

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical
Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush, St Alban's**

**Trustees Annual Report and Annual Financial Report
for the year ended
31 December 2023**

Registered Charity number: 1196796

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush, St Alban's

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Officers and professional advisers

Trustees:

Ex Officio:

Incumbent:

Revd. Ann Alexander (Chair)

Wardens:

Mrs Deborah Cowie (from 21 May 2023)

Mrs Caroline Edwards (Vice Chair) (until 21 May 2023)

Mrs Sue Richardson (Vice chair from 21 May 2023)

Secretary:

Mr Alan Magrath*

Safeguarding officer:

Mr Andy Hoare

Elected members:

Mr Geoff Bull (from 21 May 2023)

Mrs Caroline Edwards (from 21 May 2023, previously a Warden)

Mr Keith Ford (from 21 May 2023)

Mr Robert Higson

Mr Andy Hoare

Mrs Emma Humphrey

Ms Beverly Killick

Mrs Sarah Magrath

Mrs Jane Sharpe

Deanery Synod:

Mrs Sue Richardson (until 21 May 2023)

Mrs Madeleine Taylor (from 21 May 2023)

**Despite being an ex-officio position this person has not taken up the role of a voting member of the PCC.*

Treasurer:

Mr James May

Finance officer:

Mrs Sue Richardson

Charity Number:

1196796

Registered office:

St Alban's Parish Office

St Alban's Church Hall

Gossops Drive

Crawley

West Sussex

RH11 8LD

Independent Examiners:

Darren Harding ACA FCCA DChA

Richard Place Dobson Services Limited

1-7 Station Road

Crawley

West Sussex

RH10 1HT

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Our aims and purposes

The Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush consists of two main neighbourhoods on the west side of Crawley. Gossops Green and Bewbush PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar, the Revd Ann Alexander, in:

- The promotion of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England;
- Promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, social, evangelistic and ecumenical.
- To know Jesus better and make Him better known.
- Practical and spiritual support and care for all people living in the parish, from the youngest to the eldest, irrespective of level of need or ability to pay;
- Maintaining the fabric of our buildings for worship and community life in order to facilitate our mission and outreach.

What we planned to do to achieve our charitable objectives

When planning our activities for the year, our Vicar and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on 'charities for the advancement of religion'. The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake. For 2023 we discussed and planned the following objectives and activities to fulfil our aims:

- Enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and making their experience of worship a welcoming and accessible one;
- Enabling as many people as possible to become part of our parish community;
- Teaching, baptising and nurturing new and existing believers;
- Considering how services and outreach events can involve the many groups that live within the parish;
- Putting faith into practice, through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament and helping to serve some of the needs of our local communities;
- Offering worship and prayer and learning about the Gospel in small group situations;
- Assisting people from all walks of life to develop their knowledge of, and trust in, Jesus;
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish;
- Raising money and giving material support to various charities and missionary organisations;
- Reaching out to the unchurched through the provision of a variety of outreach events;

What we achieved and how we affected our beneficiaries' lives

Worship and Prayer

The church family welcomes visitors from within as well as outside the parish boundary to join us as members of the family. Visitors attend by personal choice and, it is our great pleasure to welcome anyone from all walks of life to take part in the life of our churches. We contend that voluntary attendance to worship the Lord Jesus Christ is a major demonstration of the public benefit of our activities.

I always enjoy the church service and activities, the church is always a warm friendly environment specifically organised for friends, family and those on their own like your truly. D.A. (*Comment posted on Google Maps*)

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This year, the average attendance at Sunday services (not including major feasts such as Easter) is 45 adults and 14 children. New members have been welcomed, and baptisms and funeral services have been held. This year there are 79 people recorded on the electoral roll. This number has remained pretty static over the past few years; however, several new families have joined us this year and it is hoped they will be added to the electoral roll for next year. It has been a delight to see so many worshippers from the local community at special services, especially at Easter and Christmas and for services such as the Harvest Service, Mothering Sunday, Messy Christingle Service, Sunday evening Taize, Lady Day and Wave of Prayer Services for the Mothers Union and a dedicated service for Open Doors. It also gave us great joy to host the Holy Trinity School Carol Service once again. We had three 'whole year group' visits from Bewbush Academy who all wrote lovely cards to say thank you. The number of children who enjoy attending church regularly is a joy to behold. At all age services and at

*To St Albans,
Thank you for teaching us about
Christians and answering all our
questions thank you lots and lots
From G, (Year 4 Bewbush Academy)*

other times our youngsters take part in worship by being readers, serving during worship, and leading the prayers. It is a real joy to see young people grow in confidence through these roles. We are all very proud of the group of children who admirably led the Crib Service.

