	28,631	400,841
	-	705	32,765	-	33,470	403,697
3(e) Other expenditure						
Other outgoing resources/ payments	2,001	-	484	-	2,485	2,095
Governance costs	35	-	-	-	35	35
	2,036	-	484	-	2,520	2,130
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	151,090	705	58,196		209,991	577,127

4 STAFF COSTS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Parish administrator	4,992	3,120
Cleaner	1,557	2,292
Groundsman	1,230	1,230
Gravedigger	210	110
Organist	1,913	2,035
Vergers	210	60
Bell ringers	-	-
	10,112	8,847

Note: All staff above are self-employed

The number of individuals in receipt of staff payments was as follows:

Parish administrator	1	1
Cleaner	3	3
Groundsman	1	1
Gravedigger	2	1
Organist	5	8
Vergers	4	1

None of the Trustees received any remuneration or employee benefits during the year. The lay trustees, where applicable, who acted as agents to the PCC in making approved payments on its behalf, were reimbursed for these expenses on presentation of suitable documentary evidence.

Clergy working expenses were reimbursed in accordance with Church of England guidelines.

There were no related party transactions.

5 TRANSFER OF FUNDS

	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £
Apportionment of deposit fund interest	- 19	-	19
Transfer of Drayton Pew Fund to Drayton Fabric Fund	-	- 6,664	6,664
	- 19	- 6,664	6,683

6 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost of valuation		
At 1 January 2021	608	608
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
At 31 December 2021	608	608
Depreciation		
At 1 January 2021	-	-
Charge for the year	203	203
At 31 December 2021	203	203
Net book value at 31 December 2021	405	405
Net book value at 31 December 2020	608	608

7 INVESTMENTS

		Market value at 31st December 2020	Additions	Disposals	Market value at 31st December 2021	Change in value Jan 1 to Dec 31 2021
		£	£	£	£	£
Milton Milton - Church Lands	*	559,822	-	-	616,930	57,108
Drayton Bradfield Trust		9,613	-	-	10,988	1,375
Drayton Clerk's Piece		847	-	-	967	120
Drayton Miss Emma Hyde for maintenance of church fabric		2,357	-	-	2,694	337
Drayton Hyde's charity for psalmody		811	-	-	925	114
Steventon 627485002S - ENDOWMENT FUND		31,113	-	-	35,564	4,451
Steventon 627485001 S - N01 INVESTMENT FUND		21,842	-	-	24,968	3,126
		626,405	**-**	**-**	**693,036**	**66,631**

* This is the valuation provided in the 2020 statement of funds and used in the 2020 accounts, but has subsequently been found to be incorrect and the value should have been £560,602.91

8 DEBTORS

	2021	2020
	£	£
HMRC Gift Aid	13,317	16,012
Gift aid acrued in 2020 not yet received	368	-
Statutory fees due	15	-
Collections to be banked	1,771	568
Fund raising to be banked	1,074	565
Parish share rebate	2,164	2,625
Grants from Oxford Diocese	1,034	1,560
Miscellaneous debtors	1,354	1,423
TOTAL	21,097	22,753

9 CREDITORS falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accounts examination costs	900	960
Diocesan Loan repayment	6,000	6,000
Individual 1 loan	1,000	1,000
Individual 2 loan	1,000	1,000
Individual 3 loan	1,000	1,000
Mission and evangelism costs	942	-
Clergy expenses	72	707
100 club prizes	-	36
Church running expenses	583	-
Mission giving	2,035	1,478
Parish Administrator	-	1,040
Organist	175	-
Miscellaneous creditors	2,017	2,024
TOTAL	15,724	15,245

10 CREDITORS falling due after one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Diocesan Loan repayment	15,000	21,000
Individual 1 loan	8,000	9,000
Individual 2 loan	8,000	9,000
Individual 3 loan	3,000	4,000
TOTAL	34,000	43,000

11 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
General funds	38,094	158,554	151,090	- 19	45,539
Designated funds					
Drayton pew removal	6,664	-	-	- 6,664	-
River room (designated)	705	-	705	-	0
	7,369	-	705	- 6,664	0

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS IN 2020

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
General funds	61,551	132,930	156,267	- 120	38,094
Designated funds					
Drayton pew removal	6,664	-	-	-	6,664
River room (designated)	705	-	-	-	705
	7,369	-	-	-	7,369

12 RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
Drayton fabric	4,296	4,705	4,302	6,665	11,364
Drayton Carpenters legacy	1,269	-	-	-	1,269
Drayton Bells	2,870	-	-	1	2,871
Drayton Clerk's Piece	348	25	-	-	373
Drayton Hydes for Psalmody	617	24	-	-	641
Appleford fabric fund	8,759	3,661	1,333	2	11,089
Milton bells	12,320	675	198	2	12,799
Milton building	8,914	1,557	274	2	10,199
Milton Church Lands	37,648	11,509	3,924	8	45,241
Sutton Courtenay Fabric	5,701	3,117	4,266	1	4,553
Sutton Courtenay River Room	- 32,282	41,709	30,115	-	- 20,688
Sutton Courtenay Ringers	2,528	457	2,628	-	357
Sutton Courtenay Choir	-	-	-	-	-
Sutton Courtenay Fun Day	7,580	9,512	6,235	2	10,859
Steventon Fabric	3,105	2,511	4,921	-	695
Steventon Churchyard	14,632	9	-	-	14,641
Steventon Tower	2,492	355	-	0	2,847
Steventon Church Repair	- 46	1	-	-	- 45
	80,751	**79,827**	**58,196**	**6,683**	**109,065**

RESTRICTED FUNDS IN 2020

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
Drayton fabric	4,245	740	696	7	4,296
Drayton Carpenters legacy	1,269	-	-	-	1,269
Drayton Bells	2,730	135	-	5	2,870
Drayton Clerk's Piece	348	-	-	-	348
Drayton Hydes for Psalmody	617	-	-	-	617
Appleford fabric fund	7,847	1,315	403	-	8,759
Milton bells	11,984	626	311	21	12,320
Milton building	7,647	1,253	-	14	8,914
Milton Church Lands	29,929	11,737	4,077	59	37,648
Sutton Courtenay Fabric	6,200	5,682	6,190	9	5,701
Sutton Courtenay River Room	16,158	353,155	401,595	-	- 32,282
Sutton Courtenay Ringers	2,452	76	-	-	2,528
Sutton Courtenay Choir	-	-	-	-	-
Sutton Courtenay Fun Day	3,641	4,737	798	-	7,580
Steventon Fabric	3,760	1,409	2,064	-	3,105
Steventon Churchyard	18,170	74	3,612	-	14,632
Steventon Tower	3,415	186	1,114	5	2,492
Steventon Church Repair	- 65	19	-	-	- 46
	120,347	**381,144**	**420,860**	**120**	**80,751**

SUMMARY OF ASSETS BY FUND

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	**TOTAL 2021** £
Tangible fixed assets	405	-	-	405
Investment fixed assets	-	-	693,036	693,036
Current assets	94,858	109,065	-	203,923
Liabilities				
Amounts falling due in one year	- 15,724	-	-	- 15,724
Amounts falling due after one year	- 34,000	-	-	- 34,000
	45,539	109,065	693,036	847,640

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

England & Wales - Charity number 1175551

Accounts

The DAMASCUS Parish

Drayton | Appleford | Milton
Sutton Courtenay | Steventon

2020 Report and accounts for the DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council

St Peter's, **D**rayton
St Peter & St Paul's, **A**ppleford
St Blaise, **M**ilton
All Saints', **S**utton **C**ourtenay
St Michael & All Angels', **S**teventon

Nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love

Registered charity number 1175551

Introduction to the DAMASCUS Parish

The DAMASCUS Parish is a single parish, arising out of the five, growing, semi-rural villages of Drayton, Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon. The five parishes had been working together for over twenty years as a Group Ministry prior to the formation of the single parish in July 2017. Since the formation of the DAMASCUS Parish we have begun to take advantage of the exciting opportunities to work more collaboratively.

