

**Trustees' Report
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

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

Registered Charity No:1182372

Contents

PCC Membership	3
Purpose and Responsibilities	4
Background	4
Incumbent	5
Vice-Chair's Report	5
Reader's Report	6
Church Wardens and Chapel Wardens	6
St Thomas à Becket - Churchwarden	6
St Thomas a Becket – Fabric Report	6
St Matthews - Chapel Wardens Report	7
St Matthews - Fabric Report	8
Electoral Roll	9
PCC Secretariat	9
Safeguarding Report 2024	9
Mission	10
Widcombe Junior School	10
St Matt's Children's Groups	10
St Matt's Men's Ministry	10
St Matt's Women's ministry – the Red Tent	10
Youth (A2 and Found)	11
Financial Review	12
Independent Examiners Report	13
Statement of Financial Activities	14
Balance Sheet	15
Notes to the Accounts	16

PCC Membership

The following served during the period 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

Incumbent / PCC Chair	Vacant	
PCC Vice-Chair	Andrew Udale-Smith Tony Coverdale Andrew Udale-Smith	<i>From 1 Jan 24 to 6 Feb 2024</i> <i>From 12 Feb 24 to 11 Nov 2024</i> <i>From 11 Nov 24</i>
Churchwardens	Fiona Coverdale Tony Coverdale	
Chapelwardens	Andrew Udale-Smith Jonathan Hilsden Miles Andrews Sarena Sherratt	<i>Until 6 Feb 2024</i> <i>Until APCM</i> <i>From APCM</i> <i>From APCM</i>
Treasurer	Mark Nish Tony Coverdale	<i>Until APCM</i> <i>From APCM – Ex Officio</i>

Elected Members

Mary Udale-Smith	<i>Reader – From APCM</i>
Wayne McMaster	<i>Until APCM</i>
Joel Lloyd-Carter	
Jamie Duncan	
Carol Tottle	<i>Deanery Synod Rep</i>
David Matthews	<i>From APCM</i>
Harry Collin	<i>From APCM</i>
Jill Oldham	<i>From APCM</i>

Co-Opted Members

Reverend Judith Harries	<i>PTO</i>
Mary Udale-Smith	<i>Reader – Until APCM</i>
David Matthews	<i>Until APCM</i>

Secretariat

Secretary	Samatha Forrester Jane Blackburn	<i>Until Feb 2024</i> <i>From 11 Nov 24</i>
Electoral Role Administrator	Angie Frith	<i>From APCM</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.

The parish was in vacancy throughout 2024; hence the PCC took on responsibility 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 à 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.

Incumbent

The parish was in vacancy throughout 2024.

Vice-Chair's Report

Vice-Chair: Anthony Coverdale and Andrew Udale-Smith

2024 was a turbulent year for Widcombe Parish and for the PCC. The incumbent, the Revd Tim Buckley, had resigned in November 2023, leaving the Parish in vacancy. At the time, a Deanery plan was already in development to reduce the number of clergy serving the city, requiring some reorganisation of the Benefice structure and, possibly, the amalgamation of Widcombe with a neighbouring parish. In the wake of Revd. Buckley's leaving there were many changes in parish leadership and size of congregation, the latter resulting in a dramatic fall in income.

The parish church of St Thomas a Becket continued its cycle of services based on the Common Worship prayer book, with help from the Bath Deanery and retired clergy, particularly the Revd Judith Harries, and the two university chaplains, the Revd Nigel Rawlinson and Revd Katy Garner.

The St Matthew's Chapel Wardens continued with weekly contemporary services at St Matt's. However, without the Revd Buckley, the members of his staff team were unsure about whether and how to carry on. In the run-up to the APCM in April 2024, many of them decided to leave St Matt's.

