

Report on the year ending 31st December 2024 for the Parochial Church Council of Shrivenham with Watchfield and Bourton

Aim and purposes

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our three churches and to become part of our parish community. To achieve this, we have a wide range of services to facilitate the requirements of everyone within the parish. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament. When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary 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 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 our churches.

Achievements and Performance

Incumbent's Report

1. Services, streaming, study groups and sermons

One of the sad moments of 2024 was saying goodbye to Rev'd Norma Fergusson as she retired after ministering in this Benefice for more than 10 years. I am thankful for her wonderful work and fruitful ministry here. Her leaving was a double blow as she went with Richard, who was our only LLM in the Benefice. The Benefice gave Rev'd Norma and Richard a well-deserved send off in a well-attended and colourful service. I am grateful for being trusted with the responsibility of being the Vicar of this Benefice. My family and I received a very warm welcome from everyone, and I am now settling into the new post.

I must thank my clergy colleagues (Rev'd Robin Cardwell, Rev'd Geoff Price, Rev'd Jim Mynors and Rev'd Shannon Preston, and lay worship leaders (Alex & Becky Peal, Jane & Frank Venables, Maggie & Roger Simons, Rosy & Chris Taylor, Brenda & Vic Garman; Ann & Julian Stevens, Ruth Holman, Sandy Gipps, David & Jane Ahern, Pam Mullin and Hugh Baxter) for their willingness to lead services last year – and to continue to do so as we are in another vacancy. Without their support, it would not have been possible to continue to reflect the breadth and beauty of Anglican liturgy through so many and such different services in churches, schools, crematoria and churchyards: Sunday and midweek; said and choral; lay and clergy led; weddings 5, baptisms 9, confirmation 2, and, sadly, funerals (18 in church plus 7 elsewhere), and ashes interment 8.

We have continued to live stream at least one service each Sunday, as well as special services, midweek communion services and morning prayer. We know how much this is valued by those unable to attend church on a regular basis, as well as by families whose friends or relatives have been unable to attend weddings, baptisms or funerals. Another important part of our life and worship both online and face to face during the year was the opportunity to join with the Methodist Church for services and through Café Inspire.

The Wednesday study groups have continued to meet weekly in term time both in person and online. I am grateful to David Ahern and Graham Weller for leading the bible study groups. David and Jane Ahern also hosted a bring and share lunch in which allowed us all to get together in person.

2. Singing and Ringing

We are blessed to have three bell towers with active teams of ringers who play an important part in both our regular worship, weddings, funerals and for school services. Thank you for always responding so positively to requests to ring. Children of all ages appreciate the opportunity to ring the bells at the start of services and we are now often asked specially for this at baptisms: in time this may help ensure the future of ringing in the Benefice. We celebrated Bell Sunday again in 2024 and hope it will continue to be an annual event. And, of course, our Christmas services would not be the same without the handbells, nor Café Inspire without the bell plates.

The Benefice choir continues to flourish musically and numerically under Claire Hartley's guidance. We now have an established pattern of welcoming them to every "last Sunday" service; they also sang for choral evensongs, Maundy Thursday, Easter Eve, Ascension Day, Corpus Christi, All Souls, Remembrance Day and five carol services as well as the Advent service in Watchfield.

3. Children, Schools and Families

One area in which our ministry is increasing is with children and families. Obviously, we would like to do more, particularly for those at secondary school, and we are looking at this with the Methodist church. We continue to share collective worship in all three church schools every week as well as being part of special services both in school and in church. Messy Church, Café Inspire, Christingle, Crib services and the St Andrew's family service are also important here.

Thank you to the teams for the creativity and joy you bring to our worship. We managed to do a Christingle service in St Mary's Longcot after some years of it not being done. The baby and toddler group has continued to run in St Andrew's on Thursday mornings during term time and we are grateful to Hazel Morris and her team, together with Pip Dudley and Margaret Hern from St Andrew's, for making this possible.

Pastoral support for families in the wider sense has continued in a variety of (often unseen) ways throughout the year and I know how much this is appreciated. The bereavement group continues to meet once a month; members of the ASK team also meet monthly to pray the leaves on the prayer tree in St Andrew's as well as organising the monthly communion service, whose collection often supports local charities and good causes, including the foodbank.

Although safeguarding is not restricted to the care of children but applies to any vulnerable person, it is perhaps appropriate to mention it here. As a Benefice we continue to make every effort to comply not only with the letter but with the spirit of the regulations and to make our churches safe as well as sacred spaces. Thank you to Lucy Laird for being our safeguarding lead on top of everything else and keeping us up to date with all the requirements.

4. The Deanery, Fundraising and Eco Church

The Deanery action plan has five key areas: climate change, parish share, support for young people, maintaining our presence as a rural church and making the best use of IT. Each Benefice is approaching this in the way which works best for them, and I hope you can see from the report so far how much we are doing in the last three categories.

Being a church is about more than parish share and building maintenance (and all our churches need funds for that): it is about everything that happens in, from or because of the building and the congregation, only some of which has appeared in this report. We are so grateful for the generous response to our various fundraising initiatives during the year (concerts, lunches, coffee mornings, open gardens etc) and will continue to try to offer a variety of events. And although the money is much needed, the fundraising events are also about coming together with other people in our communities – forging relationships and building trust, so people know the church is there when they need us.

