

ST MARY'S CHURCH, KINGTON

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Registered charity number 1185453



TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

for
2023

St Mary's Church is situated in Kington, in the Kington and Weobley Deanery in the Diocese of Hereford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Church Office, The Vicarage, Church Road, Kington, HR5 3AG.

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2011) and is now registered with the Charity Commission (Registered charity number 1185453).

As Charity Trustees, all PCC members are mindful of the Charity Commission's six core principles for charity trustees, which are as follows:

1. ***Ensure your charity is conducting its purposes for the public benefit.***
2. ***Comply with your charity's governing document i.e. PCC Measure and Church Rep Rules – and the wider law.***
3. ***Act in your charity's best interests., by making sure that you act for the church and not for any conflicting interest, e.g., a related school or other organisation. Ensure that the decisions are yours, not those influenced by others.***
4. ***Manage your charity's resources responsibly.***
5. ***Act with reasonable care and skill.***
6. ***Ensure your charity is accountable.***

PCC members who have served at any time since the Annual Church Meeting 2023 until the Annual Church meetings in April 2024 are:

Licensed Clergy:	Vacancy since 28/02/2023 The services have been covered by a team of deanery and cathedral clergy coordinated by the Rual Dean Mike Kneen who attended the Annual General Meeting 2023
Licensed Reader	Mr Rob MacCurrach
Churchwardens:	Miss Ann Edwards Mr Rodney Bowdler (Vice Chair)
Deanery Synod Representatives:	Mrs Eileen Thomas (sacristan) Mrs Penny Halcrow Stephen Lacey
PCC Secretary	Mrs Christine Robinson

Elected members:	
2021	Mr John Halcrow, Mr Philip Sell,
2022	Debbie Horne,(resigned November 2023,) Stephen Lacey
2023	Mrs Margaret Pengelly, Deborah Sell, Ms Julia Read coopted from November 2023 Nick Cooke, Margaret Cooke, Malcom Price re-elected

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Mary's, the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar when in post), churchwardens, the reader licensed to the Benefice, parochial representatives elected to the Deanery Synod, and members elected by those on the electoral roll of the church. All members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. There were six PCC meetings during the year five of which were chaired by the lay chair Rodney Bowdler during the vacancy for vicar of the Parish.

AIMS AND PURPOSES

St Mary's (Kington) PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent (when in post) and the Rural Dean in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of the Church and of the Parish House.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at the church and to become part of the parish community at St Mary's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish.

Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament. We try to enable everybody to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

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

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of St Mary and the Parish House and build up the church community. We are indebted to the Rural Dean for supporting the parish and the PCC to continue to maintain the life and worship of the church.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. This includes occasional Services and regular Messy Church.

There is a weekly service at 10am at St Mary's and on 3 out of four weeks this is a eucharist. There is an average attendance of 30-40 people in person. We are every grateful to the Rural Dean Revd Mike Kneen for arranging cover for services and contributing regularly to the life of St Mary's.

Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a live streamed service 'broadcast' from Kington each Sunday, and each of the major feast days of the church. The facility to live stream all services from St Marys, is welcomed by many of our congregation who, for a variety of reasons, have not been able to resume attendance at church in person. Most of our live-streamed services have over 30 views, not just on the day itself, but subsequent viewing at other times during the week.

During 2023, 16 funeral services were conducted by members of the ministry team and visiting clergy including two burials of ashes only. Several funerals were live steamed from the church. This has enabled friends and families from far away to participate in these important life events. There were two weddings, and three children were baptised in St Mary's Church.

The Christmas Services were well attended by both regular and occasional worshippers, including several attendees from Messy Church.