The Parish is situated between Abingdon and Didcot with boundaries abutting both towns. There are considerable numbers of professional people in the area, with Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, Harwell, Culham, Didcot Power Station and Milton Park Enterprise Zone all in the locality. The easy access to Didcot Parkway Station means that many parishioners commute to London, Oxford, Reading, Swindon and beyond.

Aim and Purposes

The DAMASCUS Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Helen Kendrick, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the churches of St Peter's Drayton, St Peter and St Paul's Appleford, St Blaise Milton, All Saints' Sutton Courtenay and St Michael and All Angels' Steventon and St Michael's Hall Steventon.

Our Vision and Mission

Our vision is to be a living Christian presence at the heart of our communities nurturing faith, bringing hope, and sharing love.

We believe there are five mission priorities facing the Parish:

1. Reaching out to our existing communities and the huge influx of new residents.
2. Building a new community of faith within the Milton Heights development.
3. Re-invigorating our existing traditional churches to support mission and outreach.
4. Enabling outreach within our Schools to flourish and grow.
5. Developing a spirit of generosity and giving, where all the churches support mission where it is most needed.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for

the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the five churches in the parish.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and prayer

This is the third full year of operation of the DAMASCUS Parish which formally came into existence on 1 July 2017. The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year, so the service pattern and tradition in the five churches offer variety across the Parish as a whole and to enable the clergy team to cover services in all five churches. The Clergy team and PCC will continue to review the pattern of services. The intention at the beginning of 2020 was that at least one service is held in each church every Sunday, except for the fifth Sunday when there is a DAMASCUS Parish service in one of the five churches. Also, that mid-week services are held in two churches on different days of the week. All five churches are open during the day every day for our local community and visitors to enjoy and use for private prayer. However, the usual pattern of services had to be terminated in March 2020 because of the restrictions imposed on the Nation as a consequence of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Our church buildings were shut from March 2020 until July 2020 and our worship moved online. Through the year the IT skills of both the clergy and the congregation have improved and the quality and sophistication of our online worship has developed. Most of our online worship is pre-recorded but a few services have been live streamed. Our weekly online service has continued through 2020 after the church buildings re-opened and in-person services resumed. The Ministry team provided service sheets for people to worship at home and these were delivered to all on the Electoral roll. For those people who have no access to the internet weekly worship material was posted to them. For all those with internet access, in addition to the DAMASCUS online worship they were directed to the Oxford Diocese online worship which gave an opportunity to explore how other churches worship.

All are welcome to attend our regular services, but for much of 2020 numbers at in-person services had to be restricted to ensure safe social distancing and on occasion a system for booking places had to be used and some services repeated to enable us to meet demand. From July 2020 we were able to re-open the churches each day for private prayer, with some special measures in place to keep everyone safe from coronavirus.

During 2020 there were 210 people on the Parish Electoral Roll.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey of life, though during 2020 COVID restrictions have meant that baptisms and weddings could not take place for much of the year, so the number of these events was much lower than usual. Funerals have continued throughout the year, though with some changes because of the COVID restrictions, most notably in the number of mourners who can attend; we have been able to offer a live stream for some funerals so that wider family could safely and legally be connected to the funeral. In the DAMASCUS parish we have celebrated 14 baptisms, 3 weddings and held 27 funerals in church during the year.

The Lent course this year was 'The Bible Course' by Dr Andrew Ollerton, an eight-session course to help you see the big picture of the Bible storyline from Genesis to Revelation. The course was very instructive and thought provoking, but unfortunately interrupted by the Coronavirus restrictions, so some the later sessions were by self-study. We ran an Advent course online via Zoom. The course was "Living is Christ, Dying is Gain" by Bishop Steven Croft. This is a four-session course looking at the letter to the Philippians. This was a course to help us in the new and challenging time we faced in 2020 to discover what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Remembrance Sunday is usually well supported by the village communities and the schools, but this year no services could be held in our churches because of the second period of lockdown, however, the churches were open for private prayer and brief acts of remembrance were held at village war memorials.

We would like to thank our Rector, Reverend Helen Kendrick, our Associate Ministers Reverend Phil Sutton, Reverend Meg Heywood, Reverend Rosie Bruce and Reverend Dr Karen Hyde and all the Licensed Lay Ministers for their hard work leading, nurturing, inspiring and teaching us during this year.

The following paragraphs present points about worship specific to each of the five churches in the parish, but are necessarily more limited than usual because of the restrictions in place through much of 2020.

Drayton

Under usual circumstances the typical attendance at the main Sunday service is 28 adults, but with many members of the congregation self-isolating has been lower for much of 2020. The All Souls service was recorded and went online at the time it would usually have been held in church. Invitations for this service included an invitation for light an LED candle in the Lady Chapel. St Peter's Christmas Praise also went online at the normal time of the Carol service, this was an interactive event with members of the congregation sharing their favourite carol or Bible verse and saying why they chose it. It was good to be able to sing carols in our homes knowing that others were doing it at the same time.

The prayer group met in the church room for the first two months of 2020. From March the group held a virtual prayer meeting at the same time once a month in our homes. It was a great source of encouragement to many knowing that others were praying at the same time.

Pebbles is a group for parents and carers with babies and toddlers. It takes place on Wednesday mornings, but from March has moved 'online' with a session on Zoom from 10-10.30 am during term time. It has been a way of reaching out and connecting families and a 'Drayton Pebbles' Facebook page has been set up. There is a great team of helpers. Sue Icke leads the group.

The First Tuesday Connections Group was able to meet for the first three months of 2020. During lockdown Jean, Beryl, Ros and David have kept in weekly touch with members by phone. Everyone has benefitted from being able to still chat and have a laugh together. We look forward to when we can all meet up together again.

The Care Team has met up for the first three months of the year and visits were carried out by all the members of the team to homes. However, from March COVID restrictions have meant the team has sadly been unable to visit people, but the team have kept in touch by phone. We continue to send cards on the anniversary of a baptism or bereavement and we send Parish Christmas cards to everyone who has contact with St Peter's through the year.

At St Peter's we hold a monthly Healing Service with laying on of hands which is open to everyone in the DAMASCUS Parish. These services were held in the first three months of 2020. From July, when the church building could re-open, we have instead been offering healing prayer in a socially distanced way. As the Healing Team have been unable to meet up in their usual way the evening before the Healing Service, the members of the team prayed for all those who have requested it, in their own homes.

