

# THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF THE BRIDGE GROUP

England & Wales · Charity number 1197483

## Details

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**Status** Registered

**Legal form** Other

**Registered** 2022-01-13

**Register** [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

## Contact

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Canterbury  
CT4 5AR

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**Website** <http://www.bridgechurchgroup.co.uk>

## Activities

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**Objects:** PROMOTING IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH THE WHOLE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

**Activities:** The role of the PCC is to oversee the affairs of the Parish, including financial management, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, and the care and maintenance of the church buildings. Also to assist the clergy in the leadership and spiritual guidance of the Parish.

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** Children/young People, The General Public/mankind

## Geography

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- Kent

## Finances

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Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£350,803	£147,909	-	-
2023-12-31	£155,891	£139,387	-	-
2022-12-31	£160,807	£146,131	-	-

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Alan Frank Barber		2020-01-01
Alison Mannering		2025-04-30
Amanda Jane Barker		2020-01-01
BRIGADIER MARTIN JOHN MEARDON		2020-01-01
Carol Ann Day		2020-01-01
Daphne Elizabeth Oylin Reece		2020-01-01
Dr Andrea Margaret Nicholson PhD BSc		2020-01-01
Evelyn Alethea Andrews		2020-01-01
GRAHAM DUPLOCK		2020-01-01
Gillian Moon		2025-04-30
Laurence Henry Dunderdale		2020-01-01
MIRIAM JEAN WESTENDARP		2021-05-09
Nicola Fry		2020-01-01
Pauline Ann Pritchard		2020-01-01
Priscilla Wright		2020-01-01
RODERICK GRANT WETHERELL MD FRCS		2020-01-01
Rosemary Anne Whatley		2020-01-01
Rosemary Jane Elizabeth Atkinson		2020-01-01
WILLIAM JOHN DAY		2024-04-28

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# Accounts

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**DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY**  
**The Parish of the Bridge Group**

Comprising the churches of St Peter's Bridge, St Mary's Patrixbourne, St Peter's Bekesbourne,  
St Mary's Lower Hardres and St Mary's Nackington.

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE  
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024

**Incumbent**

Reverend Canon Estella Last

**Bankers**

*In respect of The Bridge Group Parish*

The Co-operative Bank PLC

*and*

The CBF Church of England Funds  
85 Queen Victoria St, London EC4 4ET

*There are residual bank accounts in respect of  
Bridge, Patrixbourne, Lower Hardres and Nackington held with*

Lloyds TSB bank PLC  
49 High Street, Canterbury Kent CT1 2SE

*And in respect of St Peter's Bekesbourne*  
Natwest

**Independent Examiner**

David Muggridge FCCA MAE  
Ackland Webb Ltd

## **Introduction**

Since January 2020, the churches of St Peter's Bridge, St Mary's Patricxbourne, St Peter's Bekesbourne, St. Mary's Lower Hardres and St Mary's Nackington have formed one ecclesiastical parish. This is now known as The Parish of the Bridge Group in the County of Kent, within the East Bridge Deanery of the Diocese of Canterbury of the Church of England.

We are an episcopal church led by The Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York; the See of Canterbury is currently vacant following the resignation of Archbishop Justin Welby last year. He is assisted by The Rt Rev'd Rose Hudson Wilkin, the Bishop of Dover. Our Patrons are The Archbishop of Canterbury and the President and Scholars of St John's College Oxford. This is the fifth Annual Report of the newly created Parish of the Bridge Group.

## **Aims and Purposes of this report**

This annual report is made to the parishioners of the Bridge Group of churches and the members on the church electoral roll who live within or outside the parish. The Church Representation Rules (Rule 9 (1) (b)) require 'an annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the church generally' to be received by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), to be held this year on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025. The APCM is invited to discuss it.

The PCC sincerely thank all those people who voluntarily give their time and money to serving the church in many ways thus enabling the five churches in our Parish to flourish as a Christian community.

## **2024 – Progress to report**

At the time of the last Annual Report, the PCC had paid the Diocesan Parish Share for 2023 in full, but was carrying forward historic arrears of over £20,000 from the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. The Diocese offered to write off 50% of the arrears in return for immediate settlement, and we took the difficult decision to make the reduced payment from endowment funds, with the aim of restoring these, if possible, at some point in the future.

Within a few weeks, the PCC received a donation of great generosity which has enabled us to make good the withdrawal from the endowment funds entirely, and has, in addition, greatly increased the reserves in the Fabric Fund at St Peter's. The donor has chosen to remain anonymous, but the PCC and the wider church community will benefit greatly from this gesture, and we are immensely grateful.