MISSION AND EVANGELISM

MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church has been developing very encouragingly over the last year, as has Lego Club, both coordinated by Stephen Lacey with a wonderful team of regular helpers. Typically, some 25 children with a dozen or so parents and guardians have been attending Messy Church. This is an exciting outreach into our community with the Good News of the Gospel. The main theme over the past year has been 'fruits of the spirit' (love, joy, peace, patience) and this has been interspersed with other events at Easter (Easter Garden and egg hunt) and Summer (creation with visiting animals). Events are advertised through a WhatsApp group and posters. Ann, Eileen, and Rosemary provide a meal using the Parish House kitchen. The core team of craft organisers and leaders needs to expand; ideally some of the regular mums and dads will begin to offer to be helpers. Lego Club is similarly growing and sets a new challenge to the children each month. It aims to foster caring, sharing, and creative play while encouraging parent's involvement too and notably the Christmas special got everyone involved! We are also encouraged by those who attend both groups talking to the others about Messy Church. As both groups grow, we will undoubtedly need more helpers and while both Messy Church and Lego Club sometimes feel a bit chaotic, they are hugely encouraging and reaching a new generation.

Stephen & Rob

LOCAL WORSHIP LEADERS

Five members of the church community trained as Local Worship Leaders in order to lead the non-eucharistic worship on the third Sunday in the month. Freda Lymouth, Alison Hird, Trica MacCurrach, Elaine Roche, and Ann Edwards have all been commissioned as Local Worship Leaders for a period of three years. Together with the Lay reader Rob McCurrach they have able led the worship and introduced innovative approaches to worship

GIVING AND COMMUNITY

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith.

£1326 (approximately 1.1% of unrestricted income) was sent to various charities. This was in addition to a number of restricted donations for specific charities from funerals and events which were specified by the donors

Through the Deanery, we continue to support the Diocesan Train-a-Priest scheme in Tanzania

Our parish magazine keeps our parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our Church as well as providing a valuable source of community information. We are now looking for a new editor for the magazine as Freda Lymath, having done a sterling Job for 19 years is retiring from the role. The PCC are grateful for all she has done to ensure that the Parish Magazine is a much-anticipated publication each month.

St Mary's is fortunate to have three weeks at the community shop and this not only raises money for the church, but also emphasises that the church is an integral part of the community.

SAFEGUARDING

St Mary's church is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults have a positive experience of church and are safeguarded and protected. The Safeguarding Officer ensures that adults in positions of responsibility particularly with regards to children are checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service and that the correct processes are in place. The PCC has agreed to display information about safeguarding in the church and the Safeguarding lead Christine Robinson is conducting an audit of activity to ensure that we keep children and adults safe in all church activities.

ECUMENICAL LINKS

We have strong links between the churches of different denominations within the town. Our three elected PCC members attend Churches Together in Kington meetings every couple of months, each church taking it in turns to host the meeting. This gives opportunities to discuss issues of the day and plan activities in which we can all share and grow.

The Chairmanship of the group in 2023 fell to Fr Simon from St Bede's Catholic Church

Over the past year several partnership activities took place:

- Lent Groups last year were held in The Baptist Church and at various people's homes. These groups were well attended and drew members from all town churches and some from beyond the town.
- The Gathering of Witness at Kington Court care home on Good Friday was well attended and enjoyed by all who joined with residents there. After a simple act of worship, we enjoyed hot cross buns and fellowship.
- We were invited to re-start regular visits to the care home, an opportunity to sing, pray and worship with residents. St Mary's leads two Tuesday groups each month and another group, drawn from all the churches leads an act of worship on the first Monday of each month. That group also led a very well attended Harvest Thanksgiving Service, followed by a lunch.
- At Christmas, Churches Together in Kington organised a carol singing session in the barn at the Oxford Arms. This was very well attended. Thanks to Paul Roberts for his piano accordion playing and bible reading. He was supported by Lucy for The Baptist Church (playing flute) and Paul's wife, Nicy. Drinks, Pizza, and hot chocolate were served throughout the evening and many of the children present were able to make Christingles during the evening.

Finally, we continue to work together to support the work of the Food Bank. There has been an increase in uptake and need, but this has been matched by increased support by Kington residents.

