

**Trustees' Report  
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

**for the Parochial Church Council of  
St Thomas à Becket Church and St Matthew's Church,  
Widcombe, Bath**

*Registered Charity No:1182372*

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## **PCC Membership**

The following served during the period 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

### Ex-officio members

Incumbent / PCC Chair	Rev Timothy Buckley	<i>Until 31 Nov 2023</i>
PCC Vice-Chair	Andrew Udale-Smith	
Churchwardens	Fiona Coverdale Tony Coverdale	<i>From APCM 23 Apr 2023</i>
Chapelwardens	Andrew Udale-Smith Jonathan Hilsden	
Treasurer	Mark Nish	

### Elected Members

Jonathan Potter	<i>Until 7 Nov 2023</i>
Wayne McMaster	
Joel Lloyd-Carter	
Carol Tottle	<i>Deanery Synod rep</i>

### Co-Opted Members

Reverend Judith Harries	<i>PTO</i>
Mary Udale-Smith	<i>Reader</i>
David Matthews	<i>From 7 Nov 2023</i>

### Secretariat

Secretary	Samatha Forrester	
Electoral Role Administrator	Jonathan Potter	<i>Until 7 Nov 2023</i>

## Purpose and Responsibilities

Widcombe Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the main decision maker of the benefice.

Its members are clergy, churchwardens and others elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) of the parish. Its powers and duties are defined by legislation and can principally be found in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

It is responsible, with the incumbent, for promoting the mission of God in Widcombe Benefice.

Legally, the PCC is responsible for the finances of the parish. It also has ultimate responsibility for the care and maintenance of all church buildings and their contents. Although these responsibilities are executed by the churchwardens, all PCC members must share in the oversight. It has a voice in the forms of Service used by the church and may make representations to the bishop on matters that affect the welfare of the parish.

## Background

When asked, which commandment is first of all, Christ replied:

*"The first is you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

*Mark 12:29-31*

These commandments have been at the heart of Mission in Widcombe for over 1000 years and while there are many forms of Worship to express ones love for God, the aim is unwavering.

The ancient parish of Widcombe has existed since Anglo-Saxon times, but the current bounds of the parish of Widcombe, Bath were not established until 1972, when St Mark's Lyncombe was closed and part of the neighbouring parish of Lyncombe was absorbed. The parish is part of the Bath Deanery, the neighbouring parishes being: Bath Abbey with St James; St Michael Without; St Bartholomew; St Luke; Holy Trinity, Combe Down; St Mary, Claverton; and Bathwick St Mary.

Widcombe, Bath is a benefice, having two churches, St Thomas a Becket (dating from 1502) and the larger church of St Matthew (consecrated in 1847). In the early 1970's, falling congregation numbers were unable to support two churches and in 1975 St Matthew's was converted into a parish hall by building a dividing wall across the nave, converting the western nave into a hall and meeting rooms, and leaving the eastern nave and chancel as a chapel.

St Thomas à Becket church became the predominant place of worship, orientated on the Common Worship prayer book, the cycle of services revolving around Holy Communion Order One, Holy Communion Order Two (BCP), and Morning Prayer (the latter often being lay-led). More recently a programme of evening prayer, compline or similar evening service has been introduced, again with many services being lay-led.



In 2000, the status of the parish was reduced to 'House for Duty' but in 2013, St Matthew's was selected as a location for a 'Church Plant' to create a new worshipping community focused on the 'Fresh Expression' form of worship. In 2014, a stipendiary member of clergy was appointed to serve both the new congregation of St Matthew's (St Matt's) and the established congregation of St Thomas à Becket.

In addition, the Bristol branch of the German Lutheran Church continued to use St Thomas à Becket church for their services as it has done for over forty years.