The Discipleship Group has met regularly throughout the year, meeting via Zoom for most of the year. The planned "Start" course aimed at younger people who do not attend church did not take place due to lack of applicants and the pandemic. Three people completed the "Cup of Life" course which follows the outline of a 30 day retreat, they joined the course either online or by phone and thought it was beneficial. Seven people, who vary in both age and stage of their faith journey, completed their training as Faith Companions and five of these are now working with various members of the congregation. This year the group invited people were invited to write the name of a loved one on a Christmas tag and hang it on the Christmas tree in church. There was an excellent response to this idea. Throughout the year the group's concern has been to reach people who are shielding and have no access to the internet. Some success has been had with phone connections but this is still a work in progress.

Appleford

Under usual circumstances the typical attendance at the main Sunday service is 12 adults and two children. For Breakfast Church the congregation is usually much larger, this service is always lively including action hymns, short readings, family prayers and a thought for the day talk and breakfast. However, many of the regular congregation have been shielding since March and no in-person services could be held from March until September.

The Street Nativity could not be held because of COVID restrictions. However, like Sutton Courtenay knitted sheep were left around the village for children to find and return to a crib

service in the church yard. The carol service was repeated so that everyone who wished to could attend.

The Home Group consisting of 7-9 people continues to meet fortnightly throughout the year usually following set courses but adapting them when appropriate. For most of the year meetings have been virtually through Zoom.

Milton

Under usual circumstances the typical attendance at the main Sunday service is 12 adults and two children. However, our average attendance increased from July 2020 when we were able to return to in-person services and we hope this will continue as we return to 'normal' activities. During this period of social distancing, we have really benefitted from the flexibility of seating at Milton after the re-ordering of the church in 2017. Since March our Thought for the Day (Café church service) has changed to a short Morning Worship service. Our Family services have been particularly well attended and the children have been very willing contributors, we especially enjoy the thought-provoking prayers that they write for us.

We have continued to work with Milton Methodists. We again held two joint services on Covenant Sunday and St. Blaise Patronal Festival before the Coronavirus pandemic, but joint services were not possible later in the year. We were very pleased to welcome a few embers of Milton Methodists to our in-person services in July and August prior to the Methodist church resuming services.

The Remembrance Sunday Service had to be cancelled, but with the help of British Legion members we recorded a short act of Remembrance in church which was available online and there was a short act of remembrance at the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday. The church was still decorated for Remembrance Sunday, and the knitted poppy cascade around the porch door was much appreciated by the Milton community.

We had a successful Christingle service, with materials for making Christingles delivered to people at home, so they could safely make their Christingles at home and bring them to the service. The crib service was well attended drawing in families with young children and our the Children's Christmas trees in the church porch were brilliantly decorated by children and the 'young at heart' with decorations they had made. The usual Christmas Eve extravaganza was not possible in 2020, instead we held a carol service with a mix of traditional and contemporary readings and music. The service was entirely by candle light and the a lovely atmosphere. Whilst congregational singing was not permitted, but we could have a solo singer and we were lucky to have a professional singer in the village who performed for us and also thanks to a CD we had the choir from Kings College Cambridge singing for us. The church was as full as social distancing permitted and everyone appreciated this beautiful service.

Unfortunately, COVID restrictions have meant that Milton School have been unable to have services at St Blaise church this year, but we maintain links with the school and look forward to welcoming them to church in the future. Sadly we have also had no contact with Milton Park during 2020, as many companies continue to have most of their staff working away

from the office.

Sutton Courtenay

Under usual circumstances the regular attendance at Sunday services was relatively consistent at around 35 adults and two children. The monthly pattern of a mid-week Holy Communion, two Sunday Eucharists, and a Family Service plus a general worship service was maintained until 22 March when in-person services were suspended until July because of the Coronavirus pandemic. When services resumed in July the normal pattern of worship continued but with carefully managed seating and attendance was slightly reduced.

The Education Sunday service in February was held at the village primary school and was well attended.

On 1st November our All Souls' service moved to the afternoon and was recorded so that those unable to attend could see it online later in the evening. This was greatly appreciated. Our Act of Remembrance, including a bugler, happened in the Churchyard this year with wreaths being laid at later points in the day. The school came down to the church on the 11th November to lay their wreath and poppies. We were able to run all of our Christmas services using a booking system. These included two services of Nine lessons and Carols. A Longest night Service had a small congregation but was appreciated by all who attended. An Outdoor Crib service was the most successful with 100 adults and children attending. About 300 small knitted sheep had been knitted by members of the congregation and were left around the village for children to find, attach a name tag to and return to the outdoor crib – amazingly almost all the sheep managed to find their way to the stable.

For the first time in a while Midnight Mass happened at All Saints' with the final hymn being sung outside, very atmospheric. Christmas Family Eucharist was less well attended due to the change in government guidelines at the last minute. We were unable to have the annual Torchlight Procession due to safety and social distancing guidelines. The year ended with a Parish Communion on 27th December at which was nice to welcome members of our other churches.

Steventon

Under usual circumstances the regular attendance at services remains relatively consistent at around 34 adults and three children. Sunday School was held on the first Sunday of the month at the start of the year but attendance has remained low. We maintain links with the school and contact has continued, but there have been no services with the school during 2020 because of the COVID restriction.

Special services were held at Epiphany, Plough Sunday, Harvest and All Souls Day. The Remembrance Service had to be cancelled because of COVID restrictions but a short act of remembrance was held at the war memorial.

Evening prayer, held once a month, had a small but increasing attendance. This is a lay led service, and we are grateful to Mike Murray for this.

The planned celebrations for the 75th anniversary of VE Day were cancelled but a large tableau was organised outside the church doors with lots of bunting leading up to the church. This was much admired by passers by and the village community.

The service of Nine lessons and carols was held in the church yard, a shortened version and repeated so everyone could be accommodated. Both services were quite well attended and thanks to Terry Pearce, the choir master, for arranging for music and the choir outside. The Christmas Eve crib service was held outside and well attended. Midnight mass was held inside and the numbers were lower than usual. A great deal of effort was put into the Christmas decorations to turn the church 'inside out'. With a very willing and imaginative team of volunteers a huge tree was put up and decorated outside the church. A large crib was built which was gradually filled with near life size nativity figures. These figures were much admired and formed quite an attraction in the village. Large stars were constructed and hung along the Causeway leading to the church, put in place at the beginning of Advent. The cost of these was covered by donations from the village. There were many favourable comments about the decorations, an appreciation of what the church community was trying to contribute to the wider community. We gave each child at St. Michael's school a copy of a small book of the Christmas story to attempt to maintain our links with the school.

Social and fund raising

Social and fund-raising activities have been very much reduced in 2020 because of the COVID restrictions in place for much of the year. Many of the social activities provide outreach and mission opportunities within the village communities.

Drayton

We held our annual coffee morning and collection for the Children Society before we went into Lockdown. Our charity for Lent was Asylum and our Christmas appeal was split equally between PACT and Be Free Young Carers. We held a Christmas goods table throughout Advent in aid of St Peter's Fabric Fund.

Appleford

The monthly village coffee mornings which are well attended with a raffle being held and the 100 club being drawn, were held at the start of the year but then had to cease. The 100 club continued.

In October we could not hold a Harvest Supper but we did hold our Quiz virtually via Zoom and had a very enjoyable evening.

Milton

Our twice monthly tea and chat afternoons and offer an opportunity for companionship particularly for older villagers, ran until March, but then had to be suspended because of COVID restrictions.