There were also changes in the PCC during the first few months of the year. The parish administrator resigned in February, which meant their duties passed to the Church and Chapel wardens. The Parish Reader was seriously ill and her husband, a St Matthew's Chapel Warden and Vice-Chair of the PCC, resigned to support her. One of the St Thomas Churchwardens was elected as Vice-Chair of the PCC. The remaining St Matthew's Chapel Warden and the Treasurer said they would not be standing again at the APCM.

This was the uncertain situation as the APCM approached. However, at the APCM two younger members of the St Matts congregation stood as St Matthew's Chapel Wardens and were duly elected, and four new PCC members were elected. However, no one came forward to be Treasurer; hence one of the St Thomas Churchwardens became the ex-officio Treasurer.

In discussion with the Archdeacon, three options were considered for the Parish – for St Thomas a Becket to form a Benefice with the neighbouring Parish of St Lukes, for St Matt's to leave the PCC and operate as an independent mission church based in the Parish, or for the PCC to continue to operate as a single organisation supporting the two existing churches. After the APCM, once it was clear that the St Matt's congregation wanted to continue as part of Widcombe Parish, the Archdeacon explored options to identify a member of clergy who might lead the Parish in the direction of Option 3. However, the Archdeacon resigned in June 2024 and the situation remained on hold until a new Archdeacon was in post in September.

Following the APCM, the now predominantly younger St Matt's congregation reorganised themselves and moved to a new pattern of Sunday morning services from September 2024. Two children's groups were started (Matt's Minis and Sunday Science Club) for ages 1 to 11 on two Sunday mornings each month, attracting several new families.

However, St Matt's currently has no families with teenagers attending. In recent years, the PCC has funded a contracted Outreach worker, to work with teenagers and students. This led to the development of Friday youth evenings at St Matt's, happening in conjunction with several other churches most weeks and a city-wide youth event known as A2 once a month. This meant our Outreach worker no longer had any capacity for student ministry. However, the changing demographic at St Matt's, reorganisation within A2 and developments in other churches involved in Friday youth meant that the opportunities for our Outreach worker were closed down and they ceased work in November 2024. In parallel, A2 was established as a separate charitable organisation and withdrew its funds from the PCC accounts in July 2024. The two youth groups continue to use the St Matt's church building for their youth meetings.

2024 was also the year that a major building repair project was undertaken to repair the roof of St Thomas a Becket church with a budget of £90,000. Lead was stolen from the vestry in 2023, the chancel required re-felting and replacement of the slate, and the asphalt roof of the tower was holed. A fundraising campaign was undertaken approaching not only members of the Church community, but also members of the local and wider community. Over £90,000 was raised by a combination of donations, Gift Aid, insurance settlement for the theft of the lead and a grant from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme to pay the VAT. The cost of

the roof repairs was covered without having to draw down PCC reserves. The vestry and chancel roof works were completed in early December.

The best news of 2024 came right at the end of the year, when we learnt that the Revd Laura Doe will become our new minister from around April 2025. Laura's role, during the three years of her appointment, will be to help discern the best shape of ministry for our two churches going forward and, God willing, to give time for the Parish to grow and be established on a firm footing for the future.

Reader's Report

Dr Mary Udale-Smith - Reader

After having been seriously ill in the second half of 2023, I made a staged return to ministry in mid-April 2024. My health remains slightly fragile, but I was almost back to full strength by the end of the year.

In the months May – December, I led 9 services and preached 7 times across St Thomas' and St Matt's. I am also part of the St Matt's services planning team and head up the children's Sunday groups, see below for more information. I am a Foundation Governor at Widcombe Junior School which involves 5 governor's meetings a year, regular school visits and quite a lot of training! I was delighted to be able to restart my MA in Theology in September.

Church Wardens and Chapel Wardens

St Thomas à Becket - Churchwarden

Fiona Coverdale – Churchwarden

2024 saw us in vacancy for the whole year, but despite this we 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. This could not have happened without continued support from clergy within the Deanery and from our loyal band of volunteer duty wardens, sides-people, preachers, readers, and intercessors.

