

2020 Report and Accounts **for the Parochial Church Council of St Helen's Church, Escrick**

Aims and Objectives

St. Helen's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Richard Kirkman, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church; pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of St. Helen's Church, Escrick.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to providing a welcoming environment for all, whether they are regular worshippers or not. We strive to be open and accessible in every respect, and to make St. Helen's the heart of our village community. In order to achieve this, the PCC recognises the need to be financially sustainable and encouraging generous giving has had to become a focus for us. We are also committed to strengthening and further developing our relationship with the village Church of England Primary School.

When planning our activities for the year, we considered our main objectives and tried to put in place services, opportunities for worship and community engagement that would enable us to achieve these. In particular, we tried to enable people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of services that specifically meet the needs of members of the community who would not ordinarily attend church, particularly families.
- A varied programme of 'Heritage Activities' which engage a wide demographic.
- Regular opportunities to engage with music within the church from bell ringing to choral evensong and concerts.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of St. Helen's.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic which began in the first quarter of 2020, led to not only the cancellation of almost all church events but also a lengthy period of complete closure. Whilst we were relatively quick to adapt to online services and meetings, many of our events, particularly our Heritage and fundraising events, could not be replicated in a 'virtual' form. This inevitably had an impact on church finances during 2020.

Achievements and Performance

Generous giving was a central focus during 2020. It was with a heavy heart that we had to reduce our Freewill Offer this year. Due to the level of expenditure linked to our Heritage Lottery Fund project and the closure of the church, we were unable to maintain the offer of previous years. It was felt that it would be very unwise to offer more than we could sensibly afford. It was therefore decided that we would have to reduce our Freewill Offer to £10,000 for 2020, with a view to returning to previous levels as soon as possible. In light of the financial impact of the pandemic, we were further assured that this was the correct course of action.

With 'giving' in mind, our 'Sustainable Giving' project was launched on Sunday 23rd February 2020 by Archdeacon Sam Rushton. At the service, packs were given out, inviting people to review their giving and consider planned giving. As part of the project, we also invested in a card reader to allow people to donate electronically, and encouraged people to consider remembering the church in their will. The timing of this project was certainly fortuitous as it led to an increase in the number of people donating regularly via Direct Debit which helped to sustain church funds during the period of national lockdown, and, in addition, this should make future income streams more robust.

In March 2020, on the final Sunday service before St Helen's was forced to close its doors, we were delighted to take part in the 'Come and See' mission of the northern bishops. A special 'all age' service was held in church which combined our regular Sunday congregation with those who usually attend our 'Open Door' family service. The result was a vibrant and creative service filled with prayer, songs, crafts and worship.

Between the periods of national lockdown, we enjoyed several other special services. In November, the church looked truly spectacular when it was adorned with hundreds and hundreds of hand knitted poppies as part of our Remembrance commemorations. These poppies had been knitted by volunteers throughout the community and industriously sewn onto swathes of netting to allow them to be displayed within the church. It really was an awe-inspiring sight. When one looked closer, it became evident that in addition to the traditional red poppies, there were also some black, purple and white poppies integrated into the display. The poppies certainly provided a very fitting backdrop to the Remembrance service and made the words and music all the more poignant. We would like to thank everyone who was involved in this terrific project and look forward to seeing it again in some form later this year.

Due to Coronavirus restrictions, singing has not been permitted at services. Whilst this obviously affects all services, it was particularly missed at Christmas time. However, this did not dampen our spirits and we were able to celebrate with some very special 'listening' services with readings, poems, prayers and music on the organ accompanied by a small choir. Whilst this was admittedly not quite the same as a full church enthusiastically singing 'O Come All Ye Faithful', these services were very well received by all who attended.

During the periods of national lockdown, many services have taken place online, via Zoom, including our 'Open Door' family service, Mothering Sunday and Benefice services. Again, these may not be quite the same as they are in person, but they have allowed us to stay connected and to worship together even when we had to be apart.

Our parish magazine is normally distributed monthly to all parishioners however, once again, the pandemic has brought about change. We are very fortunate to have a very able magazine editor who was quickly able to switch our parish magazine from paper to electronic format and this is now shared as widely as possible via email and social media platforms. The magazine keeps our parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our Church and articles that help develop our knowledge and trust in Jesus.

Financial Review

The accounts in each of the previous four years, that is 2016 to 2019 inclusive, had been very heavily influenced by the £630,000 Heritage Project and, for example, in 2020 our expenditure was £38,070

whereas in 2019 it had been over twelve times higher at £472,588. The only significant 'heritage distortion' in the 2020 accounts was a £13,793 payment to the main contractors, and this was the 2.5% retention fee that had been held back for 12 months. Some £1,837 of this retention payment was subsequently recovered through the Listed Places of Worship VAT recovery scheme.