To mark National Cream Tea Day in June we delivered cream tea packages to people at home.

Our Lent Charity was Just Finance and at Christmas we supported the Children's Society.

The craft group could not meet in person, but some were involved in mask making and all knitted sheep to provide the Rector with a flock of 100 sheep.

Working in partnership with the church, MICE (Miltonians in Community Events) have led in the promotion of a 100 Club from which the 'church' benefitted, both financially and socially. The 100 Club draw was one of the bits of normal life that continued inspite of the pandemic.

Sutton Courtenay

Fund raising this year has been severely limited by Covid restrictions. Nonetheless Community Cafe has continued mainly via Zoom. We did manage to make a collection for Macmillan Cancer in September. A Movie Matinee featuring the film "Yesterday" happened in January.

Our main fundraising came from the Sunday Cream Teas throughout August. This was very successful and enabled a lot of people to come and enjoy the newly completed River Room. Each week we had 30 to 40 people enjoying a summer afternoon tea both inside and outside.

Helen Kendrick managed a zoom link with the Orwell Society from the graveside instead of their annual visit in June. This included a reading by Richard Blair from his home.

We also reached out to the community. During this year the Rector challenged a number of groups to knit small woolly sheep. About 300 sheep made their way to the River Room where they were bagged up with a card and a booklet of Christmas reflections. The village was "sheep bombed" a week before Christmas and then families were seen regularly coming to the Outside Crib Scene to return the lost sheep. Alongside this there was a Christmas trail which raised money for Damascus Youth Project and Oxfordshire Mind.

The church received an anonymous donation from a villager who wanted to give something back to the village. This was used to produce about 80 hampers for singles, couples and families. These were greatly appreciated and generated many of positive responses.

A 200 club was started to help raise further funds for the River Room.

Steventon

Social and fund raising events were curtailed due to lockdown. Truck festival was cancelled and there was only one Barn dance. There were 2 Lent lunches, which were well attended, the remainder had to be cancelled.

A plant stall in June raised about £500, and cream teas, in place of the cancelled fete, raised about £1000.

Music

There are choirs at Drayton and Steventon who usually combine forces for joint and special services and for weddings.

Drayton

The choir at St. Peter's has been able to meet and sing during 2020 but only in limited circumstances. The number of singers has been limited to six, social distancing at the back of church, in between services being suspended. In December, these six choir members were able to go carol singing in the front gardens of people who have been isolating throughout the year.

Malcom Ross was able to record the choir singing a few hymns to be used for the online services. Some have been recording themselves singing hymns to be used as a virtual joint Damascus choir with the help of Bryony Landsbert. There is now a wide selection of hymns available for use in the online services.

Appleford

We continue to use our iPod and sound system to good effect supplementing this with an organist for special services.

Milton

We record our thanks to our organist Margaret Patching for selecting the hymns for our services and for her very loyal support playing the organ at St Blaise over many years. Having had a break from regular playing because of coronavirus restrictions, Margaret has decided to take a break from regular playing. Since the autumn we have effectively used music from CDs and whilst congregational singing has not been allowed, we have enjoyed choirs from around the world singing hymns for us via CDs and YouTube.

Sutton Courtenay

Singing Saints' continued to enhance our worship. During lockdown they recorded hymns to be used in the online worship. Once we were allowed, post lockdown, a small group of Singing Saints' contributed to our live worship. The church appreciates the time Paul Francis has spent with the group.

The church continues to be indebted to David King, John Napper and Patrick Salisbury for providing musical accompaniment.

Steventon

We continue to have a choir and are grateful to Terry Pearce for all his efforts, sadly not heard in the church since late March. The Steventon Choral Society joined forces with the

church choir for the shortened Nine lessons and carols. We thank them for their efforts in difficult circumstances. The bulk of the organ playing is done by Helen Pearce and she is supported by Michael Evans, Robert Thomas, and John Napper.

Bells

The bells in Drayton, Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon were all rung regularly until March 2020 when all ringing was suspended because of Coronavirus restrictions. The bells at Appleford are unringable. Since July when the first lockdown restrictions were eased only extremely limited ringing for short periods (a maximum of 15 minutes was permitted) has been possible. The need to maintain 2m social distancing is a difficulty because adjacent bell ropes are not that far apart, so depending on the household configurations of the ringers and the need to keep households 2m apart, some strange, and not always musical, combinations of bells have occasionally been rung for special services.

At Drayton, Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon a bell was tolled each evening through November at 6pm for the Archbishops call for national prayer. On Christmas day when the restrictions were eased slightly ringing on five or six bells was possible.

During this long period with no significant ringing pigeons have got into both Steventon and Sutton Courtenay bell chambers. At Steventon this was cleared up by the ringers and they have replaced the window netting on one window and a second will be re-netted in 2021. At Sutton Courtenay the clean up required was more extensive and complicated so will be carried out in Jan 2021 by a professional company who also re-netted the windows.

The new bell ropes for Steventon finally arrived in October and have been fitted, hopefully they will get more extensive use next year.

As we could only ring normally for two and half months of the year we were had few visiting bands. Similarly peals and quarter peals could only be rung at the start of the year so are very low in number, one quarter peal was rung at Drayton; one quarter peal and eleven peals were rung at Milton. Income to all the bell funds has been much reduced because they rely on the generous donations of visiting ringers, peal bands and from weddings.

Flowers

All the churches in the Parish are decorated for festivals and special occasions. We thank the many volunteer flower arrangers and those who organise flower rotas for all their efforts to make our churches look so beautiful.

Drayton

Flowers in church have been low key this year. When the church re-opened for private prayer an arrangement of garden flowers was put in the Lady Chapel, changing to potted plants in the winter. There was a small display at harvest on the chancel step and swags on

the pillars. Christmas was again kept simple with holly and yew with candles on the window sills and swags again on the pillars.

Appleford
The church has been closed for much of the year, but a variety of volunteers decorated the church for Christmas.

Milton
Whilst there is no flower arranging group at St Blaise, a variety of volunteers organised decoration of the church for Harvest and Christmas.

Sutton Courtenay
In the past year we have seen significant disruption to church services. Due to government restrictions, we were not able to provide flowers at Easter though we were able to help the congregation celebrate Harvest and Christmas. In the months in between we provided flowers where this could comply with government regulations. Once again we have seen the number of flower arrangers reduce, as some individuals are no longer able to contribute due to declining health. But the arrangers we have continue to provide a dedicated service, with most providing the flowers at their own expense despite their being funds available to compensate them.

Steventon
Mary Thompson leads a team of flower arrangers and the church was decorated for all the festivals except Easter. A lot of people help in the rota and at festivals. These occasions are much enjoyed by those doing the decorating and appreciated by the congregation. Flowers were done for the weddings, which helps to keep the flower fund afloat. When the church was closed decorations of flowers were put outside the church doors. Many thanks to all who contributed to this.

Schools
Within the DAMASCUS Parish there are four primary schools of which the three in Milton, Sutton Courtenay and Steventon are Church of England schools. The clergy and lay people are actively involved in a variety of ways – as governors, taking assemblies, helping to deliver the RE curriculum, *Open the Book*, and as reading volunteers.