Being part of our communities also means looking after the environment. Caring for creation is one of the ways we live out our faith in God, so here I must thank everyone who cares for our churchyards, together with the cleaners and flower arrangers who beautify the church interiors, and we must never forget that welcoming and offering refreshments are part of that caring, too.

5. Churchwardens and Treasurers

A special thank you to the churchwardens and treasurers who bear so much of the workload in ensuring that our churches are open, safe, accessible and solvent. Dickie Green, Ruth Holman, Joanna Lambert, Maggie Simons, Chris Taylor, David Watson, Jimmy Watson,

Dennis Blease, Jane Ormondroyd, Claire Routley and Louise Slater – never think that your work is underestimated or unappreciated. I feel blessed to work with you as a team. Thank you also to everyone at St James for your collective efforts in running the church. Let us continue supporting one another.

6. And finally

Thank you everyone for all the work you do for the glory of God. As I have just started this journey with you as your Vicar, let us keep our hearts and minds open to new ideas and God's promptings. I look into the future with a huge smile because I see a lot of potential in us all to take this Benefice to greater heights. Together let us continue 'To mirror the hospitality of God'.

Blessings

Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu

Treasurer's Report

1. The total receipts on unrestricted and designated funds were £100,298 of which £57,560 comprised unrestricted voluntary donations and a further £11,374 was recovered through the PCC's Gift Aid claim. Restricted donations and restricted fundraising totalled £868. Our claim for Gift Aid still proves a valuable means of adding to PCC income and we are very grateful to all those who confirm their giving is gift-aided.

2. Church supporters are encouraged to join the Parish Giving Scheme and there are thirty-three donors on the scheme. Planned Giving in general, over the year, has increased by £3300. I would like to thank Margaret Hern for her continuing support with the planned giving envelope scheme. However, this scheme will be discontinued in 2025 and donors encouraged to move to the Parish Giving scheme. Cash collections at services have increased by £2000 but the receipts from bank card readers in our Churches have remained at the same level achieved in the previous year.

3. St James Bourton received an Oxfordshire County Council grant of £1000 to defray the costs of removing an aging Scots pine from the churchyard. St Andrew's received a grant of £3000 from Oxford Diocese to cover the costs of an energy feasibility study looking at alternative sources of heating.

4. As for outgoings, £85430 was spent from unrestricted funds to provide the Christian ministry within our Parish of three Churches. We continued to monitor income on a monthly basis during 2024 with a view to paying the proportion of parish share to the Oxford Diocese which is affordable. Within our stated outgoings, it is pleasing to report that we paid our Parish share allocation in full of £48791 (including vacancy support).

5. The net result, in unrestricted and designated funds, was an increase over the year of £7623. Balances carried forward at 31st December 2024 on unrestricted and designated funds totalled £54806.

6. This is a good opportunity to thank David and Liz Watson for their hard work in making the bottle tombola at the Village Fete in August, once again, such a resounding fund-raising success. Also, I should like to thank Penny Hockley, Lindsey Skelt, Marilyn Jeans, Daphne Willmett and all the team who worked hard during the year to organise fundraising events at St Andrew's and Ruth Holman and her team at St Thomas' and Sue Hayes and all her helpers at St James for their fundraising efforts.

Reserves policy

a. It is the policy of this Parish to hold in reserve the equivalent of three months' general running costs to include payment of Parish Share and other expenses. This policy is reviewed annually at the PCC meeting convened to approve the accounts.

b. Three months' costs are currently equivalent to £21000 for this PCC. These reserves are held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. The cash balance of £36885 held on unrestricted funds at the year-end met this target.

Jane Ormondroyd

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwardens, deanery synod representatives, co-opted members along with 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. New members receive initial training into the workings of the PCC. The PCC met seven times during the year.

Administrative information

St. Andrews Church is situated in Church Walk Shrivenham, St Thomas' Church is in the High Street Watchfield and St James' in Bishopstone Road Bourton. All are part of the Diocese of Oxford and within the Archdeaconry of Dorchester on Thames within the Church of England. The parish correspondence address is The Vicarage, High Street Shrivenham SN6 8AN. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) .

The PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2024 and the 31st December 2024 are:

Ex Officio members:

- Incumbent:

The Reverend Patrick Mabhunu (Chairman)

- Church Wardens:

David Watson – Shrivenham

Christopher Taylor – Shrivenham

Ruth Holman – Watchfield

Vacancy for Bourton

- Deanery Synod Representatives:

Jayne Venables

Lindsey Skelt

- Co-opted members:

Jane Ahern – Secretary

- Elected Members:

Penny Hockley

Maureen Coyle

Brenda Garman

Roger Parks

Marilyn Jeans

Tony Crabtree

Angela Davis

Philippa Dudley

Jane Ormondroyd

SHRIVENHAM WITH WATCHFIELD & BOURTON PARISH CHURCH

**Annual Report and Accounts
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended
31 December 2024.**

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Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
Shrivenham with Waddfield and Bampton

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1193821

Set out on pages

2,3,4,5

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above
charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the
accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out
under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I
have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission
under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to
undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of
applicable listed body]]. Delete [] if not applicable.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have
come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with
the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material
respect,:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130
of the Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements
concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities
(Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement
that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter
considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection
with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in
order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date:

17/2/25

Name:

MARIA BRICKER

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Address:	Meadow Edge, Townsend Road
	Shrivenham, Swindon SN6 8HR

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

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