

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

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended 31 December 2024



**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST MARY,
GREENHITHE**

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

Trustees Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2024

Administrative information

St Mary's Church is situated on London Road, Greenhithe. It is part of the diocese of Rochester within the Church of England. The correspondence address is - Church Office, 131 Mounts Road, Greenhithe, Kent DA9 9ND.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity on the Register of Charities with the Registered Charity Number 1180908.

PCC Members who have served from 1 January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:

Incumbent: Revd Charlie Lloyd-Evans

Curate: Revd Dr Bart Woodhouse

Wardens: Mr Rod Long
Mr Ben White until the APCM

Representatives on the Deanery Synod:

Mrs Mandy Holloway LLM

Mrs Margaret Bobby

Elected members:

Mrs Marion Lane (Secretary)

Mrs Jennie White LLM

Miss Jude Andrews

Mr Jason Emmett

Mrs Ruth Lowe

Mr Nigel Hewitt

Mr Ben White (Bookkeeper) from the APCM

These members now serve as Trustees of the Registered Charity.

Ms Jude Andrews was elected as the Safeguarding Officer for Children and Vulnerable Adults.

The council has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Powers measure. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules.

The membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, churchwardens, and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. New members receive initial training into the workings of the PCC.

Electoral Roll 2024 Summary

All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

After the revision of the roll, we have 61 members, broken down as follows:

Men, total of 20, 6 live in the parish and 14 outside the parish

Women, total of 41, 19 live in the parish and 22 outside the parish

Total living in parish is 25, outside the parish is 36

1 moved away, 3 left the church
1 man joined (1 out parish)

Reports for 2024

Deanery Synod

Gravesend Deanery met on 29th May 2024

The main focus of the Agenda was brought by Archdeacon Andy Wooding-Jones who came to bring an update on the BMO and developments in Ebbsfleet.

How do we react to Ebbsfleet?

Potentially around 40,000 people will be living there – 2/3 population of Gravesend.

Why not create a new Deanery – in consultation with the surrounding parishes: Swanscombe, Greenhithe, Stone, Southfleet, Istead Rise, Northfleet & Rosherville. All have connection and border the area of Ebbsfleet, some have already been massively affected by the building development.

- Gravesend Deanery will change again
- The new Deanery will be called Swanscombe Deanery
- There will be new clergy posts eventually including a Pioneer to build links with the school and to consider what does church look like in that place

It's not only about responding to what is happening but about trying to create a missional area around Ebbsfleet to create a move towards a new parish of Ebbsfleet. Although some parts of Ebbsfleet will belong in existing parishes, such as Cable Wharf in Rosherville, the new Alkerden Anglican Academy will be the basis for a new Christian community. We will have access seven days a week, not just when the school is closed. The new Pioneer will be based there.

We need to pay attention to what God is saying to us. There is need all around us and we are crossing the road to help. People want to know what we do and are intrigued by us. We are not as marginalised as we think. The Councils are very aware of what we do. Learn to love and bless where God has put you – will be alert to what God shows you about this place, be ready to be surprised (perhaps even how to use the building).

How do we connect with those already in touch with us – e.g. those who use our halls?
(in Jesus terms they are people peace). We need to build bridges – be alert, be ready to respond.

Diocesan vision – **“Seeking first the Kingdom of God we are called together by God to change, serve and grow with compassion, courage and creativity”**

- what is God asking of us
- challenges in finance – how do we grow and see income rise
- challenges in all areas
- population will increase

There is a threat to us – how do we do welcome and hospitality and grow love? Those who come into our parish belong – we want them to join our community. There is growth but churches are getting older – How do we grow younger? All volunteer roles are changing. Parent & Toddler groups often needing new recruits. There is a lack of young retirees. Struggles to find Churchwardens, Treasurers, Safeguarding Officers – how do we respond?