Drayton
Over the year we were not able to build upon the contact made in 2019, due to the pandemic. Meg Heywood was asked to be a governor, to which she said yes. She started in September and went to a couple of governor meetings on Teams as well as an induction course!

Milton

Links with Milton School are strong. Reverend Phil Sutton is a Governor of St Blaise School, he has been going into school regularly leading assemblies and other activity sessions when Covid restrictions have permitted. Unfortunately, it has not been possible for the school to use or visit St Blaise this year because of COVID restrictions. Phil Sutton is continuing to work with the Headteacher and staff to use the church on a more regular basis as part its curriculum and community-based activities.

Sutton Courtenay

The Open the Book team continued to do weekly assemblies at Sutton Courtenay Primary School up until March. Katie Green did some video stories for the OTB team during the first lockdown to send to the school. Helen Kendrick went into school to do some craft activities with the children of key workers to help support the school. Karen Hyde has produced some videos of Godly Play Stories for the school to use.

The school has managed to visit the school a few times in the autumn. Once for a visit and activities in the River Room. A session on communion as part of their RE curriculum. Some of the children came down to the war memorial on 11th November to lay a wreath and poppies and to reflect.

At Christmas three sessions were run by Alison Budd telling the Christmas story using the Open the Book resources concluding with "I wonder" discussions. Whole school assemblies have not yet been allowed to start.

Steventon

The church maintains its relationship with Steventon School with the *Open the Book* assemblies being run when COVID restrictions permit. Reverend Phil Sutton is a Governor of Steventon School and has been going into School regularly, when COVID restrictions permit, to take assembly and to meet and support staff. Usually the School uses the Church on a regular basis but this has not been possible because of COVID restrictions.

Fabric

In all five churches routine maintenance has taken place, including clearance of drains and gutters and servicing of boilers, fire extinguishers, lightning conductors, roof alarms, CCTV, clocks, and organs. Two quinquennial inspection (at Sutton Courtenay and Steventon) have taken place this year. For each church other specific activity related to maintaining the building and churchyard is given in the following paragraphs.

Drayton

Smith of Derby dismantled and removed a clock hammer to their workshop, where a new hammer head wedge was made and reassembled in the bell tower in January 2020. The clock has been reliable throughout the year.

Due to the pandemic the organ has had only one of its two regular services carried out.

No major work has been necessary in 2020.

Appleford

The ground gutters around the church have been cleared of weeds and the yew trees were clipped. A roof tile was replaced, and some slipped tiles put back in place. A broken window rope was replaced. No major work was carried out in 2020.

Milton

The church building and its interior are in good condition following the major projects in recent years, so no major work has been necessary in 2020. Some work was carried out to improve the sound system quality and to make it easier to use it with electronic devices. We would like to record our thanks to Paul Browning for the many tasks he has ably and enthusiastically carried out to maintain the church and churchyard; to all those involved in cutting the churchyard grass and in the working group that got the hedge under control.

Sutton Courtenay

The major achievement of 2020 was the completion of the River Room with the keys handed over on the 22nd July. The Parish Office is now in full use and we look forward to getting the River Room in full use once the pandemic is over. Those who have seen the building have commented on its high quality and look forward to be able to use it. The building work did pause during the first lockdown, but they did manage to pick up working while keeping the workers and us safe. Some snagging issues have been sorted. The yew trees on the path leading to the River Room have now been trimmed. The main gate to the church was enlarged to allow access for emergency vehicles if required. The churchyard wall adjacent to the River Room has been rebuilt and new trees and whips have been planted along the boundary.

Robert Montgomery inspected the church in December and produced the quinquennial report. Immediate action needed to be taken in the tower where pigeons had gained access. This work is scheduled to be completed in January 2021 by Total Pest Control who will clear all pigeon guano and soiled floor coverings, clean the pigeon mess from the bell frame, bells and fittings, replaced the netting to stop the pigeons getting back in and fumigated and disinfected the area. Further work is required on woodworm, gutters, soakaways and some of the stonework round the windows.

We would like to thank David McKenzie, our Clerk of Works, for his work in monitoring and maintaining the church building.

Steventon

The Quinquennial inspection was carried out in September. Nothing urgent was reported but the next thing that may need doing is repointing on the church tower.

Early in the year part of the wall on the south side of the church yard fell down and this has been rebuilt. Some remedial work has been carried out to improve the sound system. New bell ropes have arrived and been fitted and some work has been done on the netting in the tower windows to keep the pigeons out.

Deanery Synod

Four members of the PCC were on Deanery Synod until the APCM (which was delayed until October this year). Following the APCM the number of representatives dropped to two and a vacancy which we hope to fill in 2021. These members provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. Three meetings were held during 2020 – those in September and November by Zoom. The Revd Helen Kendrick is the Area Dean.

On 30 January 2020, at Cumnor, the visiting speaker was from the Church Mission society. CMS has a large library and resources and is based in Oxford. For more information, see their website. The wording of the deanery's Mission Grant Application Forms and the criteria outlines were under review, and new forms/guidelines would be posted on the deanery website. Mission Grants applications to be submitted at least a week ahead of Deanery Standing Committee meeting dates to the Deanery Secretary. At the Diocesan Synod the new Diocesan Secretary, Mark Humphriss, had been introduced. The appointment of three full-time Associate Archdeacons had been proposed, and there had been a debate on how the Diocese is resourced and finances spent. It was noted that the Revd Canon David Tyler had been appointed as Associate Archdeacon and he will be moving to Abingdon and be a member of the Deanery Synod.

On 24 September 2020, by Zoom, the pastoral reorganisation of Dry Sandford, Wootton, Marcham and Shippon had been approved. It was agreed that Abingdon Deanery would retain 0.5% of the 2021 Parish Share rebate (payable January 2022) to offset the cost of providing the Dry Sandford transition arrangements. The Treasurer proposed setting up a working group to review future parish share allocation methodology, and he would talk to other deanery treasurers to find out how they were coping with costs where there is a mix of town and rural parishes. PCCs asked to consider forgoing some or all of their 2020 rebate (payable in January 2021) to build a Contingency Fund - a discretionary fund held at deanery level to help parishes who have lost significant fundraising or hall rental and fee income during the pandemic, and are operating at a significant deficit or are running low on reserves. The balance of the 2019 Mission Grant Fund was £2,125 and parishes were encouraged to apply via the Mission Grant Application Forms on the deanery website. Up to 50% of costs (to a maximum of £500) could be applied for. Grants for media equipment to film/stream church services (eg. cameras) would be considered as they are mission tools (not 'fabric'), and these can be applied for retrospectively for items already purchased. At the Diocesan Synod the presidential address had covered going from quarantine and returning to the now 'new normal, and a look at how parishes were balancing on-screen ministry with face-to-face.