Provision of the church buildings for people to enjoy

St Alban's Church is open during the day for people to pray or just sit in a quiet and sacred space. One of our main focuses has always been to explore ways in which our church buildings can be used for groups and events that are of value to our local community in addition to church services.

The church runs a Heart of Welcome Café which is a registered 'Place of Welcome' centre. Members of the community enjoy coming each week as it is a warm and friendly weekly meeting place, also serving as a place of warmth while energy bills are still so high. Many Outreach3Way carers bring their clients along to socialise and Age UK refer their clients as well. Local councillors, PCSO's and representatives from Age UK attend regularly to provide advice and practical help to those who attend.

Our Tiny Toes toddler group continues to attract more and more people from the whole community and has proved to be a very needed and welcome wellbeing provision. Weekly attendance is around 20+ families. Refreshments and craft activities are provided each week for the children and their adults. Christmas and Easter books are gifted to the children each year.

The Mother's Union makes good use of the church and hall for meetings and activities. Among other events and activities, each year they prepare the Mothering Sunday posies for distribution, make Christmas 'Shine a Light' stars for the very young, pack socks for Brook House Immigration Removal Centre detainees and collect food donations for Family Support Work. They also make use of the church and hall for worship, meetings and other activities.

Another highlight of the year was our Patronal bring and share 'international' lunch and BBQ. The array of food donated to the feast for everyone's enjoyment paid a wonderful testimony to the increasing diversity of our congregation members. It was enjoyed so much that we decided to do it all again for a Harvest Lunch!

Other events such as the annual Cream Tea afternoon, Christmas Fair and Tree Festival, are a source of joy for the whole community. We held three musical fundraising events which were all thoroughly enjoyed by the community. The wonderful musicians for all three events generously donated their time and expertise to bring joy to the community as well as to help the church raise funds. The wonderful cakes and refreshments offered at each event were lovingly baked by our fundraising team.

There are many other groups who use the church and hall, including the regulars, the AA group, Stimming World, and annual NHS Covid vaccination clinics.

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The Barn Church Bewbush is no longer used for regular Anglican services but as a resource centre for the parish and as a community centre. The building is used by regular groups who provide services that benefit the community; The Barn Pre School, Desire to Dance, and Elim Pentecostal Church; as well as being used for one off events.

Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish

Five funerals, six baptisms and one burial of ashes were taken this year. Pastoral care is always provided after the funeral from the clergy. The vicar, pastoral care team and general fellowship amongst the church community continue to provide pastoral care through home communions, regular phone calls and visits including giving practical help when needed. A weekly emailed newsletter (also published on Facebook and hard copies delivered to those without internet access), food deliveries to those in need, and fellowship events have all ensured that our pastoral care is extended to everyone we can possibly reach, whether they are churchgoers or not.

Provision of tangible support to the poor and needy

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. The parish has supported the Family Support Work charity throughout the year with regular food donations, half of our Harvest donations and the annual Toy Service (which is the annual donation of toys and toiletries for children and their carers through Family Support Work). In addition, the St Alban's branch of the Mothers Union has also donated weekly food collections to Family Support Work. Food collections are also collected and delivered regularly to the Free Shop Crawley. Each year, the vicar visits three local pre-schools to talk to the children who then combine their harvest offerings with those collected by the church. We do ensure that the recipients of the donations know that the pre-schools donate as well. The huge amount of donations is blessed at the Harvest Service and then shared between FSW and The Free Shop Crawley.

A huge thank you to St Alban's Gossops Green & Bewbush, The Barn Pre-School and Gigglesand Grow Preschools for your very generous harvest festival donation this week. Donations are vital to Freeshop so this is amazing, your support means everything to us. THANK YOU (Facebook post)

The parish supports Link to Hope by sending Christmas shoeboxes filled with goodies and knitted items for projects in Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine. Regular collection boxes are held by members of the congregation to donate to the Children's Society. We also support Open House, and the YMCA hub which supports young people as they move into adulthood through their 'Love in a Box' Christmas campaign and we have church members who help with cooking a weekly meal for the young people.

Teaching, baptising and nurturing new and existing believers in the Christian faith

In 2023 two more of our younger children were admitted to Holy Communion on Easter Day after completing a First Holy Communion Course. Six baptisms took place during the year. Baptism preparation sessions are held with parents and Godparents before baptism. We hold our Lent Course during Lent and hold a weekly bible study group. Junior Church provides excellent teaching for our young people and is very much enjoyed by the growing numbers of children (often up to 20 children). It is always a delight to hear from the youngsters what they have learnt during the morning. School visits to the church have begun again after the pandemic and in addition to school visits, the vicar visits three local pre-schools at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. The annual Good Friday Children's Workshop is enjoyed by many local children (45 attendees) as was the Messy Christingle event (60 attendees). The school visits and the 6th Crawley beaver visits all focus on teaching the Christian faith and are very much appreciated.