We have to stop being islands – the new Deanery will be small – need to help each other. Also work collaboratively across Deaneries. The Diocese asks how they can help to bring about growth. Share what your church is doing and learn from each other

Missional churches have leaders who help us grow. It's not just about what we do on Sundays – throughout the week we are in it together. We are all learners. We need to grow younger and more diverse, numerically, spiritually, financially and to impact our communities and plant and grow new missional churches. We are following the same call

Seeking first the Kingdom of God – not about numbers. Jesus talked about it and the element of mystery – how it touches our lives and those we meet

We are called together by God – Our Father, brothers and sisters = united in Him

To change, serve and grow – openness and expectation of growth

With compassion, courage & creativity - we are not doing it alone but together.

How do we look around and see what God is showing us?

Nehemiah – walked the walls – seek out what God is showing us in our area – look at who is outside our building.

This was the last Gravesend Deanery Synod that we attended. There was an Inaugural meeting of Swanscombe Deanery in November but very few attended so it was rescheduled for January 2025.

PCC Committees

The PCC operates through several committees, which meet between full meetings of the PCC. All the committees are answerable to the full PCC.

The PCC held ten full meetings and one extraordinary meeting during the year.

2024 Activities/Events

This year we have successfully run a Pancake night, a few raffles, the Spring Fair, the Summer Fayre, a Church BBQ, a Harvest lunch, a Quiz with cooked meal, and our Christmas Fayre, as well as supporting the Deanery Confirmation service. These have seen a mix of church members and the wider community attending, supporting and volunteering as well as enjoying shared fun and games, building on already established relationships and creating new relationships. Raising money on top of this is a bonus.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to the amazing team who give so much of their time to these events and to all those in our community, in its widest sense, who volunteer on the days of our big fayres and events in so many ways.

Jen

Family Ministry

We continued to welcome children, parents and carers to a safe and enjoyable group. We averaged around 30-35 children each week. The group continued to attract new families and generate consistent positive feedback on the quality and hospitality the group provided.

The group was generously supported by several volunteers, in Jude, Karen, Dawn, Susan, Bart, and Marion, who ensured the group happened each week. We also had support from several parents and carers. Varied activities and toys were available on a rota each week and, during the warmer months, outside play was enjoyed. We gathered the children and their carers for the telling of the Christmas story in December, together with a visit from Father Christmas. Each child received a gift of a book (age appropriate) telling the story of Jesus' birth. It is a privilege to watch the children grow in confidence and height! We remain very grateful for Jude's commitment to the group, without which Sticky Fingers would struggle to continue. Her work in putting the rota together and ensuring the toys and activities are safe and engaging is greatly appreciated by all those involved and the wider church. One of the areas that needs prayer and attention is the level of volunteers, particularly from the church family. We will continue to mention this as we have opportunity and actively recruit. We wish to formally acknowledge the huge amount of work and time that goes into this ministry and to thank all those who give of their time and resources to enable the group to flourish.

Pastoral care

We continue to be a church that has a heart for the community. There are many people who are using their gifts and talents to support all sorts who are in need within our community in many different ways, especially under the charity MCK (Mary's Child Kent) which is an independent Charity with a strong connection to the church.

The Community Café

The Community Café continues to be very popular in the local area. We have up to 70 or 80 people attending weekly on Wednesday mornings between 9am and 1pm. Our group of volunteers work extremely hard setting up, preparing and serving food and packing away.

A Walking group of up to 20 people, headed by trained volunteers, leaves the Café at 10.30am to enjoy a

walk by the River Thames as far as Ingress Abbey or through Worcester Park as far as St. Mary the Virgin Church at Stone. When they return around 12 noon they enjoy bacon or sausage in rolls, cheese toasties, soup or cakes, often ordered before they go walking.

