

**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 2024**

Registered Charity number: 1196796

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Officers and professional advisers

Trustees:

Ex Officio:

Incumbent: Revd. Ann Alexander (Chair) (retired 7 July 2024)
Currently vacant

Wardens: Mrs Deborah Cowie (until 15 December 2024)
Mrs Sue Richardson (Vice chair)

Secretary: Mr Alan Magrath* (until 12 May 2024)
Mrs Meg Miller* (from 12 May 2024)

Safeguarding officer: Mr Andy Hoare

Elected members: Mr Geoff Bull (until 8 July 2024)
Mrs Caroline Edwards (until 12 May 2024)
Mr Keith Ford
Mr Robert Higson
Mr Andy Hoare
Mrs Emma Humphrey
Ms Beverly Killick
Mrs Sarah Magrath (until 12 May 2024)
Mrs Jane Sharpe
Mrs Madeleine Taylor
Mrs Helen Ford (from 12 May 2024)
Mrs Cissy Atwine (from 6 September 2024)
Mrs Jemma Robinson (from 17 September 2024)

Deanery Synod: Mrs Madeleine Taylor
Mrs Helen Ford (from 12 May 2024)

**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

Trustees Annual Report for 2024

1. About the Parish

St. Alban's church is in the Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush, which are two neighbourhoods on the west side of Crawley. It is part of the Deanery of East Grinstead and the Diocese of Chichester.

St. Alban's church prides itself for being inclusive and has a multicultural congregation of all ages and walks of life. The church welcomes visitors from within as well as outside the parish boundary to join us as members of the family.

1.1 Notice of Suspension of Presentation

On September 11th 2024, the Parish Wardens were advised that the presentation of the Benefice of Gossops Green and Bewbush St. Alban's was suspended for a period of five years. Under the provisions of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, this allowed for the temporary lifting of a patron's right to present an incumbent for appointment to a parish. The Bishop would remain responsible for the cure of souls which would normally be exercised by the appointment of a priest-in charge, or by arranging for neighbouring clergy to serve in the parish.

2. Structure, governance and management of the charity

The governance of St. Alban's church is conducted in accordance with that specified by the Church of England. 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 2024 we held six PCC meetings and an APCM. Four Standing Committee meetings were also held throughout the year. The members of the Parochial Church Council who served during the year are listed on the Charities Commission website. Membership of the PCC is determined under the Church Representation Rules and consists of certain ex-officio members (the incumbent/priest-in-charge, curate (where appropriate), the churchwardens and members of the Deanery Synods), and 9 members on the electoral roll who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). All members of the congregation are encouraged to stand for election to the PCC and we try to ensure a balance of skills, experience and diversity where possible.

Communication to parishioners is provided via a weekly emailed newsletter (also published on Facebook and hard copies delivered to those without internet access).

2.1. Notable Changes

As our vicar, the Revd Ann Alexander, retired in June 2024, St. Alban's Church is in an interregnum. The running of the church is now solely the responsibility of the Church Wardens and PCC with support from the Rural Dean and Archdeacon. The church has continued to operate as 'business as usual' with services being covered by visiting vicars. The church also has two lay leaders (one who is in training) who are authorised to take certain parts of a service.

2.2. 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.

2.3 Policies

The following policies are upheld by the PCC and are regularly updated: Health and Safety Policy St Alban's, Health and Safety Policy Bewbush Barn, Finance Policy, Finance Reserves Policy, Significant National Mourning Policy, GDPR Data Privacy Notice, GG Data Protection Consent Form, GDPR Audit, Response to Safeguarding Allegations, Safeguarding Policy, Parish Whistleblowing Policy, E-Safety Policy, Behaviour Code, Authorised Sidespersons, Conflict of Interest Policy, Reporting of Serious Incidents, Social Media Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, (The House of Bishops Guidance on Safer Recruitment and Management of People - Church of England.org/safeguarding/Emanual/safer recruitment), and Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

3. Objectives

The objectives of St. Alban's church are:

- 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 oldest, 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

3.1. How St. Alban's objectives have been met

The PCC achieved its objectives by:

- 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
- Giving material support to various charities and missionary organisations
- Reaching out to the unchurched through the provision of a variety of outreach events

4. Impact of St. Alban's Church on the community

St. Alban's church makes a significant impact to people's lives whether from the local community or worldwide. This ranges from nurturing their spiritual needs to providing practical help.

4.1. Worship and Prayer

St Alban's Church is open during the day on a Tuesday and Wednesday and on a Friday morning, and in our busy world it offers a place for people to pray or just sit in a quiet and sacred space.

Trustees Annual Report for 2024

In 2024 there were 84 people recorded on the electoral roll, which is a small increase from 2023. On average 60 people attend the Sunday Sung Eucharist. This includes about 20 children, which is higher than the national average for the Church of England. The older children regularly participate in these services by giving out service sheets, reading the lesson and intercessions, ringing the bells and serving. It has been noticeable that the young people have grown in confidence by taking on these roles. As a result it enabled them to lead the Crib Service. The young people go out to Junior Church at the start of the service and return during the Peace. They do activities that teach them about the same Gospel or readings being heard in church and have a chance to talk about what they have learnt towards the end of the service, which helps give them confidence with speaking in public.