MEMBERSHIP OF CONGREGATION

The March 2024 revision of the electoral roll showed a net decrease of 4 members. 6 new members joined the roll, 4 people moved away and sadly 6 members died and, so for 2023 - 2024 we had 103 members, 31 male and 72 female.

Ray Le Tarouilly (Electoral Roll Officer)

KINGTON AND WEOBLEY DEANERY SYNOD REPORT 2024

There have been two Deanery Synod meetings since the last APCM.

The meeting in June 2023 was held at St Mary's Church, Kington and began with a Deanery Eucharist celebrating the Feast of Corpus Christi. The preacher was the Revd Elizabeth Wild (Local Ministry Lead for the Diocese).

Following the service and the business part of the meeting, Revd Elizabeth Wild gave a presentation on the local ministry scheme, which enables people to be locally commissioned into any of the following four roles: local worship leader, local pastoral visitor, local missionary, or local minister. These positions enable people with all sorts of gifts to work as part of a team which offers worship, pastoral care, and mission activities in church and in the wider community. These roles are supervised by the parish priest and work alongside other lay and ordained ministers. More information can be found at www.hereford.anglican.org on the Ministry tab.

The Rural Dean reminded the Deanery that Chris Smith, the current treasurer, wishes to step down, so a replacement needs to be found. In addition, a Lay Co Chair is needed to collaborate with the Rural Dean. If anybody is interested in either of these positions, the Rural Dean will be pleased to discuss details.

The Rural Dean also reminded the meeting that it is especially important for each parish to have representation at Deanery Level in order to have a voice when big issues are raised within the Church of England.

The second meeting was held at Weobley Church in February 2024. The meeting began with the Rural Dean reflecting on the season of Lent as a time of growth, symbolised by the shoots of new growth appearing in the gardens and countryside and a time for finding space and time for quiet meditation with God.

Concerns were raised about the rules and regulations regarding safeguarding and the amount of detailed training required. In some parishes, it is felt that this is proving a deterrent for some volunteers in parish work and is especially unmanageable in churches with small congregations and few volunteers. Retired clergy and lay leaders are being discouraged by the stringent regulations, which, it was felt, are not appropriate for our parish situations.

The Rural Dean will represent these concerns to the bishop on behalf of the Deanery.

Rev'd Philip Harvey (Rector of Weobley Church) introduced a draft version of the latest Diocesan Strategy document – Proclaiming Christ and Growing Disciples. Copies had already been sent out to churchwardens and PCC secretaries so that they might prepare for meetings at which the strategy is to be shared and

discussed before the document is deliberated at parish level. It was emphasised that this strategy document is a discussion document and that changes will certainly be made.

The final item on the agenda concerned Funeral Collections. In recent years, all monies collected at funeral services held in church have had to go through the PCC accounts. It has now been decided that the responsibility for counting and allocating money collected to chosen charities should revert to Funeral Directors.

Penny Halcrow
February 2024

PARISH HALL REPORT

The Parish Hall is seen as part of the Church's mission to Kington, and we are pleased to be able to offer the hall as a facility for community meetings and activities.

The Parish Hall continues to be let to various bodies independent of Church use, including Home-Start, The Kington Scout group, and KADOS. It is also used for Dance Exercise and Yoga classes and rehearsals by a small music group. It is used once a month (third Wednesday) by the Community Lunch Club and is regularly used for PCC and other Church meetings. There have also been occasional bookings for parties and special occasions such as Onam, an annual harvest and cultural festival related to Hinduism, which is celebrated mostly by the people of Kerala, including the Indian Christians living in Kington. At the beginning of May this year, the Hall is booked for a weekend by the Marches Book Arts Group as part of the Marches Makers' Festival (4th – 6th May).

It is proposed that in 2024, the floor will be sanded and resealed and better lighting will be installed. Wi-Fi is now available in the Parish Hall. The gas boiler and cooker were serviced, and safety checked, and all alarms checked regularly.