Nationally, declining congregations have resulted in a reduced number of clergy and the diocese has determined that the Bath Deanery must reduce the number of paid stipendiary posts from 22 to 17. This situation was compounded by the resignation of the incumbent in Widcombe in November 2023, leaving the benefice in vacancy. The two parts of the Widcombe Church family have undertaken discernment. The St Thomas à Becket part of the family wish to continue with Common Worship orientated services, while the St Matt's are considering how 'Fresh Expression' might evolve.

The most probable future is that the Widcombe Benefice will need to form a cluster with a neighbouring parish or benefice served by a common member of clergy to provide spiritual leadership. Looking at our neighbours in turn:

Bath Abbey and St Michael Without already have close links.

St Bartholomew's (St Bart's) have two congregations holding services at St Bart's Oldfield and St Bart's Riverside, meeting at Hayesfield School.

St Luke's (in vacancy since May 2023) hold a range of services based upon one church on Wellsway.

Holy Trinity Combe Down support four churches in three parishes: Holy Trinity Combe Down; St Andrew's Community Church, Foxhill; St James the Great, South Stoke; and St Micheal's, Monkton Combe.

St Mary's Claverton are part of a Benefice with St Nicholas, Bathampton.

Bathwick, St Mary are part of the United Benefice of Bathwick with St John's Church.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our two 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 the parish and beyond. 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 Commission's guidance on public benefit, and particularly the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of the parish community through: worship and prayer, learning from the Gospels; pastoral care for people living in the parish and beyond; and missionary and outreach work.

## Achievements and Performance

### Vicar's Report

*Reverend Tim Buckley - Incumbent*

2023 quickly felt like it was going to be a year of significant change – little did I know how true that would later become.

It was always hoped that I would be able to take a three-month sabbatical during the year, which is gifted in the Diocese of Bath and Wells after 10 years of ministry and, early in the new year, this 'away from Parish ministry' was confirmed by the diocese for June-August.

With that in mind, early 2023 meant a time of detailed planning and preparation for my time away in terms of service and pastoral cover. Big thanks to the wardens, PCC, staff team and volunteers for their great support and partnership in this, particularly Sam Forrester for her brilliant oversight as Parish administrator and PCC secretary.

For many, this past year continued to bring great challenges. But despite the problems facing the national church in terms of finances, reducing clergy numbers and theological discussions and disagreements, here in Widcombe we had much to celebrate and be thankful for - not least in what we witnessed and experienced in the exciting and growing sphere of youth and children's ministry over the weeks and months.

In the light of some of the post-covid challenges, we at St Matt's took some time over several weeks to study the book of Nehemiah, to consider the challenges of hearing God's voice and re-envisioning and rebuilding together - themes that would carry even great significance no doubt, later in the year.

After a wonderful Easter season, we embarked on a challenging teaching series from Revelation covering the letters to the churches before I finally heading off on my sabbatical.

During this wonderful time, I was able to walk the St Cuthbert's Way on pilgrimage to Lindisfarne and spend time on silent retreat on the Inner Hebrides Isle of Seil, reflecting and praying, and capturing on film the beauty of God's creation. I then headed to Chicago for two weeks to meet with several church leaders and their congregations. Finally, my family joined me for the last month of my sabbatical as we drove the West Coast Route from Seattle to San Diego covering some 3000 miles. I returned to the UK with a definite sense of the Lord having spoken clearly to me during this time about moving onto new adventures.

As I wrote in my letter to the Parish in mid-September...

"I returned from sabbatical with a definite sense of God calling us as a family to new things, and so immediately upon my return I wrote to the Bishop to inform him of my sense of God's leading for me to stand down as vicar of the parish....both Sarah's and my conviction (and helpfully that of our children too) is that God is very much leading us to take a step away from parish ministry in the Church of England in this season and to explore new adventures, new ways of shaping and resourcing church and their communities."



Whilst inevitably a difficult and somewhat sad announcement for our parish family, we felt very supported and affirmed by all after the decision was made public.