On 26 November 2020, by Zoom, Shirley Northover stepped down as Lay Chair, and Sue Scott was elected to replace her. Michael Murray was welcomed as our new Representative from DAMASCUS. There was a presentation on Children's and Families' Ministry by Ian

MacDonald, a Diocesan Youth Adviser. He commended the amount of creativity and adaption arising from the past months of restrictions, and highlighted shifts that sought to reconnect young people and families in church and to ensure that connection was not lost at around the age of 11-14. The Synod voted unanimously to approve the 2021 Parish Share of £843.289. With some parishes weathering the Covid-19 financial storm better than others, PCCs were reminded to consider forgoing some or all of their 2020 rebate (payable 2021) to add to the Contingency Fund. This Fund not intended to be long term (only while the pandemic problems remain) and thereafter it will be closed with any balance left over redistributed back to the parishes who contributed. It was reported that, at the Diocesan Synod, Bishop Steven had addressed the casualisation of work, the inequity in the distribution of work, the recompense for work, and the fairness of working. There had been an inspiring presentation on (Parents and Children Together) which works in the area of adoptions, supporting families and victims of domestic violence.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our five churches lively and vibrant communities. Particularly we thank welcomers, sidespersons, readers, intercessors, junior church leaders, those who assist with the financial processes, and all those who work behind the scenes who make for an efficient operation and ensuring we have well-presented buildings and churchyards.

Financial review

This financial review covers the period 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020. Income again exceeded £250,000 resulting from the financing and completion of the River Room project at Sutton Courtenay church. At this level of income, it is a requirement that the account must be prepared and presented using the accruals method. Income and expenditure are recognised as soon as entitlement is established, e.g., gift aid must be recognised when the income is received even though the actual claim may be received in the subsequent year.

Accruals accounts consist of a SOFA (Statement of Financial Activities), a balance sheet, a cash flow statement, and further explanatory notes. The SOFA is on page 21, the balance sheet is on page 22, the cash flow statement is on page 23 and the notes on pages 24-34.

Total unrestricted income during 2020 was £132,930 a substantial fall on the previous year's income of £160,414 due primarily to the pandemic. Unrestricted expenditure fell from £174,068 to £156,267, reflecting a reduction in church expenses such as heating. This decrease was substantially less than the reduction in income and hence there has been a net deficit on unrestricted spending of £23,337. Consequently, the unrestricted funds carried forward to 2021 are £38,094 or £45,463 if designated funds are also included. Unrestricted funds have fallen consistently since the new parish was formed and are now close to the limit set by our reserves policy (see below).

The River Room has been financed from restricted funds. These have now been used to the extent that the carried forward value for this fund is a deficit of £32,282. This shortfall is covered by four loans which will be repaid over the next 10 years. By the end of 2020 there was £52,000 of loan finance to be repaid. The loan repayment is being financed through a 200 club and other fund raising. Projects of a lesser scale at Sutton Courtenay and Steventon have been financed wholly through restricted funds.

Investment funds, which are all endowment funds, improved from £598,587 to £626,405. Only the interest or dividends from these funds may be spent.

In summary, it is likely that sufficient finance will be raised to close the account on the River Room, but close attention will need to be paid to the level of unrestricted funds. Significant changes will be required to increase day to day income or reduce expenditure.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on free reserves (net current assets) which equates to at least two months unrestricted payments. This is equivalent to £30,000. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies.

It is our policy to invest short term balances with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund and longer term reserves in the CCLA Church of England Investment fund. However, the significant movements in funding for the Sutton Courtenay River Room has led to more cash being held in ordinary bank accounts.

Structure, governance, and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. In the DAMASCUS Parish the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, other members of the clergy team, churchwardens, licensed lay ministers and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the parish. All those who are members of the congregations are encouraged to register on the electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. Following an initial part year of operation from election in September 2017 to April 2018, the full PCC was elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in April 2018. Elections to fill vacancies on the PCC and to appoint Churchwardens and Pro-wardens took place in October 2020. The PCC met six times during 2020. Local Church Committees (LCC) have been established for each of the five churches with responsibility for considering local activity and provide local church feedback to the PCC and act as a forum for the PCC to consult with the congregations of each of the five churches. Each of the five LCCs provide a report to every PCC meeting. For each church Pro-Wardens, elected at the APCM, carry out roles ensuring the smooth running of their church and maintain order in the church and grounds.

A Standing Committee consisting of the incumbent, the churchwardens, the PCC Secretary, and the PCC Treasurer meet bi-monthly (in the months between PCC meetings) to transact business delegated to them by the PCC.

Most meetings during 2020 have been held virtually via Zoom because of Covid-19 restrictions.

Administrative information

The Ministry team

Clergy

Parish Rector – The Reverend Helen Kendrick
Associate Priest (Half-Time Stipendiary) – The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest (House for Duty) – The Reverend Meg Heywood
Associate Priest (SSM) - The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Assistant Priest (SSM) – The Reverend Dr Karen Hyde

Licensed Lay Ministers

Dr Tim Budd
Mr Jack Jarvis
Mrs Alex Landsbert

Authorised Preacher

Mr Paul James

The DAMASCUS Parish is part of the Abingdon Deanery within the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Rectory, 3 Tullis Close, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4BD. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission, with registered charity number 1175551.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2020 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent: The Reverend Helen Kendrick (Chairman)
Associate Minister: The Reverend Meg Heywood
Associate Minister: The Reverend Phil Sutton
Associate Priest: The Reverend Rosie Bruce
Assistant Priest: The Reverend Dr Karen Hyde
Licensed Lay Minister: Dr Tim Budd
Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Jack Jarvis
Churchwarden: Dr Hilary Otterburn
Churchwarden: Mrs Nicola Turner
Mrs Anne Brownson representative in Deanery Synod (until 21 Oct 2020)
Mr Anton King representative in Deanery Synod
Mrs Alex Landsbert representative in Deanery Synod (until 21 Oct 2020)
Mrs Faye Rees representative in Deanery Synod (until 21 Oct 2020)
Mr Michael Murray representative in Deanery Synod (from 21 Oct 2020)

Elected members:

Mrs Roz Green (until 21 Oct 2020)
Mr Robert Green(until 21 Oct 2020)
Mrs Valerie Cross

Mrs Linda Johnson
Mrs Joy Browning (until 2 September 2020)
Dr Elaine Maxwell (from 21 Oct 2020)
Mrs Alison Budd (from 21 Oct 2020)
Mr Fred Cubbage (until 21 Oct 2020)
Professor David King
Mrs Jane Hornsby
Ms Claire Ward

Co-opted members
Mrs Sue Harris, Secretary
Mr Martin Blogg, Treasurer
Mrs Sue Jenkins, Safeguarding Officer

Local Church Committee members from who have served at any time from 1 January 2020 until the date this report was approved are:
Appleford LCC: Elizabeth Duffield, William Finch, Roz Green (Pro-Warden), Sue Helby, Anne Hounslow, Linda Payne, Iris Ramkissoon.
Drayton LCC: Valerie Cross (Pro-Warden), Sally Dixon, Sue Harris, Sue Icke, Linda Johnson (Pro-Warden), Anton King.
Milton LCC: Joy Browning (Pro-Warden), Anne Brownson, Audrey Devall, Elaine Maxwell, Janet Money, Margaret Patching, Janet Taylor, Nicola Turner (Pro-Warden).
Sutton Courtenay: Alison Budd (Pro-Warden), Tim Budd, Fred Cubbage (Pro-Warden), Sue Jenkins, David King, Alex Landsbert, David McKenzie, Vivienne Maunders, Phil Stubley, Mary Warrington.
Steventon: Alan Binning (Pro-Warden), Diana Bowder, Doreen Goddard, Jane Hornsby, Jack Jarvis, Andrew Loutit, Hilary Otterburn (Pro-Warden), David Sandford, Tony Sloggett, Claire Ward.