After several years of preparation and planning, the project to provide toilet and kitchen facilities for visiting pilgrims at St Mary's Patricxbourne has been granted a Faculty, allowing work to proceed. At the time the Faculty was granted, it was unclear whether sufficient funds would be available, and it seemed likely that the project would have to be scaled back. However, another anonymous donation of great generosity has been received, allowing the project to proceed as planned. Building work will commence at the beginning of March 2025.

So these are exciting times, and the Parish enters a new year in good financial health and with much to look forward to. The pattern of church services developed since the creation of the

single Parish is now well established, and the sense of community across the five churches has been notably enhanced. The work of Estella, Miriam and the Ministry team continues to hold our church community together and drives us forward, and we are fortunate to be led by such inspiring and dedicated individuals. Curate Miriam will sadly be leaving us soon, and will go with our thanks and heartfelt best wishes. Wherever she goes, her parishioners will be fortunate and blessed by her ministry.

Rory Wetherell , PCC Secretary

## **Vicar's Report**

Having read through all the reports for this year's Annual Report I find there isn't much more for me to say. The report itself is a great encouragement. I know at times it can feel hard to be the Church of England at the moment for all sorts of reasons and we have not had an easy year in some ways, but I think with the limits on resources, both human and financial that we have, we do a great job all things considered! Eco church, Care Home visits, Messy Church, Coffee mornings and other social and fundraising events, toddler group and our support group for parents of children with neurodiversity all add to our shared life together over and above the work of being the church and our life of worship and prayer together.

We continue to develop good relationships with families from all over the Parish partly due to our relationship with Bridge and Patricbourne School but also to the times when we offer worship and events at which families are welcomed and can participate in. We have particularly enjoyed having the Choir from Bridge and Patricbourne School fulfil the role of Church Choir at a number of services, and it has been a joy to welcome the children and their families on these occasions. Full and lively churches over festival periods, Easter and Christmas also demonstrate that our communities still embrace the opportunity to be in church at these times, if not every week.

It is a huge benefit to us that working together as we do across the Parish, the responsibilities of Governance, Administration, Finance and Safeguarding are shared, and we are able to tackle our challenges together. We also have those who work to fundraise for the fabric and for special projects in each of our churches. We have been particularly blessed in 2024 with some extremely large donations which will support the fabric of our church buildings and enable exciting projects at Patricbourne and Nackington to come to fruition in 2025 as well as the Lychgate at Bekesbourne and hopefully see some improvements to the Audio-Visual facilities at Bridge in the coming year.

All of this is thanks not just to the Clergy and Ministry Team but to all those who give their time and energy to support the work of the church and ensure that we can serve the communities in which we are set. Particular mention must be made of all the Churchwardens who shoulder the lion's share of this work, and all who help them, and of course to our PCC members as well. In the background though there are bellringers, flower arrangers, those who care for our churchyards, those who clean, make the coffee and wash- up. The list goes on but often many individuals take on more than one job, perhaps 2025 can be the year when we encourage more people to get involved and help us with the work that we do – I wonder, who could you ask to help you with whatever it is you contribute to the life of our churches or how could you get more involved if you're not already?

I mentioned earlier that in some ways 2024 had not been an easy year. Between us we conducted something in the region of 28 funerals and a further nine Interments of Ashes on a separate occasion (some of these were in churches outside our parish to assist parishes in vacancy or due to pastoral connections). Many of these were folk well known to us in the villages but we should make particular mention of Bob Thomas who had worked tirelessly in support of St Mary's Nackington for more than 50 years, Margaret Clarke who in her capacity as Lay Reader and friend to all had given so much to the churches and parishes working almost full time for decades, Elizabeth Kirkwood who had served as a sidesperson at St Mary's Patricbourne and John Harris, who had been organist at both Bekesbourne and Patricbourne for a number of years. Faithful folk who had served the church in so many ways during their lifetimes and whose loss is felt in ripples across our Parish. As 2025 began the losses to our community have continued. We celebrated the long 104 year span of Dorothy King, previously choir mistress and sometimes organist at St Peter's Bridge and more recently that of David Spencer who finally succumbed to the cancer which he had battled for so long; and John Hill whose contributions to the Parish over the years have ranged from PCC member to candlestick maker and almost all things in between over many decades of living in Bridge. I am writing this report as Easter approaches and so I am reminded strongly of the hope we share in the promise of eternal life and our prayer for all our faithful departed loved ones that they may indeed, rest in peace and rise in glory.

This year in our Lent Course we have been encouraged to seek Living Hope, even in the challenges of life, and especially at points when we have felt despair. The evolution of House Groups during Advent 2024 and Lent 2025 is, I think, an encouragement in itself and one which I hope we will continue to explore in 2025. How good it is to come together in small groups to study scripture together, to share our life experiences, and to pray for one another. As we look for new ways to enliven the life of our churches in the coming year and deepen their connection in and with their village communities, maybe this could be one of the marks of who we are as a church community. A church that supports and sustains one another through study and prayer and not just on Sundays.