Several all age services were held in 2024 as part of the Sunday Sung Eucharist that were specifically targeted at young people (no Junior Church is held at this time) e.g. Mothering Sunday.

A weekly said Eucharist is held that is attended by about 12 people. Major festivals such as Christmas and Easter, and the Carol Service tend to attract more people from the community. Other special services included: the Triduum at Easter, Harvest, Mothering Sunday, Christingle, Taize, and Wave of Prayer Services for the Mothers Union.

Once again, it was a pleasure to welcome The Holy Trinity Secondary School, who used St. Alban's church to host their carol service.

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

There were 3 Baptisms in 2024, which involved preparation with the parents/Godparents and the Baptism itself that took place either in the Sunday Eucharist or a small service with family, friends and representatives from the church.

The Lent Course was well attended and a lay leader led a fortnightly bible study group.

We have a dedicated team of volunteers who run Junior Church and this provided excellent teaching for our young people as well as being very much enjoyed by them.

The annual Good Friday Children's Workshop was well attended and enjoyed by all (40 children and 15 adults) as was the Christingle service (43 attendees).

Classes from Year 2 of Gossops Green Primary school visited the church as part of their studies to learn about the building, its features and how these are used. A member of the congregation and a retired vicar showed them around and answered their questions.

A member of the congregation visited Year 3 classes of Gossops Green Primary School to teach them about the meaning and symbols of Advent.

4.3. Provision of pastoral care

Pastoral care was provided by the pastoral care team and included home communions, regular phone calls and visits. It was offered to anyone in need, whether they were churchgoers or not.

4.4. Provision of practical support

Helping those in need provides a visible demonstration of our faith. Members of the congregation regularly provided practical help e.g. small jobs, shopping to those identified in need. We have a box in church for donations to the local foodbank, Freeshop Crawley, which is delivered regularly.

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. Social Services and NHS staff bring clients with whom they are working on a one to one basis and Age UK refer older people as well. Some people have been referred to the weekly health walk led by one of the volunteers. Local councillors, PCSO's and representatives from Age UK attend regularly to provide advice and practical help to those who attend.

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Our Tiny Toes toddler group continues to attract more and more people from the whole community and has proved to be a much 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 gifts are given to the children each year.

The Mothers' Union (MU) actively supports our mission through projects such as the Rise Up Project to support Victims of Domestic Abuse. As a result, they have received the Bronze award for supporting victims of domestic abuse. The MU also issue socks for Gatwick detainees and attend a Carol Service at Brook House, Gatwick's Immigration Removal Centre.

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. Food collections are also collected and delivered regularly to the Free Shop Crawley.

The parish supports Link to Hope by sending Christmas shoeboxes filled with useful items and toys to those in need in Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine (48 boxes in 2024).

We also support Open House, and the YMCA hub which supports young people as they move into adulthood and we have church members who help with cooking a weekly meal for the young people.

St. Alban's continues to support Open Doors through prayer, individuals providing financial gifts and advocacy. The latter is performed by encouraging our Member of Parliament to become informed about the World Watch List and by signing petitions for support of persecuted Christians, which is directed to national governments and the United Nations. We held our annual service dedicated to the persecuted church where the congregation learnt about the work performed by Open Doors.

4.5. Provision of the church buildings for people to enjoy

In addition to church services, one of our main focuses has been to explore ways in which our church buildings can be used for groups and events that are of value to our local community. These can take place in the church or church hall. As the chairs are not fixed in the church, it provides a large and flexible space for a wide range of varied activities.

A major event in 2024 was Rev. Ann's final service which was well attended by the regular congregation and those with whom she crossed paths in the community and wider afield during her 11 years in office. A celebration lunch was held that reinforced the sense of community in the church.

Other events such as the annual Cream Tea afternoon, Christmas Fair and Tree Festival, are enjoyed by the whole community. The wonderful cakes and refreshments offered at each event are lovingly baked by the fundraising team.

There are many other groups who regularly use the church and hall, including Alcoholics Anonymous, Slimming World, Rainbows, a Martial Arts class.

The Barn Church Bewbush is no longer used for regular Anglican services but it provides a resource centre for the parish and acts as a community centre. The building is used by regular groups who provide services that benefit the community: The Barn Pre School, Desire 2 Dance, and Elim Pentecostal Church, as well as being used for one-off events.

4.6. Significant Activities in 2024

- Taize service
- Visioning Day
- Fund raising concert given by an ex-chorister who now performs professionally
- Whole church meeting with Archdeacon Angela and Rev'd Richard Poole

Trustees Annual Report for 2024

- Patronal Festival and Rev'd Ann's 'send-off'
- Cream Tea
- Anne Oldham's talk on her job as makeup artist for Downton Abbey
- Harvest Festival Lunch
- Christingle service
- Christmas Tree Festival and Fair & Grand Draw
- Carol service
- Crib service

5. The Future

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.