My final service was held on the morning of Sunday 26th November and was a joint gathering of the congregations of St Matthew's and St Thomas à Becket and we enjoyed a wonderful warm farewell. We were very grateful to all for the kindness and generosity shown at our departure.

As ever, church life can only happen because all play their part in family life. We have been deeply blessed over the years, and not least during this past year, with an incredible team of volunteers and staff throughout the parish who have worked tirelessly to serve and facilitate the many varied worship services, events, and ministries. For all the endless generosity of time, resources, and energy, for your selfless, creative, humble, and enthusiastic partnership, ministry, and wise and prayerful counsel – a deep thank you!

The PCC, along with our amazing wardens and service teams at St Matt's & St Thomas à Becket, have always been central in making sure church life, with its joys, challenges, diversity, and outflowing ministry, work so seamlessly. It has therefore been my utmost privilege and joy to lead alongside these heroes of the faith and I'm personally so grateful for their faithful support and hard work throughout, not just this last year, but over the last decade.

Thank you to everyone who has been or continues to be part of the family of churches in Widcombe, both at St Thomas à Becket and at St Matts. Even in this uncertain new season, we can all be encouraged that God will continue to make a way as you seek to serve the lost and bring blessing in His name to all around you, honouring and loving God, loving each other, and loving this fabulous community.

Thank you and bless you all!

## **Reader's report**

*Dr Mary Udale-Smith - Reader*

In the first half of 2023, I led and preached at services in both St Thomas' and St Matt's and received a licence from the Bishop to allow me to officiate at Holy Communion when the elements have previously been consecrated by a priest at a service within the parish. I was happy to be able to offer support to both churches during Reverend Tim Buckley's sabbatical, including planning the sermon and service series at St Matt's and taking one 8am Communion service at St Thomas'.

Sadly, ill-health took me out of action for most of the autumn. Having had a significant procedure towards the end of the year, I hope to start a staged return to ministry in 2024. I also have had to suspend my MA in Theology completely this academic year but hope to pick that back up in 2024.

## **Churchwarden - St Thomas à Becket**

*Fiona Coverdale – Churchwarden*

It has been a challenging year, but our small, loyal congregation are pulling together and are positive about the future.

Since the last APCM St Thomas' have been able to continue to offer twice a month 8am BCP HC services, 10.30am HC and Morning Prayer services and a monthly evening service. Following the departure of Reverend Tim Buckley this has been with the help of visiting clergy, to whom we are extremely grateful. The Morning Prayer and evening service provide a welcome opportunity for the continuation of our well established lay- led services. The smooth running of all our services owes much to the band of volunteer duty wardens, sides-people, readers, and intercessors.

The German Lutheran congregation continue to meet at St Thomas on a regular basis and are very grateful to us for the use of the building.

Our outreach activities have ranged from the twice monthly afternoon 'tea with the word' get-togethers to 'teas in the Churchyard' and a range of events where the Church building has been open out with the normal Sunday service times. We also support the weekly coffee morning held on a Wednesday at St Matt's.

Summer Sunday afternoon opening in June/July/August worked well and there were 182 visitors in total. Visitor numbers varied widely from week to week – dependent on the weather/sporting fixtures etc. – the most in the 2 hours was 37 whilst the least was 5!

We held a 'St Thomas' weekend' in June – with a fascinating talk about the history of the Church building and the parish, 'teas in the Churchyard' and an uplifting evening prayer with hymns service. This was one of several events to begin the process of raising money for the Church roof repairs.

## **Chapelwarden - St Matthew**

*Jonathan Hilsden – Chapelwarden*

Over the summer Tim went on sabbatical for three months requiring the congregation to step up to organize services thereby creating the opportunity for different voices to speak and offer a range of perspectives. When Tim returned from sabbatical, he announced he would be stepping down as vicar of Widcombe Parish at the end of November. Tim's last service was 26 November which was very well attended and a provided a lovely send off for him and his family from the whole parish.