DAMASCUS PARISH
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF DAMASCUS

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2020 which are set out on pages 21 to 34.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement
Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed

Caroline Webster, FCA

Ross Brooke Ltd
Suite I, Windrush Court, Abingdon Business Park, OX14 1SY

Date: 26/7/21

DAMASCUS PARISH
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ending 31 December 2020

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS							
Voluntary income	2a	110,831	-	362,003	-	472,834	450,358
Activities for generating funds	2b	4,103	-	6,855	-	10,958	27,475
Church activities	2c	9,562	-	-	-	9,562	14,288
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	2d	2,076	-	11,872	-	13,948	15,038
Other incoming resources	2e	6,358	-	414	-	6,772	12,639
TOTAL INCOME		**132,930**	**-**	**381,144**	**-**	**514,074**	**519,798**
EXPENDITURE							
Church activities	3a	122,218	-	615	-	122,833	134,253
Church expenses	3b	31,967	-	15,736	-	47,703	64,938
Costs of generating income	3c	-	-	764	-	764	6,860
Major capital expenditure	3d	-	-	403,697	-	403,697	398,228
Other expenditure	3e	2,082	-	48	-	2,130	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		**156,267**	**-**	**420,860**	**-**	**577,127**	**604,279**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE BEFORE INVESTMENT GAINS		**- 23,337**	**-**	**- 39,716**	**-**	**- 63,053**	**- 84,481**
NET GAINS ON INVESTMENTS					**27,818**	**27,818**	**68,959**
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE		**- 23,337**	**-**	**- 39,716**	**27,818**	**- 35,235**	**- 15,522**
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS		- 120	-	120	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		**- 23,457**	**-**	**- 39,596**	**27,818**	**- 35,235**	**- 15,522**
Total funds brought forward		**61,551**	**7,369**	**120,347**	**598,587**	**787,854**	**803,376**
Total fund carried forward		**38,094**	**7,369**	**80,751**	**626,405**	**752,619**	**787,854**

DAMASCUS PARISH
BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Notes	2020 Total £	2019 Total £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible	6	608	811
Investments	7	626,405	598,587
		627,013	599,398
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and prepayments	8	22,753	25,365
Short-term deposits		77,543	95,424
Cash at bank and in hand		83,555	127,962
		183,851	248,751
LIABILITIES			
Creditors - amounts falling due in one year	9	15,245	33,295
NET CURRENT ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		168,606	215,456
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		795,619	814,854
Creditors - amounts falling due after one year	10	43,000	27,000
TOTAL NET ASSETS		752,619	787,854
PARISH FUNDS			
Unrestricted	11	45,463	68,920
Restricted	12	80,751	120,347
Endowment		626,405	598,587
		752,619	787,854

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 12 July 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

The Revd Helen Kendrick (Chair) HGKendrick

Nicola Turner (Treasurer) Nicola Turner

DAMASCUS PARISH
CASH FLOW STATEMENT AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

	2020		2019	
	£	£	£	£
Net cash from operating activities		- 128,236		- 109,390
Cash flows from investing activities				
Dividends, interest and rent from investments	13,948		15,038	
Interest paid	-		-	
Proceeds from sale of:				
Tangible fixed assets	-		-	
Tangible fixed investments	-		-	
Purchase of:				
Tangible fixed assets for the use of the PCC	-		-	
Fixed asset investments	-		-	
Cash flows from financing activities				
Loans (outstanding balances)	52,000		50,000	
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities		65,948		65,038
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		- 62,288		- 44,352
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January		223,386		267,738
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December		161,098		223,386
Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) before investment gains				
Net income before investment gains 31 December		- 63,053		- 84,481
Adjustment for:				
Depreciation charges		203		203
Dividends, interest and rent from investments		- 13,948		- 15,038
Decrease/(increase) in debtors		2,612		- 20,211
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors		- 54,050		10,137
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		- 128,236		- 109,390
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents				
Cash in hand		83,555		127,962
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)		77,543		95,424
		161,098		223,386

DAMASCUS PARISH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Parish is a public benefit entity within the meaning of FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared under The Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and with the Regulations "true and fair view" provisions, together with FRS102 as the applicable accounting standard and the 2019 version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP (FRS102). The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets, which are shown as fair value.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. There are no material uncertainties in respect of the charities ability to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

ASSETS

Consecrated and benefice property

Consecrated and beneficed property of any kind is excluded from the accounts by s.10(2) of the Charities Act 2011. All expenditure incurred during the year on such property is written off as expenditure in the SOFA and separately disclosed

Moveable church furnishings

These are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful economic life (normally 20 years) other than when insufficient cost information is available. In this case the item is not capitalised, but all items are included in the Church's inventory in any case.

Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £1,000. The Parish computer comes within this scope and has been depreciated over 5 years.

FUNDS

Unrestricted Funds

These represent the remaining income funds of the PCC available for spending on general purposes of the PCC. They include designated funds that have been set aside by the PCC for specific purposes.

Restricted Funds

These are income funds that must be spent on restricted purposes and details of funds held and restrictions provided are shown in the notes to the accounts.

Endowment Funds

These are restricted funds that must be retained as trust capital either permanently or subject to a discretionary power to spend capital as income.

INCOME

Collections and planned giving are recognised when received by or on behalf of the Parish. Income tax recoverable on covenants or gift aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised. Grants and legacies to the church are accounted for as soon as the Parish is notified of its legal entitlement and the amount due. Funds raised by fund-raising events are accounted for as gross. Sales of books and magazines are accounted for gross.

INVESTMENT INCOME

Interest on bank balances is accounted for on an accruals basis with interest recognised in the period to which the interest relates.

Dividend income is recognised on the date the share interest becomes ex-dividend or when the right to the dividend can be established.

EXPENDITURE AND LIABILITIES

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal and constructive obligation and settlement is probable and quantifiable.

DAMASCUS PARISH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

2 INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
2(a) Voluntary income					
All other giving and voluntary receipts, including Special Appeals (recurring and one-off)	5,766	40,886	-	46,652	84,350
Collections at services	9,080	1,136	-	10,216	19,270
Collections at services for charity	1,181	-	-	1,181	-
Gift Aid recovered	20,079	8,978	-	29,057	67,714
Grants (include recurring and one-off)	7,695	308,440	-	316,135	203,323
Other planned giving	2,853	438	-	3,291	3,666
Legacies received (capital value)	-	-	-	-	-
Tax efficient planned giving	64,177	2,125	-	66,302	72,035
	110,831	362,003	-	472,834	450,358
2(b) Activities for generating funds					
Gross income from fundraising activities	4,103	6,855	-	10,958	27,475
	4,103	6,855	-	10,958	27,475
2(c) Church activities					
Additional wedding and funeral fees	511	-	-	511	1,031
Gross income from trading (e.g. hall lettings, magazine, bookstall). NOT fundraising.	1,834	-	-	1,834	3,477
Statutory fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc)	7,217	-	-	7,217	9,780
	9,562	-	-	9,562	14,288
2(d) Dividends, interest, income from property etc.					
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	2,076	11,872	-	13,948	15,038
	2,076	11,872	-	13,948	15,038
2(e) Other incoming resources					
Other incoming resources	6,358	414	-	6,772	12,639
	6,358	414	-	6,772	12,639
TOTAL INCOME	132,930	381,144		514,074	519,798