We are pleased to host outside agencies including Hi Kent, MCK Digital, MCK Legal Advice and, until recently, the Autism South East Cafe. The local Police and our PCSO often come in to see us and are there to give advice and help to anyone who has problems. Local Councillors also attend on a regular basis. The Cafe opened its doors in April ten years ago. To celebrate this on Wednesday 17th April we had a special morning at the Cafe. We had a beautiful Anniversary cake, free raffle and lots of cakes and chocolates. The Bishop of Tonbridge, Simon Burton-Jones, attended as he had opened the Cafe ten years ago and also our Archdeacon Andy Wooding Jones came.

Our annual Cafe Beach Trip to Ramsgate took place on 20th August. This was a subsidised event. Two coaches of happy people had a great day.

The Senior's Afternoon Tea which is an offshoot of the Community Cafe meets on a Tuesday from 2pm to 4pm.

Our Coffee Morning now renamed Coffee and Craft Morning takes place on the third Saturday of the month from 9.30am to 11.30am. People have been able to learn how to make greetings cards, to do quilling and to crochet. Some people prefer to bring their own crafts along or just enjoy our freshly made coffee, tea and homemade cakes and a chat with friends old and new. Bike repair sessions now take place at Coffee and Craft mornings.

All the people who attend our Community Cafe, Senior's Afternoon Tea and Coffee and Craft Morning say how much they enjoy coming and we are always delighted to see them.

Margaret

Sunday Special

We began the year in the church, as the rest of the congregation were staying warm in the hall. Ben did a fabulous job, as usual, of keeping us warm with the heaters. We continued to bring our cloth and cross so the kids could see that we were having some special time with God. We have small numbers, but they are great children, that are learning how much God loves them.

Emily

Ignited Youth

The Ignited Youth continues to meet on Sunday morning during services and it has been a delight to see the young people growing in their faith during our sessions together. Somewhere between 4 and 9 young people attend on a Sunday morning and we continue to use the excellent Youth for Christ resources for 11 to 14-year-olds. Particular highlights have included the Ask the Vicar sessions and the Ask the Curate sessions where the young people were able to ask any questions they wished to ask of Charlie and Bart.

Rachel

Eco Working Group – Report for 2024

The ECO Working Group (Eco WG) was formed by the PCC in early 2024 to lead on St Marys response to the environment and climate crisis. Key targets for the Eco WG are to progress in achieving ECO Church status and to meet the Church of England's target for Net Zero carbon by 2030. The Eco WG is currently 5 strong (1 x minister, 3 x PCC and 1 x lay member) but we would welcome others to join or donate.

- **Eco Church** – the [A Roche UK scheme](#) provides a framework over 5 areas

Worship + Teaching / Buildings / Land / Community & Global Engagement / Lifestyle for churches to assess their impact and make improvements.

Progress: Bronze – achieved March 24. Silver – achieved September 24.

- Admin. ECO is a standing item on PCC agenda with a new ECO restricted fund and a budget for 2025
- Support to a global charity in 2025 - Tearfund
- Registered with Fairtrade Foundation as Fairtrade Church
- Cycle bike repair café - September 24 & March 25
- Drafted a Land Management Plan
 - Bird Boxes / Feeding. Bug Hotel. Composting
- Applied to Woodland Trust for free community trees. Hedge planting (135 saplings) event in March 25

- Applied to Diocese for funding for “Green Hall” project – Insulation / Roof / Solar panels – Application submitted - awaiting response
 - Bike rack funded – to be installed in April 25
 - ECO themed services (September 24 & Youth Café service in March 25)
 - Re-ordering of hall entrance / kitchen / toilets for a recycling centre
 - Toilet Rolls / Paper towels – move to 100% recyclable
- **CofE Net Zero Carbon by 2030** – [CofE Video](#)
 - **Electricity.** The PCC has a 2-year green tariff contract with Total Energies via Parish Buying – 100% offset from offshore wind. In future for electric heating in the church, we need to upgrade to a three-phase supply and a full rewire. Eco WG obtained a quote from UK Power Networks for connection of a 3 phase cabinet by Lych gate.
 - **Gas.** Both gas supplies have been disconnected. Church (condemned heating - Oct 23) & Hall (hob only - Oct 24)
 - **Overall** Removal of gas and using electricity offset 100% for offshore wind means a large reduction in church carbon footprint. The remaining carbon footprint is from transport, building, food etc and with the green offset electricity we could meet the CofE Net Zero Carbon target now but the temporary church LPG heaters dent progress.