With respect to our wider Parish duties, we were very pleased to hold four weddings, one baptism, two funerals and two interments of ashes during 2024.

The German Lutheran congregation continued to meet at St Thomas on a regular basis – we are pleased to be able to share our building with them.

Our now well established, twice monthly, afternoon 'Tea with the Word' get-togethers were well attended and much appreciated. Volunteers again opened the Church to visitors on Sunday afternoons from June to September – with an increased footfall from those also visiting the NT Prior Park Gardens.

The year was dominated by our 'Raise the Roof' campaign. The theft of lead from the vestry roof in 2023 coupled with roof issues highlighted in the 2023 Quinquennial Report resulted in £90,000 needing to be raised to repair the Vestry, Chancel and Tower roofs. A fund-raising team got behind the wardens and together we worked to address this seemingly huge mountain to climb. A well-publicised 'Teas in the Churchyard' weekend followed by a leafleting campaign within the parish galvanised both Church and local community members. An amazing £53,000 was raised which, together with the insurance payout for the lead theft, a grant to cover VAT from the Listed Places of Worship scheme and Gift Aid resulted in us reaching our target amount. Huge thanks go to all who helped in any way. Very generous donations came not just from Church members but also from people within Widcombe who value the Church highly although they are not congregation members.

St Thomas a Becket – Fabric Report

Anthony Coverdale – Churchwarden

In late 2022, the lower vestry at St Thomas a Becket church developed a leak caused by deterioration of the bituminous felt covering and slipped slates on the adjacent chancel. A temporary repair was affected but while plans were being made to replace the bituminous roof the problem was compounded by the theft of lead from the adjoining upper vestry roof (March 2023). 2023 was also a year of quinquennial review which

identified that the asphalt roof of the tower had also failed and needed repair. In September 2023, the PCC resolved that:

Repair of the vestry, chancel and tower roofs of St Thomas a Becket Church should be pursued and a faculty raised to obtain approval for the work. The use of an alternative to lead for the vestry roof should be pursued and a faculty raised to obtain approval with advice from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches for the work (DAC).

The repairs dominated work relating to the fabric of St Thomas a Becket Church in 2024.

St Thomas a Becket Church is grade II* listed. A faculty was submitted in 2023 to use a single ply membrane (EBPM) as an alternative to lead for the vestry roof but was rejected. A revised design scheme was prepared by the Church architect, using Terne Coated Stainless Steel (TCSS) as an alternative to lead. Following consultation with the DAC and local council planners, it was agreed that the roofs of the upper and lower vestries should be replaced with the same material - TCSS (both roofs had originally been lead, but the lower roof was replaced with a bituminous covering following theft of the lead in the 1970s). It was also agreed that the chancel and tower roofs should be replaced, like for like.

The design scheme was approved by the Diocese and Local Council in June. Invitations to tender were sent to several roofing companies in response to which three compliant bids were received and the contract awarded to Emery Bros. of Bath on grounds of cost.

The estimated cost of the work was £90K, including VAT, covering the architect's fees and contractor's costs. A major fundraising campaign was embarked upon, which in combination with the insurance claim for the theft of the lead, Gift Aid on eligible donations and a grant from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme raised the required funds without having to call upon the PCC's reserves. Over £50K was raised by donations from congregation members and non-church congregation who value the building as an important asset in the Widcombe landscape.

Work commenced on the vestry and chancel roofs in Oct 2024 and completed in December. Work on the tower remains outstanding, awaiting the availability of a skilled asphalter. Work is hoped to take place in Q1 2025.

St Matthews - Chapel Wardens Report

Sarena Sherratt - Chapel Warden

St Matt's was in vacancy for the whole of 2024; the previous vicar, Revd Tim Buckley, left in November 2023. During the first few months of the year a lot of people chose to leave the church, including most of the previous leadership team which had supported Tim. We approached the 2024 APCM concerned for the future of our church, but with a core fellowship which believed that God was not finished with St Matts and wanted it to continue. Consequently, Miles and I felt called to be chapel wardens for St Matts and we were then elected at the APCM, along with new members for the PCC as well.