We continued the pattern of two Sunday evening services and two Sunday morning services. Over the year we held one wedding and two adult baptisms in St Matt's. The quinquennial review of the fabric of St Matthew's was completed in the summer of 2023.



## **Churchwarden - Fabric**

*Tony Coverdale – Churchwarden*

### St Thomas a Becket Church

In late 2022, the lower vestry roof began to leak caused by a combination of damaged chancel tiles and deterioration of the bituminous roof on the lower vestry. Plans were in hand for repair when, in March 2023, the lead was stolen from the upper vestry roof (this was the fourth occasion that the lead had been targeted by thieves and on this occasion, several churches in Bath had also been targeted). 2023 was also a year for quinquennial review. An architectural survey was carried out by Bruce Clark of Nash Partnerships and an electrical survey by EPS (Bristol) Ltd. In addition to the chancel and vestry roofs, the architectural survey also identified that the tower roof had reached the end of its serviceable life, the asphalt roof having blistered and spilt. An area of dry rot was also detected in the porch. The electrical review identified that the chancel lights were not earthed and hence did not meet current safety standards.

#### *Vestry Roof*

Following discussion with the architect, it was agreed that the repair to the upper and lower vestry roof should be of one design (both roofs were originally lead but the lower vestry was replaced with a bituminous roof following the theft of lead c.1975). A proposal was worked up to replace both roofs with a rubber-based material, EPDM, as an alternative to lead. The DAC and council planners however opposed the proposal as it would likely have a short lifespan, but did advise that Terne-Coated Stainless Steel (TCCS) may be an acceptable alternative. A design was worked up by the church architect and a submission made to the DAC and Council Planning department for Listed Building Consent (St Thomas a Becket Church is listed Grade II\*). At the turn of the year, a decision was awaited.

#### *Chancel Roof*

There are several broken or slipped slates on the chancel roof. The slates need to be lifted, the roofing membrane replaced, and the slates re-laid, replacing broken tiles.

#### *Tower Roof*

The bell tower is capped with a concrete slab covered with an asphalt roof. The asphalt has reached the end of its life, having split in several places, necessitating gorilla tape patches. It is proposed to replace the roof, like for like. One issue that we are in discussion with the council is the need, or not, to conduct a full bat survey before the work commences.

#### *Cost and Funding*

The original estimate to repair the chancel room and replace the bituminous lower vestry roof was £15,200 (+VAT). The additional work to replace both vestry roofs with TCCS and repair the tower roof like-for-like will be much more than this. Architect's fees to date are £8,500.00 (+VAT). We have received a donation of £5,000 towards the roof and have raised a further £1,950 through fundraising events, but a fund-raising campaign will be required once we know the likely costs to avoid excessively depleting church funds.

### *Chancel Lighting*

New LED light fittings have been installed in the chancel. After experimentation with intensity and colour, a satisfactory solution has been achieved using 4.3W led lamps (83W equivalent), 600 lm, colour temperature 2700K.

### *Dry Rot*

Small areas of dry rot were identified in the porch. The rot has been mechanically removed and the areas treated with clear Ronseal wood hardener.

## **Electoral Roll**

The Benefice listed 108 on the Roll at the end of 2023.

If anyone is unsure whether they are listed, please contact the Electoral Roll Administrator on [electoralroll@widcombe.church](mailto:electoralroll@widcombe.church).

If you would like to be added to the Electoral Roll you can apply online at <https://widcombe.churchsuite.com/forms/nhyminy> or contact the Electoral Roll Administrator for a paper application form.

## **PCC Secretariat**

The 2023 APCM was held at St Matthew's Church on 23 April 2023. Since the APCM, the full PCC have met 5 times, with an average level of attendance of 69%. Between April 2023 and April 2024, there were:

1 Dedication	St Thomas à Becket
2 Adult Baptisms	St Matthew's
1 Wedding	St Thomas à Becket
1 Wedding	St Mathew's
1 Funeral	St Thomas à Becket

## **Safeguarding**

### *Jill Oldham – Safeguarding Officer*

There were no safeguarding incidents reported during 2023 in respect of St Thomas à Becket Church or St. Matthew's Church.