Penny Halcrow
February 2024

FINANCIAL REPORT 2023 ST MARY'S KINGTON

The Financial Report consisting of the following:

1. Summary of key items
2. Summary of Receipts and Payments - page 2
3. A Statement of Assets - page 3
4. Notes on the Accounts (Pages 4-7.) These are a more detailed analysis of the Summary of Receipts and Payments and some explanatory comments
5. Organ funding report - page 8

Summary of Key items

Oxford Arms

A loan of £50,000 was made to the Oxford Arms community project to enable them to establish further funding and enable purchase of the building. This loan has now been fully repaid.

Church Organ

Another year of very successful fund raising has enabled the work on the organ restoration and improvement project to proceed. See organ report for details.

Gift Aid

This has not yet been fully reclaimed for 2023

Future financial funding requirements

A number of significant projects are being considered for 2024 that will need funding and financial planning.

- Alternative church heating to meet the Church of England requirement to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 and to reduce fuel bills longer term
- Audio visual improvements
- Replacement of occasional chairs

St. Mary's Church, Kington

Registered charity no. 1185453

Financial Statement for the year ending 31st December 2023

Receipts and Payments Account

These accounts are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis

		2023				2022
		Unrestricted		Restricted	Total	
		General	Designated			
Notes						
RECEIPTS						
Voluntary Receipts						
Planned Giving	1	24525			24525	27197
Collections at Services	2	1464		10632	12096	4923
All other giving/voluntary receipts	3	5757	288	22213	28258	15305
Gift Aid Recovered	6	9436			9436	6210
Legacies	5	5000			5000	
Grants	4			11320	11320	16933
Total voluntary receipts		46181	288	44166	90634	70568
Activities for Generating Funds	7	5557			5557	5624
Investment Income	8	4334			4334	5175
Church Activities	9	14741			14741	16492
Rent/Hire of Church Property	10	3020			3020	1991
Sale of Church Property	11					5733
Sundry Income	12	363			363	1922
Repayment of loan to Open Arms Kington (OAK)		50000			50000	
Total receipts		124196	288	44166	168649	107504

		2023				2022
		Unrestricted		Restricted	Total	Total
		General	Designated			
Notes						
PAYMENTS						
Church Activities						
Parish Offer	13	40,000			40,000	44,000
Prepayment of Parish Offer						8,000
Clergy & Staffing Costs	14	173			173	1,731
Church Running Expenses	15	23,220			23,220	15,269
Cost of Services	16	4,603	113	0	4,716	5,754
Mission Giving & Charitable Donations	17	1,326	586	8,411	10,324	9,490
Parish House	18		4,267		4,267	4,629
Administration	19	8,766			8,766	9,094
Weddings and Funerals	20	2,277			2,277	3,500
Major Works	21			3,557	3,557	12,098
Costs of Generating Funds	22	1,871		1,860	3,731	2,340
Costs associated with other church property	23					
Loan to Open Arms Kington (OAK)		50,000			50,000	
Various	24	2,022			2,022	1,294
Total Payments		134,258	4,966	13,828	153,052	117,200

Surplus or (Shortfall)		(10,063)	(4,678)	30,338	15,596	(9,696)

The shortfall in 2022 looks £8000 bigger than it actually is because of the prepayment which is recouped during 2023

Statement of Assets on 31st December 2023

	2023				2022
	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds
	General	Designated			
Accounts					
<i>Co-operative Account (08-92-99 67225860)</i>				69,773	5,913
<i>Loan Accounts</i>					(1,500)
<i>Prepayment of 2023 Offer</i>					8,000
<i>CBF Deposit (618026001D) – Capital Reserve</i>				63,811	114,162
<i>Gregory Trust (Diocesan CBF Fund) ...1452D (K11)</i>				4,304	4,304
<i>Cash and cheques in hand</i>				2,109	21
Subtotal Cash /Cash equivalents	88,021	1,727	45,945	4,304	139,997
Investment Accounts / Shares					
<i>1,650 Glaxo Smith Kline shares (E Bowen bequest)</i>	23,928			23,928	22,579
<i>1,650 Haleon shares (Share issue from GSK)</i>	5,307			5,307	5,406
<i>Bill Price Bequest (485 Utd Utilities shares) (K16)</i>	5,134			5,134	5,015
<i>M Edwards' Bequest (CBF Invest. Fund) 618026001S</i>	23,767			23,767	21,723
<i>Price Bequest (CBF Investment Fund) ... 1371S (K15)</i>	9,253			9,253	8,451
<i>Gregory Trust (CBF Investment Fund) 1289S (K11)</i>				58,344	53,287
Subtotal Investment accounts/shares	67,389			58,344	116,461
Total	155,410	1,727	45,945	62,648	247,361