Since the APCM, a new team consisting of the St Matts members of the PCC have met regularly to plan our contemporary services. We continued with the twice monthly morning and twice monthly evening service pattern until August. We arranged a variety of different meetings for the Sundays during August including a walk, a worship evening and an Iona style service.

The team made the decision to move all Sunday services to 10:30 am from September to facilitate providing children's work regularly and make it easier for visitors to attend by having a consistent service time. This was well received by the families and congregation in general, with our two new children's groups - Matt's Mini's and Sunday Science Club - being run twice monthly. Once a month we had an alternative style service called Papers and Pastries, which consisted of a cafe and a short 'Thought for the week' to prompt discussion. This was designed to be a gateway service to invite non-Christians into church. By the end of the year, our service congregations were averaging 23 adults and 5 children.

Our church soul groups (mid-week meetings) have continued to be central to the church community throughout 2024. There was some re-organisation of these after the APCM due to several of the soul group leaders and hosts having left the church. We re-formed into three soul groups meeting in various homes around Bath and with new leaders for two of the groups.

St Matt's held one wedding during 2024. St Matt's was booked regularly by Bath Operatic and Dramatic Society, and by the youth groups Found and A2. We also had a new regular booking for Pilates classes and had several one-off bookings for birthday parties and other events.

Although we are now a smaller church family, we are a group of committed believers who have grown closer together through the challenges this year. Everyone has been more involved in soul groups and services and the generosity of people's time and skills is what has enabled us to continue with everything we do. We are looking forward to welcoming Revd Laura Doe in April 2025 and the changes that will bring.

St Matthews - Fabric Report

Miles Andrews - Chapel Warden

Following the APCM, when Sarena and I started as Chapelwardens at St Matthew's, the building had been neglected for some time. The quinquennial review carried out in 2023 had identified several areas of deficiency, the most urgent of which are highlighted in this report. Whilst we have done our best to address many of these areas, lack of available funding and resources have meant that some of these issues have not yet been resolved. Fortunately, we have a team of people in the congregation who have willingly stepped up to help keep our building running smoothly and we are so thankful for all that they do.

Roof Slates - South Ridge

There are several slipped slates on the northern pitch of the south ridge which is allowing water ingress into the building. In the short term, the slates need to be lifted, the roofing membrane replaced, and the slates re-laid, replacing the broken tiles. In the long term and when sufficient funds are available, the entire south ridge will need to be reroofed.

Roof Slates - Middle Ridge

There is no evidence of slipped slates on either pitch of the middle ridge therefore no action is required in the short term. In the long term and when sufficient funds are available, the entire middle ridge will need to be reroofed.

Roof Slates - North Ridge

There is no evidence of slipped slates on either pitch of the north ridge. The entire north ridge was previously reroofed, and no action is anticipated in the short or long term.

Gutters

There is evidence that most gutters around the building are blocked allowing rainwater to overspill. This is most likely being caused by the leaf guard being dislodged, allowing vegetation to fill the gutters. The gutters will need to be cleaned, and the leaf guard replaced. Some gutters are showing signs of structural deterioration, and this will require repair also.

Boilers and Energy

The existing boilers are still working and continue to be serviced on an annual basis. Their housings are in a significant state of disrepair and will need to be replaced soon if the boilers are to remain as the main source of heating for the building. This work will require a faculty. A potential alternative, highlighted by Bruce Clark (church architect, Nash Partnership) is to switch to alternative energy sources such as solar. This is in line with the General Synod February 2020 vote to move towards carbon zero.

Tower

The tower was last inspected at height circa. 1976. There is no proper access internally and the inside is poorly lit, so it is difficult to assess its condition. However, given the length of time that has elapsed since the last inspection, this should be carried out as a matter of urgency.