During the year, 23 people from St Matthews's and St Thomas a Becket congregations received a clear DBS check for their roles, for example concerning church administration, acting as churchwarden, Big Brix, Little Brix, pastoral visiting and youth church.

In October, the DBS process became much easier and quicker with applications going through the independent, Christian, non-profit organization "Thirtyone:eight", rather than through the Diocesan safeguarding department.



Our Benefice continued to use the Diocesan 'Parish Dashboard' self-audit tool throughout the year. Policies were reviewed if required and updated.

As regards safeguarding training, our Benefice's secure safeguarding training database was updated throughout the year as training was completed by those in the Parish required to do it.

Safeguarding training must be refreshed every three years, and further details of the safeguarding training categories can be found on the Diocesan website. Anyone requiring training is asked to contact the Safeguarding Officer in the first instance.

Our Parish website meets national church requirements for safeguarding, including providing clear signposting arrangements and links to the Safeguarding Officer and Safeguarding Policy on the home page.

## **Deanery Synod**

### *Carol Tottle – Deanery Representative*

A Deanery is a geographical subdivision of a Diocese, grouping together parishes so that they can work together to serve God's purpose. The Diocese of Bath and Wells comprises 19 Deaneries, of which the Bath Deanery is one. The Bath Deanery comprises 21 parishes containing 40 Churches. Each Deanery has a Synod, which is an intermediary between the PCC of each parish or benefice and the Diocese Synod.

The aim of the Deanery Synod is to encourage local efforts and programmes, supporting and assisting churches to be more visible in their communities and to grow and flourish, each playing their unique and important part.

The Bath Deanery Synod is chaired by the Area Dean, the Reverend Stephen Girling.

Currently one member of the Widcombe PCC sits on the Deanery Synod, which provides the PCC with a link between the parish and the wider structure of the church.

The church of England currently faces a major financial challenge in response to which the number of stipendiary clergy within the Bath Deanery will be reduced from 22 to 17 clergy over the next 3-4 years.

## **Mission**

### Christmas Services

The Christmas services were well attended.

- Nine Lessons with Carols was very successful with 97 people present. The mince pies and mulled wine arranged by Carol Tottle for after the service were much appreciated and enjoyed by many.
- The Christmas Eve 11pm service saw a lower number of attendees than previous years, but the weather was VERY wet (42 people in 2023 cf. 72 in 2022).



- Christmas morning numbers were also a bit lower than would have been hoped (68 in total cf. 91 in 2022).

Offertory collections taken at these services was shared by our 3 chosen charities; Mercy in Action - Food Pantry, Shelter, and Tear Fund (Middle East Emergency Appeal).

#### *Other missional support*

We continued to provide financial support to our mission partners in Sri Lanka, Jerrie and Isabel, both in terms of their co-leading of the newly built church and also their running of the *Haven Home* for girls in Sandy.

We also provided some financial support to *Just Love*, a charity that equips students and support alumni to pursue justice and engage in social action initiatives including volunteering in local communities, from homeless outreaches to teaching English to refugees, from youth mentoring to collections for foodbanks.

#### Soul Groups

Midweek "Soul Groups" (small groups) continue to meet (usually) on Wednesdays in homes around the city for food, fellowship, Bible study and discipleship.

#### Tea with the Word

*Liz Holden-White*

'Tea with the Word' is exactly that! We meet twice a month on a Thursday afternoon at my home. We start with tea, cake and chat and then read and discuss a Bible passage. Recently we have read about some of the inspirational women in the Bible. During Lent we have considered suitable themes - self-denial, repentance, and forgiveness. This group welcomes any member of our congregation who would like to come!