Notes on the accounts

For the year ending 31st December 2023

		2023			2022
		Unrestricted		Restricted	Total
		General	Designated		
RECEIPTS					
Voluntary Receipts					
Note					
1	Planned Giving				
	Standing Orders Gift Aided	2496		2496	3271
	Yellow Envelopes	780		780	1445
	Unrestricted donations				675
	PGS Donation	21249		21249	21805
	Total	24525		24525	27197
2	Collections at Services				
	Unrestricted	1464		1464	4923
	Restricted			10632	10632
	Total	1464		10632	4923
3	All other voluntary Giving/Donations				
	Sundry Donations	4309		4309	2817
	Goodbox Contactless	760		760	482
	QR (give.net)				
	Amazon Europe Core	20		20	6
	Easy Fundraising	65		65	56
	Donation Box in Church	602		602	639
	Mission Support inc Messy/Lego		258	258	217
	Donations to Designated Funds				
	Bells				
	Handbells				166
	Flower Fund		30	30	832
	Donations to Restricted Funds				
	Restricted Special Collections (For 2023 allocated to Note 2)				4805
	Ukraine Appeal			479	1993
	Organ Fund donations			21734	3292
	Total	5757	288	22213	15305
4	Grants				
	Roof			5000	16933
	Reordering			2120	2120
	Organ Fund			4200	4200
	Total			11320	16933

RECEIPTS (Continued)		2023				2022
		Unrestricted		Restricted	Total	Total
		General	Designated			
5	Legacies and Bequests					
	Ann Caunt	5000			5000	
	Total	5000			5000	0.00
6	Gift Aid recovered					
	PGS Gift Aid Tax Refund	4898			4898	4521
	Other Gift Aid & GASDS	4537			4537	1689
	Total	9436			9436	6210
7	Activities for Generating Funds					
	Bonus Ball	1688			1688	1873
	Com. Shop	1591			1591	1364
	Peerie Boxes	28			28	22
	Fete	1065			1065	2048
	Other Fund Raising	1185			1185	27
	Parish House Fund Raising					280
	Music (not organ fund)					10
	Total	5557			5557	5624
8	Investment income					
	CBF Deposit Fund Interest (618026	649			649	396
	Investment Income	3684			3684	4779
	Total	4334			4334	5175
9	Church Activities					
	Fees	7057			7057	10127
	Parish News Adverts	5478			5478	4440
	Parish News Sales	2206			2206	1925
	Total	14741			14741	16492
10	Rent/Hire of church property					
	Hire of Church	100			100	845
	Hire of Parish House	2920			2920	1146
	Total	3020			3020	1991
11	Sale of church Property					
	Bradnor Green Coppice					5733
	Total					5733
12	Sundry income					
	Charges for Visits					290
	Church Lunch					
	Net of expenses charged to other parishes	363			363	1329
	income					303
	Total	363			363	1922
Repayment of Loan to Open Arms Kington (OAK)		50000			50000	
TOTAL OF ALL RECEIPTS		124196	288	44166	168649	107504

Further to note 12 Sundry income (Other & Net of expenses...) : The other parishes in our benefice are invoiced monthly for their shares of the Benefice Expenses (Office work, stationery supplies etc.) This value will vary from year to year depending upon when they settle the final invoice. Over the years it averages out to zero.