West Wall

There has been much discussion regarding the crack in the west wall and whether this needs an urgent repair. The crack has occurred almost central to the large window and through the entire thickness of the wall. The occurrence of the crack is thought to be due to movement of an existing steel beam in the crypt. A crack gauge was at some point installed to monitor the crack and is currently showing a dilation of 2mm. It is my view that a full repair of the crack is not possible especially where it has travelled through the window

tracery. It may be possible to install crack stitching above and below the window, but this would require a faculty.

Fire

We continue to strive to make our church building safe in the case of fire. Early in 2024, a fireproof cabinet was installed in the building containing a high vis jacket, the most recent electrical survey (from September 2023), a map of the church which has been recently updated for the fire exits, extinguishers, fuse boxes, water valve, gas valve, etc (copies pinned to the noticeboard) and the fire safety instructions. Further to this, we have reordered and rearranged various spaces in the building that were at risk, including removing flammable stored items from alcoves in fire exits and from the electrical cupboard. The locks on all designated fire escapes will need to be reviewed to ensure they can be opened without difficulty in case of fire. It is believed that there is no fire compartmentalisation between the parish hall and the main church, and this should be verified and/or rectified as a matter of urgency, although it is noted this will require a faculty.

Electoral Roll

The Benefice listed 78 on the Roll at the end of 2024, a fall of 30 from the figures at the end of 2023. This reflected a major review of the Roll undertaken as part of preparations for the APCM to ensure that the Roll correctly reflected the state of the parish.

PCC Secretariat

The 2024 APCM was held at St Matthew's Church on 28 April 2024. Since the APCM, the full PCC have met 5 times, with an average level of attendance of 73%.

In 2024, there were:

2 Baptisms	St Thomas à Becket
4 Weddings	St Thomas à Becket
1 Wedding	St Matthew's
2 Funerals	St Thomas à Becket
2 Interment of Ashes	St Thomas à Becket

Safeguarding Report 2024

Jill Oldham, Parish Safeguarding Officer

There was one safeguarding concern raised during the year regarding a member of Youth Church. No one else was implicated. The matter was addressed in line with Diocesan safeguarding procedures, and the young person in question received the necessary support.

Throughout the year, the organisation Thirtyone:eight handled DBS applications efficiently and gave advice when sought. Eight people received a clear DBS check for their role within our two churches: two Chapelwardens, five Children's Activity Leaders and the Parish Safeguarding Officer (DBS renewal). In addition, four young people received a clear DBS check via Widcombe Benefice for their role with Youth Alpha.

Our Benefice continued to use the Diocesan 'Parish Dashboard' self-audit tool during the year, retaining its (top) Level 3 status. Policies were reviewed as required and updated. As additional Dashboard requirements were added throughout the year, these were raised at PCC meetings, addressed and compliance confirmed.

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, with several people undertaking three-yearly refresher training.

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

Mission

Widcombe Junior School

Dr Mary Udale-Smith – Foundation Governor

The school held their Harvest, Easter, and Christmas services at St Matt's in 2024, and a Leavers' service at the end of the summer term. The school's vision is 'Be the best you can be' and they weave this into the fabric of school life and teaching. It is based on Acts 2:1-4, when the Holy Spirit equipped the believers to go out into the world.

I have very much enjoyed visiting the school this year and am always impressed by the dedication of the staff and the behaviour and engagement of the children. Highlights were seeing a rehearsal of the year 6 production of Matilda and the Harvest Festival at St Matt's.

The PCC were very pleased to be able to give £600 to pay for two students to attend the year 6 residential trip. The school is still looking for one further Foundation Governor.

St Matt's Children's Groups

Dr Mary Udale-Smith

Sadly, we were not able to continue with our occasional Saturday morning Lego club, Big BriX, in 2024 as Revd Buckley had left and I was ill, leaving the team very depleted. However, we did continue with the Sunday morning Little BriX group for the first half of the year.