2020 will however be remembered as the year of the Covid-19 pandemic and this inevitably had a material impact on our finances as church was closed for an extended period, weddings were cancelled, and fundraising and other activities were curtailed.

Excluding the impact of the retention payment, we had hoped to see income and expenditure close to being balanced in 2020 however, after removing the retention payment the year saw a deficit of £4,462 which represents a reasonable outcome in the circumstances but, that said, we did benefit from a total of £6,000 made up of a generous benefice distribution and two legacies.

At the end of the year St Helen's had £25,288 in its current account and a further £1,376 in an investment account making a total of £26,664 in funds, but that should be reduced by £902 due to an unpresented cheque making net total funds on 31st December 2020 of £25,742.

With at least the early months of 2021 likely to be again heavily impacted by Covid it is anticipated that future income streams will again be impaired, but hopefully things will gradually return to some normality and, if so, the objective must be to try and balance income and expenditure.

Moving forwards St Helen's Church should seek to maintain a reserve of at least £25,000 and this is reflective of two key factors: firstly, this represents about six to nine months of income and secondly the maintenance of a larger than average village church, which is grade2* listed and over 160 years old, will inevitably mean periodic significant expenditure.

Additional Information

Volunteers:

We would like to thank all of the people who are involved in the life of St Helen's Church: Richard, Francis, Malcom, Chris and the visiting preachers who lead our services; the many volunteers who support services every week, giving welcome, leading prayers and reading; the people who tirelessly undertake the many chores involved in maintaining our beautiful building and grounds, particularly Brian Castle and his team of green fingered volunteer gardeners; those who create the wonderful floral displays in the church; Nigel Bellamy for providing us with glorious music on the organ each week; the bell ringers who we have greatly missed this year; those who help to raise vital church funds and support our charitable work; all the members of the PCC who have continued to meet online throughout the pandemic to ensure St Helen's had continued to function; and to our amazing churchwarden, Caroline Wandless, and her ever supportive husband, Roger, who do so much for our church behind the scenes, working with great enthusiasm and commitment. Thank you all.

Structure, Governance and Management:

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St. Helen's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwardens and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church.

All those who attend our services / 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. The full PCC met eight times during the year.

Church Council Members on 31st December 2020:

Ex-Officio

Rev Richard Kirkman (Chairman)
Caroline Wandless (Churchwarden)
Maurice Vassie (Deanery Representative)

Christine Mason (Co-opted)
Pat Reader (Co-opted)

3 years to serve

Sadie Ashton
Hilary Castle
Carolyn Skilbeck

2 years to serve

Margaret Gowthorpe
Judith Luscombe
Nigel Wood

1 year to serve

Louise Bartle
Fiona Walters
John Wilson

St Helen's Church, Escrick

Accounts to 31 December 2020

Index:

Section:	Page(s):
Overview of the 2020 accounts	2
Income	3
Expenditure	4
Summary of income and expenditure and accounts	5
Restricted, unrestricted and designated funds	6
Treasurer statement and audit certificate	7

OVERVIEW OF THE 2020 ACCOUNTS

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Excluding the impact of the retention payment, we had hoped to see income and expenditure close to being balanced in 2020, but, after removing the retention payment the year saw a deficit of £4,462 which represents a pretty reasonable outcome in the circumstances but, that said, we did benefit from a total of £6,000 made up of a generous benefice distribution and two legacies.

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At the time of writing (late February 2021) church is again closed due to a Covid related national lockdown, so once again our income streams are impaired, but hopefully things will gradually return to some normality and, if so, the objective must be to try and balance income and expenditure.

Whilst the monies held in our accounts provide some comfort, they only equate to about eight months expenditure and they will inevitably be reduced if church continues to run a deficit and, in addition, we always need to be mindful that the costs of maintaining a 160-year-old grade 2* listed building will always generate significant repair and maintenance costs.

St Helen's Church Income

INCOME	2020	2019
		£
Planned regular giving	7,419	5,401
Collections	5,435	9,393
HMRC gift aid	807	2,796
TOTAL GIVING	13,661	17,590
Weddings	2115	3,065
Funerals	3240	5,575
TOTAL STATUTORY FEES	5,355	8,640
Monies from the Benefice	3,000	0
Legacies and Donation	3,570	250
Listed Places of Worship VAT claim	2,552	72,055
Fundraising	4,745	7,470
100 Club Income	982	912
Allotments and Garages	550	0
Heritage Lottery Grant	0	334,799
Roof Alarm Grants	3116	0
Other Grants	500	9,120
From investment accounts	19	19,009
Miscellaneous Income	20	2,743
TOTAL INCOME	38,070	472,588

Notes:

During the year the church received a £3,000 benefice distribution and, in addition, it received a total of £3,000 in legacies from the estates of Sir Timothy Forbes-Adams and Mrs Dixon.