The Future

Last year we reported that we were getting closer to raising the funds for installing a new heating system in St Alban's. We are delighted that this was completed in March 2023. This has enabled many more church and community groups to make use of the church. This will enhance the lives and wellbeing of so many in our church and community and will further combat the growing problem of loneliness within society.

St Alban's is currently fundraising for various desperately needed improvements to the church building so that more mission, outreach and community work can be facilitated. Although the fundraising is moving slowly, we are delighted we received a small grant of £2,000 in 2022 from <http://www.benefacttrust.co.uk/> towards the preparation costs for the building project.

The PCC's aim is to create a new accessible entrance, install toilets, the new heating system, a refreshment area, and repair the tower. This work will benefit both the church and the local community by providing an accessible worship space as well as a usable space for community use. As we recover from the economic and social effects of Covid 19 there is even greater need for our buildings to be used for and by the community to provide for the spiritual, physical and mental health and wellbeing of people in our neighbourhoods and beyond.

The Buildings Development Group continues to meet and is working on funding applications. The building work is more pressing than ever now that we have more church activities in the pipeline and more community groups needing space for their activities.

Financial Review

The summary of financial activities shows an increase in receipts which is attributable to higher rental receipts. This is driven by a mix of higher rents (to cover the higher utility bills of the premises) and greater utilisation.

The summary of financial activities also shows a decrease in expenditure as a result of regrettably cutting our payment to the Diocese. This was done in the 2022 budget when inflation was rampant and the economic forecast looked far from certain. 2023 saw the parish out perform its budget, resulting in a surplus and as a result will look to pay an increased amount to the Diocese in 2024.

Why we hold some money in reserve

It is the PCC's policy that due to the age and condition of the buildings, it should work towards, and then maintain, a balance on the general unrestricted funds (excluding property) which equates to approximately three months of unrestricted payments as contingency against unforeseen situations. The closing balance on unrestricted funds at the end of 2023 was £32k (2022: £19k) which achieved this.

Risk Management

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. The PCC takes a minimal risk approach to operations. PCC meetings are held every 2-3 months to discuss risks (including upcoming events) and put in place insurance. With no fixed assets or debtors, the risk of impairment is minimal. Cash handling remains a risk, with segregation of duties taking place throughout the parish where possible. There is a Safeguarding Officer in place in order to ensure that we can manage vulnerable people appropriately.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush, St Alban's

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Safeguarding statement

The PCC of the Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush has complied with section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). The PCC of the Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush is committed to implementing all safeguarding policies and practice guidance issued by the House of Bishops and have adopted the 'Promoting a Safer Church; Safeguarding Policy Statement'. The PCC has implemented the new requirement to have safeguarding arrangements on the front page of the parish's website and in the porch notice board. The parish has also achieved the SQP Level 1 quality assurance assessment.

Structure, governance and management of the charity

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is registered with HMRC and became a registered charity with the Charity Commission in 2021. Its governing document is the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. In 2022 we held six PCC meetings and an APCM. Six Standing Committee meetings were also held throughout the year. The members of the Parochial Church Council who served during the year are listed on page 1. Membership of the PCC is determined under the Church Representation Rules and consists of certain ex-officio members (the incumbent/priest-in-charge, curate, the churchwardens and members of the Deanery Synods), and 9 members of the church who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). As of the 2020 APCM there are no vacancies on the PCC. All members of the congregation are encouraged to stand for election to the PCC and we try to ensure a balance of skills and experience where possible.

This Trustees' Annual Report was approved by the PCC and signed on their behalf by the Revd Ann Alexander, PCC Chair.

A Alexander

Date: 20/3/24

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush, St Alban's

**Independent examiners report to the Trustees of The Parochial Church Council of the
Ecclesiastical Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush, St Alban's**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 1 to 12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records

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.