Children do get older each year though and it was becoming apparent that the older ones needed something different to engage them appropriately. Over the summer, a small group of us discussed starting a Sunday Science Club for school years 1-6. This started in September and is proving great fun for adults and children alike. Meanwhile, Little BriX was transformed into Matt's Minis and is aimed at pre-school children and Reception. These two groups run on the first and third Sundays of the month. 12 children from 7 families came to one or more sessions between September – December. Weekly numbers are usually between 3-6 at Matt's Minis and 1-5 at Sunday Science Club.

I am hugely grateful to Issy Andrews and Stef Federle for their help planning and leading Sunday Science club, along with a growing band of helpers. It must be one of the most highly qualified Sunday School teams in the country. I am also extremely grateful to an enthusiastic and creative team of parents and volunteer leaders who took on Matt's Minis at the end of the year – thank you all, you know who you are!

St Matt's Men's Ministry

Andrew Udale-Smith

The Widcombe Warriors are a group of men (mainly from St Matt's) who, since 2019, have been learning to "walk with God" whilst navigating life's ups and downs together.

Having met weekly in the spring of 2024 for teaching and discussion, we decided to focus on doing something practical over the summer. This turned out to be serving the food and drink to the youngsters at the citywide Youth Alpha that took place at St Matt's in May and June. It was a real privilege to see around 50 young people come along every Wednesday evening (and they were very polite to the old-timers who were serving them!).

In September 2024, as we had done the last few years, we hosted a Wild at Heart retreat for a group of men from Bath, Bristol and beyond at The Poplars, a Christian conference centre near the Malvern Hills. This year 49 men made it to The Poplars for what was a rich time of teaching (based on the book Wild at Heart), fellowship and fun! This year's retreat will take place from the evening of Friday 26 September until the evening of Sunday 28 September 2025.

St Matt's Women's ministry – the Red Tent

Jane Blackburn

The Red Tent is a new initiative as part of the women's ministry at St Matt's. It is based on the Old Testament principal of women withdrawing from the community once a month and finding sanctuary with one another, traditionally identified as the Red Tent. It was seen as a time of rest from serving the men, instead focusing on care and support among each other. From teenagers to mothers to grandmothers, the women would share

in worship, storytelling and growing in love for one another. The hope is to emulate this way of community by gathering the women of St Matt's once a month to share in vulnerability and identify how Jesus is present in every aspect of our lives.

There have been two gatherings so far with around 6-8 women attending. These have taken part in the homes of church family members where a meal has been shared and questions on life discussed around the table. Each gathering has a theme (e.g light and darkness) with prompt questions available to probe vulnerability and an adjacent activity such as a craft or game based on the theme. Listeners are encouraged to offer insights or places they see God working in each other's stories.

Already, it has been a joy and great blessing to see the depths of the hearts of the women at St Matt's and grow in fellowship and community with one another. There is great anticipation to see where the group goes, with different members facilitating sessions and bringing their own experiences, as well as having an awareness of where God might be moving any given season.

Youth (A2 and Found)

2024 has been a significant year for the young individuals of Bath. We have witnessed the impactful movement of God's spirit at Found Youth, which convenes on Friday evenings, as well as within the monthly city-wide Youth initiative known as A2. The attendance at both initiatives, which meet at St Matt's, has increased, with young people inviting their friends to learn about the good news of Jesus. There is an evident hunger for God among the new generation, which is both compelling and crucial to the work God is doing within His Church.

In March, churches collectively engaged in prayer to support a planned school's mission. Our Youth and Outreach Worker, Libby Piggott, was heavily involved. This outreach initiative, executed in April, was supported by the band LZ7. Hundreds of young individuals were introduced to the gospel through a week of school assemblies across the city, culminating in a youth event at the Forum on the Friday night of that week. Subsequently, we ran Youth Alpha sessions at St Matt's during May and June for those whose hearts were moved by what they had heard.