#### Wednesday Coffee Morning

*Victoria Jones*

Coffee morning happens on a Wednesday morning 10.30-12.00 at St Matt's in the café area. A small number from the Church and local community, of varying ages, generally come and there is also a group of up to 20 who meet on Wednesday's to play cribbage.

At present, there are three individuals who volunteer their time to host the coffee mornings. The future of the Coffee Morning is currently uncertain.

#### BriX Children's Work

*Jonathan Hilsden*

BriX is the name of our children's work in the church. We have been through various iterations of what this looks like in the last 2 years but have now found a format which is working well and bringing in new children and families.

#### Little BriX

This is our "Sunday school" offering for children. This runs on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month, when we have a morning service. It caters for children aged 0-11. Each session

has a different theme or story. The children listen to a short story introducing the session, build things with Lego related to the week's theme, then complete an activity or activity sheet appropriate for their age and learn some simple prayer. We have a small team of people from across both parish congregations, who volunteer each week to run these. They have been very much enjoyed by both children and parents and we have had many children outside of the church get involved also. The very youngest in the congregation also join in.

### BIG BriX

This is our Saturday morning children's club which was run from the start of the year until May. This offers children in primary school the chance to spend the morning with our team, learning about a different theme and spending time doing various crafts, activities, games, Lego builds and most importantly a lot of fun!

The last Big BriX was held in May 2023 shortly before Reverend Tim Buckley went on sabbatical. It has not continued since then due both to Tim's sabbatical and his subsequent decision to step down from his post as well as a lack of resources and/or volunteers.

## **Outreach**

### Widcombe Junior School

The school held their Harvest, Easter, and Christmas services at St Matt's in 2023, and also a Leavers' service at the end of the summer term. They had their SIAMS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) in May 2023 and were given an 'excellent' grade. This was well-deserved, being an improvement on the 'good' grade of their previous two SIAMS inspections. It reflects the way they have woven their vision 'Be the best you can be' into the fabric of school life and teaching. This vision is based on Acts 2:1-4, when the Holy Spirit equipped the believers to go out into the world.

Mary Udale-Smith has recently become a Foundation Governor and is looking forward to getting to know the school better over the coming months. The most recent SIAMS report is available on the school website. They are still looking for one further Foundation Governor – if you are interested, please talk to Mary.

### Youth Work

*Libby Piggott - Youth and Outreach worker*

#### *• Found Youth*

St Matthew's Church and Life Church Bath youth have joined together (since 2021) for gatherings every Friday evening. It is a lot of fun and a powerful space for young people to seek Jesus and build (or start!) their relationship with Him. The past year has been very encouraging as we see and hear many testimonies from the youth each week both at Found and as we disciple through 1-2-1 meetings. Found Youth group has 65 names on the register and currently averages 30-35 attendees each week...and growing!



- *A2 Nights*

On the last Friday of each month, we gather youth from all around the city to join for an evening of games/fun, refreshments, worship, testimonies, a guest speaker and ministry time. This format allows the youth to see they are part of a bigger community, to grow in the knowledge of Christ and be filled and sent out in the power of the Holy Spirit. It has been amazing to see the unity amongst the churches around Bath, through youth and youth workers.

- *A2 Winterfest/Summerfest*

The aim of these events is to bless the youth of the city by simply having fun together. These are also outreach events where youth can invite their friends thereby providing a steppingstone into other A2 events in which they can hear about Jesus. Our festivals and A2 nights combined (as of February 2023) have registered a total of 200 youth, with 60-80 being the average attendance.

- *Deeper*

This is a discipleship programme for those willing to intentionally spend time exploring deeper into their faith. A group of around 12 sixth-formers meet once or twice a month to hear different guest speakers covering a range of topics including: prophecy, the Father's heart, the secret place and so many more.