PAYMENTS For the year ending 31st December 2023		2023				2022
		Unrestricted		Restricted	Total	Total
		General	Designated			
13	Parish Offer Pepayment of Parish Offer <div>Total</div>	40000			40000	44000 8000 52000
14	Clergy Expenses & Staffing Costs Kington Share: Vicar Vicarage Garden wages Kington’s Share: Curate <div>Total</div>	173			173	968 102 661 1731
15	Church Running Expenses Upkeep of Church Wages Insurance Minor repairs/ maintenance Gas 3003486630 Electricity 3003746581 Water Upkeep of Churchyard <div>Total</div>	2184 1397 4256 1311 9685 3084 283 1020			2184 1397 4256 1311 9685 3084 283 1020	247 1819 4089 1049 5297 1771 423 575 15269
16	Cost of Services Cost of Services: Sundries Live streaming Payments to Organist Music and Choir Flowers <div>Total</div>	549 593 3247 214			549 593 3247 214 113 4716	936 564 2915 882 458 5754
17	Mission giving and Charitable donations DEC Ukraine Other special collections From St Mary’s General Fund Burton Communion Donations Mission Support in Messy Church & Lego Other mission Support <div>Total</div>	765 561		765 7646	1531 7646 561 586 10324	3973 4197 429 64 811 16 9490
18	Parish House Wages Upkeep Insurance Repairs & maintenance Gas 3003519585 Electricity 3003746592 Water Lease <div>Total</div>	518 112 690 230 1100 1382 234			518 112 690 230 1100 1382 234 4267	462 190 523 2106 534 609 147 58 4629

Payments (Continued)			2023				2022
19	Administration	Wages: Office Admin (not wages) Parish News Printing Total	Unrestricted		Restricted	Total	Total
			General	Designated			
			1889			1889	1983
			1901			1901	2525
			4975			4975	4586
8766			8766	9094			
20	Weddings and Funerals	Statutory Fees Organist/Bells/Choir/Verger Total	837			837	2092
			1440			1440	1408
			2277			2277	3500
			21	Major Works	Roof Organ Reordering Total		
		77				77	
		3480				3480	9518
		3557				3557	12098
22	Costs of Generating Funds	Bonus Ball Beetle Drive Community Shop Peerie Boxes Fete Cost of grant applications Other (Ludlow Town Band) Total	1360			1360	1510
			395			395	260
							570
					1860	1860	
			116			116	
			1871		1860	3731	2340
24	Various	Visits Miscellaneous Total	1760 262 2022			1760 262 2022	440 854 1294
TOTAL OF ALL PAYMENTS			138525	699	13828	153052	117200

2022
Total
1983
2525
4586
9094
2092
1408
3500
2580
9518
12098
1510
260
570
2340
440
854
1294
117200

Organ Report

	31-Dec-23	29-Feb-24
Estimated Total Cost of Organ Project (inc VAT)	125,000	125,000
Estimated outstanding costs of Organ Project	123,007	79,039
St Mary Contribution (if all grants obtained)	40,119	43,819
St Mary Contribution (if all grants obtained & Vat & gift aid are rec'd)	16,449	20,149
Receipts	47,881	65,181
Benefact trust (Organ Grant)	4,200	4,200
William Cadbury Trust organ Grant		3,000
Garfield Weston - Organ fund		10,000
Heritage Lottery Fund		3,500
Total Organ Fund donations rec'd (includes £21,947 from 2022 donations)	43,681	44,481
Remaining Grants anticipated	37,000	16,000
Laslett's Hinton Charity	8,000	2,000
Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust	10,000	10,000
The Rowlands Trust	2,000	3,000
William Cadbury Charitable Trust	3,000	rec'd
The On Organ Fund	1,000	1,000
Garfield Weston	10,000	rec'd
Heritage Lottery Fund	3,000	rec'd
Refunds to be claimed	23,670	23,670
Estimated Gift Aid to be claimed	4,000	4,000
Vat to be claimed on Organ payments (£98,350)	19,670	19,670
Payments already made	1,993	45,961
Philip Sell (Organ project stationery etc see comment)	62	62
Philip Sell (Banners for Messy Church and Organ appeal)	71	71
Hightech Industrial Service - Organ Scaffoldings		2,976
Clevedon Organs - first payment		11,712
Clevedon Organs - 2nd stage payment		29,280
Cost of grant applications	1,860	1,860

Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of St Mary's, Kingston, Herefordshire

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out in FINANCIAL REPORT 2023 ST MARY'S KINGTON , (pages 1 – 7, produced by Stephen Lacey and Nick Cooke) is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and s.43 of the Charities Act 1993 ("the Act"). Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the Examiner As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations. Basis of this report My examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees 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 view given by the accounts. Independent Examiner's statement In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention: (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements – to keep proper accounting records; and – to prepare proper accounts from those records and to comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached. Chris H.E. Smith Chris H.E. Smith F.C.M.A., The Old Vicarage Lyonshall 01544 340598 / 07785 708603 2nd March 2024

CHURCHWARDENS' MESSAGE AND REPORT ON THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, 2023

We extend a warm welcome to newcomers to St. Mary's.

The past year has seen the loss of some valued Church members, either through failing health or death. Sincere sympathy goes to all bereaved families. It is good to know that many, unable to be with us in person, are with us sharing our worship via the livestream.

It is always good to hear the Church bells ringing and we congratulate John Clayton, Bell Captain, on increasing the number now meeting in the Belfry. On Occasional Sundays it is good to hear the bells ringing forth as they welcome us to our 10a.m. service. Equally we enjoy them as they ring out at a Thursday practice.

Continuing the theme of music we all benefit from the numerically increasing number of members in our choir. We thank Phillip Sell, our Music Director and Choir Master and all Choir members for the leadership and enhancement they bring to our services. One special event was the Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas 2023. We hope that their increased repertoire has given them as much pleasure to sing as it has to all who enjoy their singing. They well deserve the new robes which they will be wearing very soon.

Music and the organ restoration have featured in our thoughts throughout the year and work on the organ began in earnest on February 1st, 2024. This has involved scaffolding and reorganising the church, but we look forward to the completion of the work and hearing the much-improved organ. Phillip Sell has worked tirelessly in many different ways to reach this stage and we give special thanks to him, to Hannah Vernon who has helped in securing grant funding and to the many who have shown their care for and interest in St Mary's by the very generous way in which they have donated to the appeal. That generosity has been much appreciated.

We enjoy delightful, well maintained flower arrangements week by week and as always, we give our sincere thanks to Gill Pennell, Lesley Walters and their team of skilful, cheerful workers who enrich our lives in this way.

We are always pleased to welcome the schools to St. Mary's. Kington Primary School came and shared their celebration of both Harvest and Christmas with us. Little Orchard nursery also responded to our invitation to make a Christmas visit which we all enjoyed.

In September Lady Hawkins' School made their annual visit to celebrate Foundress' Day.

Kington Community Choir rehearsed weekly with us until Christmas, and we hope we can look forward to welcoming them back in the Spring. We much enjoyed their Christmas concert with its audience participation and thank them for the donations to the Organ Fund.

We have always received many comments both from our regular congregation and in the Visitors' Book, regarding the shining brass in St. Mary's and have Beryl Thompson to thank for this. For the last ten years she has cared for the brass, coming in on a regular basis and working her way round the considerable brass involved. Sadly, Beryl has decided that it is time to screw the cap on the brasso and fold her polishing cloths away. We are so grateful to her for all that she has done and what she has achieved - she will be sadly missed. We are delighted that Julia Reid has agreed to take on Beryl's mantle.

Giuliana Nazari has continued to do a splendid job cleaning St. Mary's week by week and we offer her a big thank you for that and for all that she does to help particularly in transporting goods when we have the Community Shop.