Sadly, towards the end of 2024, we bid farewell to Libby. She has had a profound impact on the young people of both our parish and Bath in general during her tenure and played a key role in the development of both Found and A2. Since her departure, we have been working diligently to understand how to continue supporting the youth movement across the city, while also recognizing the demographic shift within our parish, where we have an increasing number of young families joining the congregation.

Financial Review

The major financial drivers in 2024 were the reduction in congregation size and corresponding reduction in income, and the cost of repair of the St Thomas a Becket Church roof and associated fundraising campaign.

Planned giving fell from £84,628 in 2023 to £68,606 in 2024 and may fall further in 2025 as people left the church community in the first quarter of 2024. Following the theft of lead from the St Thomas a Becket vestry roof in 2023 and repairs arising from the quinquennial inspection, the PCC faced the challenge of a £90,000 repair project.

The St Thomas roof fundraising campaign raised £53,000. Gift aid on those donations added an additional £8,686. An insurance settlement was agreed with Ecclesiastical Insurance for £18,490 and a grant was obtained from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme for £11,750 resulting in a total of £94,488. The repair is therefore being funded without drawing on the PCC reserves. Work on the vestry and chancel completed in December for which £56,444 has been paid. Work is ongoing on the tower which is planned to complete in the first quarter of 2025.

In November 2024 a major restricted donation of £45,000 was made to the PCC. This had been promised at the start of the fundraising campaign as insurance against being unable to raise funds by other means. Having raised sufficient funds for the roof the promised donation was made but with restrictions on its use. The minimum sum held in the restricted St Thomas Restoration fund was to be raised to £25,000 as insurance against future urgent work that may arise. Internal fittings, such as carpets, damaged by the leaking roof were to be replaced and a Parish Secretary should be funded to ease the load on the Churchwardens.

The major routine spend is for the Benefice share. The Diocese of Bath and Wells requested a contribution of £75,210, against which the PCC agreed to contribute £42,500.

Two other major commitments were the A2 youth mission work and the contracting of a Youth Mission worker. The nature of these two initiatives had changed by early 2024 from what was originally conceived. The A2 initiative involved several churches across Bath with leadership being centred on the Bath City Church. The A2 group set up as an independent Charitable Organisation in 2024 and withdrew their funds from the PCC account where they had been hosted during the start-up phase of the project. The Youth Mission work had also changed in nature and was no longer targeting young people in the St Matts congregation. Funding for the Youth Mission worker therefore stopped in November 2024.

Donations had also been amassed for a Sri Lankan mission project but links with the project were lost with the departure of the Revd Tim Buckley. The residual funds were therefore transferred to the charity and the restricted fund closed.

£600 was also donated to Widcombe Juniors School to support a school camp project and £680 was donated to two selected charities, Grow for Life and Burundi Mission and Development, from funds raised at the parish's Christmas Services.

The expenditure from unrestricted funds falls into three categories: PCC expenses, including Benefice Share and charitable donations, St Thomas à Becket's expenses; and St Matthew's expenses.

Unrestricted donations come predominantly from planned giving, with a small amount received from lettings of St Matthews Church.

The PCC met its legal liabilities in 2024 and continues to aim is to maintain a reserve of Unrestricted Funds in the order of £30,000, equivalent to approximately three month's routine operating costs.

Over the year, the PCC's surplus rose from £112,448 on 31 Dec 2023 to £201,388 on 31 Dec 2024, noting that a large proportion of the surplus is in Restricted Funds (£99,055).

Unrestricted funds rose by £16,985 (from 85,348 in 2023 to £102,333 in 2024). A key driver for this was the reduction in Parish Share (£42,500 down from £65,400).

Independent Examiners Report

Independent Examiners Report to the trustees/members of Widcombe PCC - Year Ended 31 December 2024

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2024 as set out on pages 14 to 16.