- *Youth Leaders Breakfast and Banquet*

As youth leaders (from around 17 different churches/organisations) around the city we meet once a month to gather, pray and dream together... and drink coffee!!! We have also organised a youth volunteers' banquet for all those who have helped with youth work in Bath during the year. The aim is to bless and thank those who pour so much of their time into the youth work of the city.

- *Final remarks on youth*

The youth of today are incredible 'world changers'. I pray that we may never underestimate them, in who they are, what they do, what they say, and in the level of intimacy they can have with the Lord. It's powerful and so beautiful.

- *Outreach*

There are exciting things to come - keep your eye out for notices. Whilst we wait for this...be encouraged - 'The kingdom advances through servants not experts'. Let us be an invitational people, like Philip, and let us continue to say to others 'come and see'. Come and see who Jesus is, come and see what this hope and love is all about, come and see the spirit-filled community we have here, come and see. Create opportunities to share your testimonies with others and invite them into your journey and Jesus' story.



## Financial Review

In 2023, the PCC's total unrestricted income was £196,360 and expenditure from normal activities was £157,986. Consequently, the PCC returned a surplus of £38,374 for the year. It should be noted that within the total unrestricted income the sum of £70,012 relates primarily to the sale of a plot of land, without which the PCC would have returned a deficit for the year.

The PCC can meet its legal liabilities when they are due; the PCC's aim is to maintain a reserve of Unrestricted Funds in the order of £30,000 which is equivalent to approximately three month's normal operating costs at current levels. At the end of 2023, the PCC's balance of unrestricted funds held was £85,348.

In 2023, the PCC had three principal sources of income: Voluntary Giving; Gift Aid; and Lettings. The PCC received £92,406 in voluntary donations, of which £81,346 was Planned Giving. The PCC received an additional £21,047 in tax recovered in the form of Gift Aid. The PCC received £8,771 in rent from lettings of St Matthew's Church and Church Hall, the principal users being: Bath Operatic and Drama Society, Beats Dance, and the Natural Theatre Company.

The expenditure from unrestricted funds fall into five categories: Administration and Office Costs; St Thomas à Becket's Operating Costs; St Matthew's Operating Costs; Charitable Donations (Mission); and Parish Share.

In 2023 the PCC paid £65,400 to the Diocese of Bath & Wells, representing 85% of the Parish Share requested (£77,139). The Parish Share largely provides for the stipends and the cost of housing for clergy. Despite the PCC receiving additional income in 2023 following the sale of a plot of land, the expected cost of essential roof repairs required at St Thomas à Becket, when considered alongside the level of current income receipts and very limited reserves, regrettably prevented the PCC from matching the full sum requested.

Approved by the PCC on 28 April 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



**Tony Coverdale** (Vice Chair of Widcombe PCC)

## Independent Examiners Report

### **Independent Examiners Report to the trustees/members of Widcombe PCC - Year Ended 31 December 2023**

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I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2023 as set out on pages 18 to 20.

#### **Respective responsibilities of PCC and examiner**

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

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

#### **Basis of independent examiner's statement**

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

#### **Independent examiner's statement**

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the PCC have not met the requirements to ensure that:

- proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
- accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act; or

2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Peter Barton FCCA  
ART Accountants Ltd  
11 Manvers Street  
Bath  
BA1 1JQ