The day-to-day oversight of vestments, church linen and ornaments has remained in the capable hands of our Sacristan, Eileen Thomas. Many tasks undertaken by Eileen are beyond the call of her office and we would certainly be the poorer were she not to do them. Thanks also go to our Deputy Sacristan, Beverly Fensom. In addition to helping Eileen, Beverley undertakes the task of compiling duty rotas and organising the lottery.

We also appreciate those who serve refreshments for the fellowship time following services. Lay people play a vital role in the Services at St. Mary's and to each and to everyone we say thank you.

THE INTERIOR OF ST. MARY'S

The annual inspection of the security system and the lightning conductor along with P.A.T. testing of electrical items and the fire equipment have all taken place successfully this year.

The organ restoration is now under way and the north aisle has been taken over by the firm for their equipment and on-site work. The scaffolding will be in situ for as long as it is needed which means that the Craigie altar is out of use. We thank Penny and John Halcrow for refitting the Children's Corner. This will return to the north aisle from the Vaughan Chapel when current work is complete.

The re-ordering of the area on the north side of the Church, in front of the Craigie altar has proved invaluable for many different uses.

It is a joy to see the children at both Messy Church and Lego Club enjoying and using this space. The number at both these events is increasing, as detailed above.

We look forward to The Marches Makers returning to St. Mary's for their May event.

Carpet was taken up during the re-ordering exposing tiles which await treatment.

We must look ahead to changing our heating system by 2030 and we thank Nick and Margaret Cooke for the time they are giving to investigating different systems and for keeping us up to date with their progress.

THE EXTERIOR OF ST MARY'S

Kington Town Council renewed the tender for grass cutting and the work was satisfactorily conducted in 2023. The Council also authorised the cutting of branches on the horse chestnut by the Lych gate. A working party was organised to tidy up the churchyard on February 1st. A splendid job was done, and low growing branches were removed and shredded making it easier for mowing this year. We thank Elizabeth Banks and Phillip Sell for organising this and all who took part. It is good to be able to see across the Churchyard again.

The Garden of Remembrance.

Our grateful thanks go to Jean and Frank Williams, to Nick and Margaret Cooke and to Eileen Thomas for their regular care and oversight of the Garden, flowers dead headed, weeds removed from the gravel and edges trimmed all contributing to a cared for garden.

New benches have been placed in the area.

Please, we would repeat our request that dead flowers are regularly removed from the vases and taken away whenever possible for disposal. This is particularly so following major festivals such as Christmas and Easter.

Space in the Garden is now extremely limited, and plans are being discussed relating to the extension of the Garden.

St. Mary's is a treasure belonging to the people of Kington; however, its maintenance is an ongoing reality which becomes more costly year by year. Fundraising remains a high priority among our responsibilities, and we do appreciate particularly the generous way in which you help to stock the Community Shop, so making it the success it has proved to be.

We value the support given by The Friends of St. Mary's and look forward to the future events they may organise. They are always pleased to welcome new "Friends."

The feature that stands out in the past year is Ben and Jean Griffiths leaving us for North Wales. They both played a vital part in the life of St. Mary's and are very much missed. Tributes have been paid to them both before they left and since.

We wish particularly to thank Malcolm for his expertise in dealing with all things practical relating to the Church maintenance. He has been assisted from time to time, by John Halcrow and Michael Horne and our thanks are also due to them.

The churchwardens continue to carry out their remit which is to keep “The Fabric, Goods and Ornaments in good shape” for future generations to use for worship together with identifying ever widening opportunities and events.

Ann Edwards and Rodney Bowdler.

There is no vicar’s report this year as we are still in a vacancy with interviews being held on 25th April 2024. The first round of interviews in November 2023 were not successful in identifying an appointable candidate and we pray that a suitable candidate will be identified this time.

Approved by the PCC on ...14/03/2023..... and signed on their behalf by Rodney Bowdler Churchwarden and Chair of St Mary’s PCC during the vacancy.