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 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

During 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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



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

Date 26 March 2025

Statement of Financial Activities

WIDCOMBE PCC - STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES- Year Ended 31 Dec' 2024


	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 2023 £ £	
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Voluntary receipts:				
Planned giving	67,198	1,408	68,606	84,628
Other giving & donations	12,315	65,088	77,403	24,023
Grants	-	11,753	11,753	-
Gift aid tax recovered	20,993	8,750	29,743	21,047
Activities for generating funds:				
Fundraising	-	52,873	52,873	1,766
Lettings	5,108	-	5,108	8,771
Parochial fees	2,921	-	2,921	1,676
Investment income	3,334	-	3,334	2,448
Other income	82	18,490	18,572	70,012
Total incoming resources	111,951	158,362	270,313	214,371
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Church activities:				
St Parish expenses:				
Parish Share for year	42,500	-	42,500	65,400
Parish administration	5,160	-	5,160	17,002
Church services	3,462	243	3,705	5,241
Clergy expenses	29	-	29	143
Mission & charitable giving	19,778	24,001	43,779	35,845
Parish sundries	1,424	-	1,424	2,800
Parochial fees	1,266	-	1,266	857
Bank fees	77	298	375	225
St Thomas Church expenses:				
Heat & light	1,484	-	1,484	1,011
Insurance	1,372	-	1,372	1,202
Church repairs & maintenance	163	61,505	61,668	11,648
Legal fees	-	-	-	2,485
Fundraising	-	360	360	2,485
St Matthew's Church expenses:				
Heat, light & water	11,685	-	11,685	15,634
Insurance	2,962	-	2,962	2,803
Church repairs & maintenance	3,604	-	3,604	16,742
Total resources expended	94,966	86,407	181,373	179,039
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	16,985	71,955	88,940	35,332
Balances brought forward	85,348	27,100	112,448	77,115
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD	102,333	99,055	201,388	112,448

Balance Sheet

WIDCOMBE PCC - BALANCE SHEET – Year Ended 31 December 2024

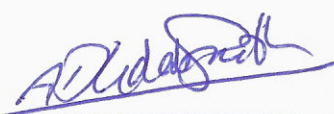
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds	
			2024 £	2023 £
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	390	286	676	1,622
Bank Current Account	103,170	76,840	180,010	100,422
Deposit Funds	471	21,929	22,400	21,278
	<u>104,031</u>	<u>99,055</u>	<u>203,086</u>	<u>123,321</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Creditors	1,698	-	1,698	10,874
	<u>1,698</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,698</u>	<u>10,874</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS				
	<u>102,333</u>	<u>99,055</u>	<u>201,388</u>	<u>112,448</u>
FUNDS				
Unrestricted funds			102,333	85,348
Restricted funds		Note 1	99,055	27,100
TOTAL FUNDS				
			<u>201,388</u>	<u>112,448</u>

Approved by the PCC and signed on their behalf:



Anthony Coverdale (Treasurer of Widcombe PCC)

Date... 25 March 2025



Andrew Udale-Smith (Vice Chair of Widcombe PCC)

Date... 25 March 2025

Notes to the Accounts

WIDCOMBE PCC - NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - Year Ended 31 December 2024

1 RESTRICTED FUNDS

The movements in restricted funds during the year were:

	Balance brought forward	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance carried forward
St Thomas' Restoration Fund	20,288	92,046	(62,120)		50,214
Organ Fund	2,350		(243)		2,107
St Matthew's Regeneration Fund	1,700				1,700
Missionary Fund	2,762	21,316	(24,044)		34
Churchwarden's Contingency Fund	-	45,000			45,000
	<u>27,100</u>	<u>158,362</u>	<u>(86,407)</u>	<u></u>	<u>99,055</u>

- The St Thomas' Restoration Fund is restricted to expenditure on the fabric of St Thomas a Becket Church building or curtilage.
- The Organ Fund is restricted to expenditure on any organ repairs that may be required at St Thomas a Becket Church or St Matthews Church.
- 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.
- The Churchwarden's Contingency Fund is restricted to expenditure on the fabric of St Thomas a Becket Church building or curtilage, or costs to support employment of a Parish Administrator.