Medium term plans include the installation of a kitchenette in the church. This will make it easier and safer to provide coffee after church services and other communal gatherings, which currently has to come from the church hall.

Further longer term plans include building a new entrance to make St. Alban's more accessible and to incorporate toilets within the church. At some stage we would be like to replace the church hall with a new multi-purpose brick building.

6. Financial Review

The summary of financial activities shows an increase in giving, an increase in the number of hirers of the Church Hall and a reduction in expenditure.

The tower requires significant time and money to make it structurally sound and the PCC is fundraising and identifying suitable grants specifically for this project.

6.1. Reserves


It is the PCC's policy that due to the age and condition of the buildings, it should maintain a balance on the general unrestricted funds which equates to approximately two months of unrestricted payments as contingency against unforeseen situations. The closing balance on unrestricted funds at the end of 2024 was c.£50,000, which achieved this.

6.2. 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.

7. Approval

This Trustees' Annual Report has been approved by the PCC and signed on their behalf by Sue Richardson, PCC Chair.



Date: 11.12.2025

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 2024 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').

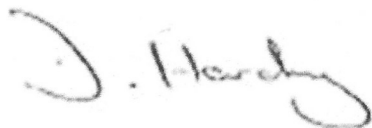
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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: 14 April 2025

Receipts and Payments Summary of Financial Activities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		2024 £	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	35,489	500	35,989	45,663
Trading activities	2	40,726	-	40,726	40,206
Other receipts	2	1,722	2,442	4,164	1,492
Total received		77,937	2,942	80,879	87,361
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	3	274	-	274	121
Charitable activities	3	47,377	-	47,377	44,713
Other payments	3	12,482	-	12,482	27,199
Total paid		60,133	-	60,133	72,033
Reconciliation of funds:					
Net income		17,804	2,942	20,746	15,328
Funds at 1 January		32,502	12,936	45,438	30,110
Funds at 31 December		50,306	15,878	66,184	45,438

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	2024	2024	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Assets:				
Bank current account	50,306	15,878	66,184	45,438

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):

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accruals	1,552	2,490

This Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2024, including the notes following, was approved by the PCC and signed on its behalf by S. RICHARDSON, PCC Chair:



Date: 11.4.2025

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
	2024	2024	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Planned giving (excl. tax refunds)	23,529	-	23,529	23,434
Planned giving (no tax refunds)	1,750	-	1,750	2,277
Loose cash collections	1,629	-	1,629	2,366
Special appeals	2,697	500	3,197	11,726
Gift aid recovered	5,884	-	5,884	5,860
Donations	35,489	500	35,989	45,663
Rental income	37,196	-	37,196	37,625
Fundraising events	3,530	-	3,530	2,581
Trading activities	40,726	-	40,726	40,206
Fees for weddings and funerals	491	-	491	1,084
Other receipts	1,231	2,442	3,673	408
Other receipts	1,722	2,442	4,164	1,492
Total received	77,937	2,942	80,879	87,361

Notes to the Annual Financial Report

3. Analysis of total paid

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		2024 £	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £
	Note				
Event costs		274	-	274	121
Raising funds		274	-	274	121
Charitable donations		-	-	-	-
Parish share to Chichester Diocese	4	20,004	-	20,004	15,000
Interregnum costs		1,206	-	1,206	-
Salaries and honoraria incl NI	6	3,802	-	3,802	3,525
Clergy and other people's expenses		2,184	-	2,184	3,609
Mission costs		1,193	-	1,193	942
Insurance		4,363	-	4,363	4,289
Water, gas, electric, and oil		8,807	-	8,807	13,400
Printing and photocopying		2,838	-	2,838	2,412
Wedding and funeral costs		1,167	-	1,167	-
Other regular church running costs		1,813	-	1,813	1,536
Charitable activities		47,377	-	47,377	44,713
Maintenance & redecoration		9,916	-	9,916	24,737
Accountancy fees		1,284	-	1,284	1,260
Bank fees		120	-	120	120
Other payments		1,162	-	1,162	1,082
Other payments		12,482	-	12,482	27,199
		60,133	-	60,133	72,033

4. Parish share to Chichester Diocese

The Parish share to Chichester Diocese of £20,000 (2023: £15,000) is for the payment of Clergy and other central costs. The full cost of the parish ministry amounts to c.£81,000 for the year (2023: c.£80,000). The shortfall is 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 preperation 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

	2024	2023
	£	£
Gross pay	3,501	3,300
Honaria payments	301	225
Salaries and honaria per note 3	<u>3,802</u>	<u>3,525</u>

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.

Furthermore the charity has also received funds which are restricted for expenditure in relation to the Toddler group at the church.

	2024	2023
	£	£
Building fund	13,436	12,936
Toddler group	2,442	-
	<u>15,878</u>	<u>12,936</u>

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.