Date 11 April 2024

## Statement of Financial Activities

### **WIDCOMBE PCC - STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES- Year Ended 31 Dec' 2023**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Funds 2022 £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
<b>Voluntary receipts:</b>				
Planned giving	81,346	3,282	84,628	88,555
Other giving & donations	11,060	12,963	24,023	18,954
Grants	-	-	-	1,500
Gift aid tax recovered	21,047	-	21,047	24,300
Legacies	-	-	-	20,000
<b>Activities for generating funds:</b>				
Fundraising	-	1,766	1,766	-
Lettings	8,771	-	8,771	7,604
<b>Parochial fees</b>	1,676	-	1,676	3,000
<b>Investment income</b>	2,448	-	2,448	365
<b>Other income</b>	70,012	-	70,012	67
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<u>196,360</u>	<u>18,011</u>	<u>214,371</u>	<u>164,345</u>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
<b>Church activities:</b>				
<i>St Thomas Church expenses:</i>				
Heat & light	1,011	-	1,011	622
Insurance	1,202	-	1,202	1,036
Church repairs & maintenance	3,371	8,277	11,648	-
Legal fees	2,485	-	2,485	-
<i>St Matthew's Church expenses:</i>				
Heat, light & water	15,634	-	15,634	4,551
Insurance	2,803	-	2,803	2,417
Church repairs & maintenance	16,742	-	16,742	10,867
Parish Share for year	65,400	-	65,400	65,400
Parish administration	17,002	-	17,002	20,006
Church services	5,241	-	5,241	13,149
Clergy expenses	143	-	143	887
Mission & charitable giving	25,110	10,735	35,845	25,220
Parish sundries	800	2,000	2,800	2,162
Parochial fees	857	-	857	1,252
Bank fees	185	40	225	-
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<u>157,986</u>	<u>21,052</u>	<u>179,039</u>	<u>147,569</u>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	38,374	(3,041)	35,332	16,776
Transfers	(1,500)	1,500	-	-
Balances brought forward	48,474	28,641	77,115	60,339
<b>BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<u>85,348</u>	<u>27,100</u>	<u>112,448</u>	<u>77,115</u>



## Balance Sheet

### WIDCOMBE PCC - BALANCE SHEET – Year Ended 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Funds 2022 £
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Debtors	1,622	-	1,622	1,939
Bank Current Account	89,466	10,956	100,422	59,735
Deposit Funds	454	20,823	21,278	20,620
	<u>91,543</u>	<u>31,779</u>	<u>123,321</u>	<u>82,294</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>				
Creditors	6,195	4,679	10,874	5,179
	<u>6,195</u>	<u>4,679</u>	<u>10,874</u>	<u>5,179</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>85,348</u>	<u>27,100</u>	<u>112,448</u>	<u>77,115</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>				
Unrestricted funds			85,348	48,474
Restricted funds		Note 2	27,100	28,641
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>			<u>112,448</u>	<u>77,115</u>

Approved by the PCC and signed on their behalf:



**Tony Coverdale** (Vice Chair of Widcombe PCC)

Date 11 Apr 2024

## Notes to the Accounts

### WIDCOMBE PCC - NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year Ended 31 December 2023

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#### 1 LAND AT ST MARK'S

Following a protracted and complex legal process the PCC was able to sell St Mark's Land to an interested party in 2023, thereby releasing £67,568 (net of fees). This transaction enabled the PCC to be released from the significant challenges and risks presented by continued ownership of the plot. As required by the Charity Commission, the PCC engaged independent qualified expertise to ensure that fair value was received for the land.

#### 2 RESTRICTED FUNDS

The movements in restricted funds during the year were:

	Balance brought forward	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance carried forward
St Thomas' Restoration Fund	20,161	8,404	(8,277)	-	20,288
Organ Fund	2,350	-	-	-	2,350
St Matthew's Regeneration Fund	1,700	-	-	-	1,700
Missionary Fund	4,430	9,607	(12,775)	1,500	2,762
	<u>28,641</u>	<u>18,011</u>	<u>(21,052)</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>27,100</u>

- The St Thomas' Restoration Fund is restricted to expenditure on the fabric of St Thomas' Church building.
- The Organ Fund is restricted to expenditure on any organ repairs that may be required.
- The St Matthew's Regeneration Fund is restricted to expenditure for the regeneration of the church roof and to the future re-ordering of the church building.
- The Missionary Fund covers any gifts made to the church towards specific individuals and causes.