MCK – Mary’s Child Kent

MCK – Mary’s Child Kent exists to love, care for and support individuals and families in the local area. The charity continues to grow since our establishment in 2023 and we support many people through our three foodbanks and the legal advice provided by our advisor Jeremy. We continue to run food and fun events during the school holidays in local venues which are very well attended. There have been fundraising events held in the form of an afternoon tea and Christmas Tree festival which were both well supported by local schools, businesses and individuals. Jude has also completed an apprenticeship in fundraising through the University of Kent. MCK has seen a change of staff with Naomi who has been with the charity since the beginning moving on and Jude has taken on her responsibilities alongside her current role. She is now Operation Manager for MCK. We have been supported financially by many individuals, organisations and grant making trusts and foundations. We are supported by volunteers from many local businesses especially taking part at food and fun events. We have been out and about promoting MCK in various places such as Darent Valley and Bluewater.

Looking forward – The Swanscombe foodbank (formerly the Swanscombe food cellar) is now overseen by MCK and will be sited in the grounds of Swanscombe Church Centre. The new containers which will house it are due for delivery very soon and this new venture will be up and running.

Thank you to everyone who supports MCK in any way, it is very much appreciated.

Jude

Curate Report

Curacy formally began on the date of my ordination, the 28th September 2024, and the licence to minister at St Mary Greenhithe ratified the following Sunday. Since then I have served as Deacon at over a dozen communion services under the guidance of my Training Incumbent Rev’d Charlie Lloyd-Evans, preached most weeks, and been an active member of the ministry team in the broader life of the church. After contributing to three funeral services with Rev’d Charlie I took a funeral service independently on the 11th December, which went well. In early November, with the help and support of several members of the congregation, I started a new ministry “The Man Shed”. This new meeting on the first Sunday of the month focuses on growing fellowship and deeper conversations over food and various pub style games and activities. Thirteen men gathered for the first meeting, and it has since grown to nearly twenty members, some of whom would not identify as Christian. There is strong missional potential with this group, which has led to the decision to use some of the Alpha Course sessions in the new year. We hope to continue to develop and grow this new ministry. Curacy continues with regular supervision meetings with Rev’d Charlie and teaching days and weekends with the Rochester Diocese IME2 team. My Curacy is going well and it’s been a privilege to serve within such a generous and supportive church.

Rev’d Dr. Bart Woodhouse

Church Warden report

Now that the roof project has been completed and the inside of the church is now dry we have been able to carry out much needed internal maintenance.

In the Spring we removed all the rotten front paneling from the south door and installed new oak paneling. The ironwork was repainted and reinstated. The job was successful apart from the fact that wet weather caused the wood to expand and the door jamming on the frame. Fortunately a small amount of trimming to the edge of the door seems to have cured the problem.

From the rotten wood that was removed, a very skillful individual used this wood to create several bird boxes that are now around the church grounds. Although the other church doors are painted black an overwhelming number of the church members voted to have the new paneling on the south door oiled. This has to be an annual exercise and will need to be done again very shortly.

At the back of the church hall there are two small windows that went into the store cupboards at the back of the hall. One was broken and boarded up and neither let in any light as shelving had been erected on the inside. These windows were boarded up and the gaps insulated to give better protection to the contents in the cupboards.

At the side of the hall we had erected a frame and covered it with tarpaulins to provide a protective covering for buggies and pushchairs. However the wind wrecked the tarpaulins on three occasions and so we have had to abandon this idea. We are reluctant to erect a permanent structure until such time as a new roof is fixed to the hall as this would make the fixing of the new roof difficult.