In 2019 the income from the allotments and garages was included within fundraising. In terms of fundraising income, it included: Ceilidh £1,768; Tealights £520; Calendars £422; and a range of other activities.

The 2019 figures were hugely influenced by the heritage project and that makes meaningful comparisons relatively difficult.

St Helen's Church Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	2020	2019
		£
Freewill to Diocese	10,000	15,450
Statutory Fees	1,600	2,263
TOTAL TO DIOCESE	11,600	17,713
PAYMENTS TO CHARITIES*	2,438	2,802
Organists	1,188	1,424
Vergers	276	351
Bellringers	0	646
Visiting clergy	131	305
Payment to Benefice Account	750	1,500
TOTAL FEES	2,347	4,226
Insurance	4,978	4,885
Oil	1,596	2,671
Electricity	1,846	2,775
Water	272	210
Internet	388	0
TOTAL UTILITIES	9,080	10,541
Repair and maintenance	5,967	1,803
Installation of Roof Alarm	4,288	0
Total Grounds	2,224	1,506
100 Club Prizes	600	600
Miscellaneous (inc fundraising expenses)	2,151	2,579
Heritage Project	13,793	438,188
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	54,488	479,958

*These payments to charities are essentially either:

- Collections at funerals with specific instructions to make payment to a particular charity, for example Cancer Research – this is the majority of this money;
- Some services where the collection is for a specific charity, for example: Remembrance Sunday and the Royal British Legion; and Christingle and the Children's Society.

More generally the main outgoing was the £13,793 retention payment related to the heritage project but, in addition, there was an increased amount spent on repair and maintenance and also grounds with this, in part, reflecting works subsequent to the quinquennial inspection and also the required periodic work on trees in the churchyard.

The internet cost was previously included within the miscellaneous costs.

St Helen's Church Summary of Expenditure and Income

	2020	2019
	£	£
Total Income	38,070	472,588
Total Expenditure	54,488	479,958
Surplus or (deficit) of income over expenditure	(16,418)	(7,370)

St Helen's Church Summary of Funds: Current Account

	2020	2019
	£	£
Opening bank balance at 01 January	41,706	49,076
Income	38,070	472,588
Sub-total of opening balance and income	79,776	521,664
Expenditure	54,488	479,958
Closing bank balance at 31 December	25,288	41,706
Unpresented cheques at 31 December	902	1,230
Net closing bank balance at 31 December	24,386	40,476

There was just one unpresented cheque at 31 December 2020. No 103201: £902.00

St Helen's Church Summary of Funds: Investment Accounts

To help finance the heritage project PCC closed all but one of its CCLA investment accounts and at 31st December 2020, the value of the investment was just £1,376..

The values of these accounts at 31 December were:

Investment Accounts	2020 £	2019 £
TOTAL	1,376	1,287

St Helen's Church restricted, unrestricted and designated funds

The PCC needs to be clear about which funds are restricted, and also which are unrestricted and or designated.

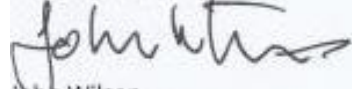
- 'Restricted funds' are sums of money that are held on trust for particular purposes and can only be spent on those purposes.
- 'Unrestricted funds' can be spent on any of the PCC's general purposes.
- 'Designated funds' are sums of unrestricted money earmarked by the PCC for specific purposes.

During 2018 and 2019 all the Restricted Funds and Designated Funds were spent on the Heritage project, so all current PCC funds are Unrestricted.

St Helen's Church Accounts 2020: treasurer statement and audit certificate

Treasurer statement:

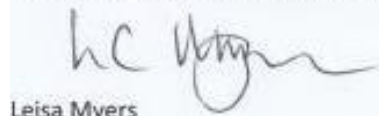
These accounts are an accurate, fair and full representation of the finances of St Helen's Church at 31 December 2020.



John Wilson
St Helen's Church PCC Treasurer

Audit certificate:

The income and expenditure accounts and the summary of funds are in agreement with properly maintained accounts and records maintained by the St Helen's PCC Treasurer, John Wilson.

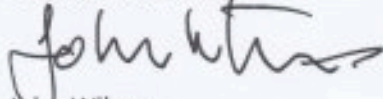


Leisa Myers
St Helen's Church Auditor

St Helen's Church Accounts 2020: treasurer statement and audit certificate

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John Wilson
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Leisa Myers
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