3 EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
3(a) Church activities						
Clergy and staff expenses	7,299	-	-	-	7,299	6,805
Diocesan parish share contribution	103,957	-	-	-	103,957	106,269
Mission giving and donations	2,730	-	-	-	2,730	11,330
Salaries, wages and honoraria	8,232	-	615	-	8,847	9,849
	122,218	-	615	-	122,833	134,253
3(b) Church expenses						
Mission and evangelism costs	245	-	798	-	1,043	761
Church running expenses	25,124	-	13,541	-	38,665	52,837
Church utility bills	5,435	-	1,397	-	6,832	9,457
Costs of trading	-	-	-	-	-	-
Independent examiner's costs	960	-	-	-	960	1,680
Depreciation on church equipment	203	-	-	-	203	203
	31,967	-	15,736	-	47,703	64,938
3(c) Costs of generating income						
Costs of fundraising activities	-	-	764	-	764	6,860
	-	-	764	-	764	6,860
3(d) Major capital expenditure						
Major repairs to the church building	-	-	2,856	-	2,856	18,353
New building work	-	-	400,841	-	400,841	379,875
	-	-	403,697	-	403,697	398,228
3(e) Other expenditure						
Other outgoing resources/ payments	2,047	-	48	-	2,095	-
Governance costs	35	-	-	-	35	-
	2,082	-	48	-	2,130	-
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	156,267	-	420,860		577,127	604,279

4 STAFF COSTS

	2020	2019
	£	£
Parish administrator	3,120	1,697
Cleaner	2,292	2,292
Groundsman	1,230	1,230
Gravedigger	110	-
Organist	2,035	4,110
Vergers	60	-
Bell ringers		520
	8,847	9,849

Note: All staff above are self-employed

The number of individuals in receipt of staff payments was as follows:

Parish administrator	1	2
Cleaner	3	3
Groundsman	1	1
Organist	8	11
Vergers	1	-

None of the Trustees received any remuneration or employee benefits during the year. The lay trustees, where applicable, who acted as agents to the PCC in making approved payments on its behalf, were reimbursed for these expenses on presentation of suitable documentary evidence.

Clergy working expenses were reimbursed in accordance with Church of England guidelines.

There were no related party transactions.

5 TRANSFER OF FUNDS

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
Apportionment of deposit fund interest	- 120	120	-

6 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost of valuation		
At 1 January 2020	811	811
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
At 31 December 2020	811	811
Depreciation		
At 1 January 2020	-	-
Charge for the year	203	203
At 31 December 2020	203	203
Net book value at 31 December 2020	608	608
Net book value at 31 December 2019	811	811

7 INVESTMENTS

	Market value at 31st December 2019	Additions	Disposals	Market value at 31st December 2020	Change in value Jan 1 to Dec 31 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
Milton Milton - Church Lands	536,268	-	-	559,822	23,554
Drayton Bradfield Trust	8,994	-	-	9,613	619
Drayton Clerk's Piece	796	-	-	847	51
Drayton Miss Emma Hyde for maintenance of church fabric	2,218	-	-	2,357	139
Drayton Hyde's charity for psalmody	762	-	-	811	49
Steventon 627485002S - ENDOWMENT FUND	29,111	-	-	31,113	2,002
Steventon 627485001 S - N01 INVESTMENT FUND	20,438	-	-	21,842	1,404
	598,587	**-**	**-**	**626,405**	**27,818**

8 DEBTORS

	2020	2019
	£	£
HMRC Gift Aid	16,012	22,625
Statutory fees due	-	178
Collections to be banked	568	2,562
Fund raising to be banked	565	-
Parish share rebate	2,625	-
Grants from Oxford Diocese	1,560	-
Miscellaneous debtors	1,423	-
TOTAL	22,753	25,365

9 CREDITORS falling due within one year

	2020	2019
	£	£
Accounts examination costs	960	900
Diocesan Loan repayment	6,000	23,000
Individual 1 loan	1,000	-
Individual 2 loan	1,000	-
Individual 3 loan	1,000	-
Architects fees for River Room	-	1,796
Clergy expenses	707	2,836
100 club prizes	36	-
Mission giving	1,478	-
Parish Administrator	1,040	-
Miscellaneous creditors	2,024	4,763
TOTAL	15,245	33,295

10 CREDITORS falling due after one year

	2020	2019
	£	£
Diocesan Loan repayment	21,000	27,000
Individual 1 loan	9,000	-
Individual 2 loan	9,000	-
Individual 3 loan	4,000	-
TOTAL	43,000	27,000

11 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £		Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £
General funds	61,551	*	132,930	156,267	- 120	38,094
Designated funds						
Drayton pew removal	6,664		-	-	-	6,664
River room (designated)	705		-	-	-	705
	7,369		-	-	-	7,369

* **Reconciliation of 2019 and 2020 balances**

Closing unrestricted fund balance from 2019 accounts	59,682
Income from charity collections at service incorrectly recorded as NonPCC funds in 2019 accounts when expendiutre was from PCC unrestricted funds	1,869
Opening unrestricted fund balance 2020	61,551

12 RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfer £	Carried forward £	
Drayton fabric	4,245	740	696	7	4,296	
Drayton Carpenters legacy	1,269	-	-	-	1,269	
Drayton Bells	2,730	135	-	5	2,870	
Drayton Clerk's Piece	348	-	-	-	348	
Drayton Hydes for Psalmody	617	-	-	-	617	
Appleford fabric fund	7,847	1,315	403	-	8,759	
Milton bells	11,984	626	311	21	12,320	
Milton building	7,647	1,253	-	14	8,914	
Milton Church Lands	29,929	11,737	4,077	59	37,648	
Sutton Courtenay Fabric	6,200	5,682	6,190	9	5,701	
Sutton Courtenay River Room	16,158	353,155	401,595	-	- 32,282	*
Sutton Courtenay Ringers	2,452	76	-	-	2,528	
Sutton Courtenay Choir	-	-	-	-	-	
Sutton Courtenay Fun Day	3,641	4,737	798	-	7,580	
Steventon Fabric	3,760	1,409	2,064	-	3,105	
Steventon Churchyard	18,170	74	3,612	-	14,632	
Steventon Tower	3,415	186	1,114	5	2,492	
Steventon Church Repair	- 65	19	-	-	- 46	
	120,347	**381,144**	**420,860**	**120**	**80,751**	

* ***Sutton Courtenay River Room***

This fund has a negative end of year balance because the building work has been paid whilst fund raising continues. This negative balance is covered by loans from four sources, repayable over periods of up to 10 years and will be repaid by future fund raising. Plans are in place to cover the repayments. At 31/12/2020 the total of loans was £52,000. The loans are not PCC funds so do not appear as part of the balance for this fund. The loan cash and the repayment liability does appear in the balance sheet.

SUMMARY OF ASSETS BY FUND

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	**TOTAL 2020** £
Tangible fixed assets	608	-	-	608
Investment fixed assets	-	-	626,405	626,405
Current assets	103,100	80,751	-	183,851
Liabilities				
Amounts falling due in one year	- 15,245	-	-	- 15,245
Amounts falling due after one year	- 43,000	-	-	- 43,000
	45,463	80,751	626,405	752,619