During the year we have continued to hold work parties on the first Saturday of each month carrying out gardening, bush and tree trimming, small repairs and regular cleaning to the inside of the church and the church hall and kitchen.

During the year there were changes at the Archdeaconry which is situated next to the church. Andy Wooding Jones retired as Archdeacon and the diocese were busy making preparations for the arrival of his replacement. This only affected us in so far as the somewhat haphazard parking arrangements had to be made into a formal arrangement with the diocese. The necessary documents were drawn up and signed up by both parties.

As we have so far been unable to resolve the problem of heating the church to date services were held in the church hall from January to Easter.

Social activities have been very successfully run with increasing attendance and many people from the local community attending.

2024 has ended well and we are looking forward to 2025.

We believe that God has called us to turn efforts to mission and outreach. With this in mind the missional team has been given new impetus and increased prayer time has been started including regular corporate prayer and also a 6am prayer meeting every Wednesday morning as we seek God's plans for St. Marys.

I have to confess that this has been a relatively easy year for me and this has been due to all the hard work and support I have received from all the groups and committees as they have followed their God given callings.

My grateful thanks to you all,

Roderick Long

Priest in Charge report and Future Outlook

This year has again been an exciting one as we have continued our journey with God in this community. The area is changing significantly, especially with the continued development in Ebbsfleet, and this has resulted in us becoming part of the new Swanscombe Deanery, with a more specific local missional focus. For me personally I have also taken on the role of Area Dean of this new deanery, which brings both rewards and challenges. I continue to be supported by a wonderful PCC and ministry team. There have been significant changes in the Ministry Team, with Revd Bart Woodhouse joining us as a curate, our wonderful LLM Margaret leaving as she relocated to Sheffield, and our longest standing LLM Mandy starting a secondment to assist another local parish of Istead Rise. A particular highlight of the year was Thy Kingdom Come, with many prayer activities organised throughout the 10 days, including a series of creative prayer stations in the church, which were visited by both church and non-church people. I am particularly grateful to the PCC, Ministry Team and wider church membership who supported me through a protracted period of severe back problems that had me laid up for nearly two months and on minimal duties for a lot longer.

The PCC focus of the year has been delving into the question of where God is leading us missionally as a church. We had a clear God given Vision a couple of years ago to focus on the roof project, but now that is complete we are keen to seek the next stage of our missional journey. The PCC started to meet for a second meeting every month, entitled Missional Leaders. During this we have prayerfully created a Vision statement and continue to progress towards a mission action plan. This process has been shared with the wider church, particularly through café services. Going forward we continue to pray for revival in our community and to seek ways to build connections with the community, including strengthening the church connections to the wide range of community engagement provisions that we have already established.

Financial review

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £93,702 (**2023:** 71,400 **2022:** 72,966).

£112,061 (**2023:** 49,331 **2022:** £33,314) was spent to provide Christian ministry. This has included a contribution to the Diocesan Parish Share this year of £36,000 and a back payment of £30,000 in respect of last year's Diocesan Parish Share. This had been retained last year due to cash flow needs of the Roof Project.

The net result for the year was a deficit of income over expenditure on unrestricted funds of £18,359 (2023 surplus 22,069, 2022 surplus: £39,652). This is indicative of the retention of Diocesan Parish Share in 2023, to maintain cash flow, that has then been paid in this financial year. The balance on unrestricted funds at 31st December 2024 was £67,820 (2023: £88,689 2022: £68,023).

Reserves policy

The reserves policy was reviewed and will be maintained at a balance on unrestricted funds which equates to at least 3 months operating costs, equivalent to £15,000, plus the additional liability of the retainer on the roof project contract, which will become due during 2025. At the end of 2024 the reserves was £41,784 which was in excess of the reserves policy.

Approved by the PCC and signed on their behalf by:

Chairman _____

PCC Member _____

Date _____

Date _____