Darren Harding ACA FCCA DChA

Richard Place Dobson Services Limited
Registered in England
Company Number 4681154
1-7 Station Road, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 1HT

Date: 20/03/2024

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush, St Alban's

Receipts and Payments Summary of Financial Activities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		2023 £	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	37,379	8,284	45,663	43,113
Trading activities	2	40,206	-	40,206	32,640
Other receipts	2	1,492	-	1,492	4,598
Total received		79,077	8,284	87,361	80,351
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	3	121	-	121	170
Charitable activities	3	44,713	-	44,713	60,805
Other payments	3	21,199	6,000	27,199	21,136
Total paid		66,033	6,000	72,033	82,111
Reconciliation of funds:					
Net income		13,044	2,284	15,328	(1,760)
Funds at 1 January		19,458	10,652	30,110	31,870
Funds at 31 December		32,502	12,936	45,438	30,110

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush, St Alban's

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £
Assets:				
Bank current account	32,502	12,936	45,438	30,110

Note 7 has further details on restricted funds.

Liabilities:

At the year end the following estimated liabilities existed (all to be paid from unrestricted funds):

	2023 £	2022 £
Accruals	2,490	1,221
Other creditors	-	300
	2,490	1,521

This Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023, including the notes following, was approved by the PCC and signed on its behalf by The Revd. Ann Alexander, PCC Chair:

A. Alexander

Date: 20/3/24

Notes to the Annual Financial Report

1. Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Church Accounting regulations 2006, using the Receipts and Payments Basis.

2. Analysis of total received

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £
Planned giving (excl. tax refunds)	23,434	-	23,434	23,396
Planned giving (no tax refunds)	2,277	-	2,277	2,608
Loose cash collections	2,366	-	2,366	1,327
Special appeals	3,442	8,284	11,726	9,931
Gift aid recovered	5,860	-	5,860	5,851
Donations	37,379	8,284	45,663	43,113
Rental income	37,625	-	37,625	30,314
Fundraising events	2,581	-	2,581	2,326
Trading activities	40,206	-	40,206	32,640
Fees for weddings and funerals	1,084	-	1,084	1,499
Other receipts	408	-	408	3,099
Other receipts	1,492	-	1,492	4,598
Total received	79,077	8,284	87,361	80,351

Notes to the Annual Financial Report

3. Analysis of total paid

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		2023 £	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £
	Note				
Event costs		121	-	121	170
Raising funds		121	-	121	170
Charitable donations		-	-	-	418
Parish share to Chichester Diocese	4	15,000	-	15,000	27,000
Salaries and honoraria incl NI	6	3,525	-	3,525	3,900
Clergy and other people's expenses		3,609	-	3,609	3,665
Mission costs		942	-	942	1,687
Insurance		4,289	-	4,289	4,250
Water, gas, electric, and oil		13,400	-	13,400	16,136
Printing and photocopying		2,412	-	2,412	2,704
Wedding and funeral costs		-	-	-	854
Other regular church running costs		1,536	-	1,536	191
Charitable activities		44,713	-	44,713	60,805
Maintenance & redecoration		18,737	6,000	24,737	19,526
Accountancy fees		1,260	-	1,260	1,146
Bank fees		120	-	120	86
Other payments		1,082	-	1,082	378
Other payments		21,199	6,000	27,199	21,136
		66,033	6,000	72,033	82,111

4. Parish share to Chichester Diocese

The Parish share to Chichester Diocese of £15,000 (2022: £27,000) is for the payment of Clergy and other central costs. The full cost of the parish ministry amounts to c.£80,000 for the year (2022: £76,967). The shortfall is absorbed by the Diocese not payable by the parish in future years.

5. Gift aid

Gift aid is recoverable on donations received up to the year end. Due to the preparation on the basis of cash accounting, there is Gift Aid due on December's donation after the year end.

Notes to the Annual Financial Report

6. Payments to PCC employees

	2023	2022
	£	£
Gross pay	3,300	3,300
Honaria payments	225	600
Salaries and honaria per note 3	3,525	3,900

7. Restricted funds

The PCC continues to fund raise for a building project which will take place in phases but will result in the repair of the church tower, construction of a new entrance hall, the upgrade of WCs and the kitchen area, and a new church hall. At the year end all restricted funds related to this project.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Start of year	10,652	6,509
Income	8,284	4,630
Transfer	-	(187)
Expenditure	(6,000)	(300)
End of year	12,936	10,652

During the prior year a review of the restricted fund was carried out and it was identified that £187 was not correctly classified. As a result we have transferred £187 this year between funds.

8. Related party transactions

During the year there were various donations from trustees to the parish. Due to many being in cash it is not possible to quantify the amounts.

During the period there were various expenses paid for by trustees on behalf of the church (because cash floats are not given out), which were then reimbursed.

Furthermore the utility, council tax, and phone bills of the clergy and curates are paid by the charity, with rent and wages being paid by the Diocese (for which this charity pays through contributions, see note 3).

There were no other related party payments or receipts during the year.