In some ways 2024 has continued to be as 2023 was, a year of consolidation and embedding of worship schedules and practices not just post pandemic but for us as well, post single parish. I think though as we move forward in 2025 we will need to give some thought to what the future looks like, to continue the work of enabling our churches to be assets to the communities we serve (rather than simply monuments to be preserved) and to consider how we can shape our worship in such a way that it is reaching the most people, offering the best missional opportunities and being as accessible as possible. A common theme in the Bible regarding welcome and invitation is found in passages encouraging hospitality and love for others, even those who may be considered strangers. Some verses emphasize the importance of extending a warm welcome to all, while others focus on inviting people to a spiritual and eternal invitation from God. For those of us who work for the Church it is good to be reminded that we are the agents of God's welcome and hospitality, and our work is not simply about sustaining the church we like or want but building a church that can enable everyone to grow in faith and discipleship for many years to come. May this be our focus as we go forward together this year.

Rev'd Canon Estella Last  
Vicar



## **Updates from each of our Churches**

### **St Peter's Bridge**

#### **Services**

Our services (mainly) followed the established pattern –

1st Sunday Choral Evensong at 6pm. The September service was entitled “Hymns and Pimms”

2nd Sunday Parish Communion at 10 am. On Mothering Sunday, the school choir attended. On Palm Sunday the service was preceded by a procession from the school to church led by Banks the donkey (who stayed in church during the service). The school choir also attended the July and October services

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Family Service at 4 pm. This service ran from January to May, but with gradually dwindling numbers the Clergy/Leadership team considered the viability of this service and, reluctantly, discontinued the service.

In September and November there was a youth led service, called “Breakthrough”. This was led by Teenagers for interested youths. It was held at 6pm on a Saturday.

Additional services throughout the year included – Ash Wednesday Communion, Maundy Thursday evening Tenebrae, Remembrance Day service in church and at the War Memorial with the Nailbourne Scouts (all ages) attending, Carol Service and 2 Christingle Services.

The school held services for Easter, Summer (end of term), Year R Reception, Harvest, Advent and Year 2 Nativity. The school also participated in Lent Prayer Station over 2 days.

The Nailbourne Scouts held their Christmas service in December.

There were two Baptisms, one Wedding, one Wedding Blessing, five Funeral services (of which two services were attended by over 350 people) and two Interment of Ashes

#### **Church Building**

The building is mainly in good order and is open every day.

There continue to be minor flaking of various areas of stonework, which are kept under review.

The Belfry cleaning and re-netting was carried out in late summer.

In the gales in late November a section of the spire was dislodged by the wind. Although it looked serious at first it was found on closer inspection that it was a “panel” which was repaired and re-fixed promptly by Colman Contactors.

The clock is mainly in working order, thanks to Mark Esdale who looks after it. A fault with the Automatic Winding mechanism developed, resulting in the striking being disconnected.

The fire extinguishers were inspected/serviced in February.

The heating boilers were serviced in June. A fan fault was discovered but rectified under Warranty.

During the autumn the Vicar's vestry was painted.

In December there was a problem with the toilet being blocked but this was cleared thanks to assistance from Steve Briant.

The organ had an annual tuning.

The church silver and vestments are in good order.

The choir is led by Jean Barber, who is our main organist. Dan Luck and Gerard Ahearn assist with organ playing as required.

Rosemary Whatley is our Sacristan, Viv Brasier organises the flower arrangers, there is a small team of volunteer cleaners. Eco church recycling continues and volunteers take the materials to various places for onward recycling.



## **Churchyard**

The churchyard continues to be maintained by Canterbury City Council, who just cut/trim the grass during the mowing season. Any other maintenance/tidying is carried out by volunteers as and when they are available. Some help is occasionally available from staff from The Pig. Overhanging dead tree branches are still a concern but are being monitored.

Laurence Dunderdale and Evelyn Andrews  
Churchwardens

## **St Mary's Patrixbourne**

The congregation for the 10am Sung Communion service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month consistently ranges from 25 to 40 people with Gerard Aherne playing the organ. Coffee is served after the service and people appreciate the chance to chat to each other. On 3<sup>rd</sup> October we hosted the funeral of Elizabeth Kirkwood, a regular member of the congregation and a former Sidesman at the church. The Carol Service was attended by 40 people including four children. Once again, the carols were chosen by residents and the congregation of the church, and the lessons were read by adults and children living in the village.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> June, we hosted the volunteers from the Pilgrims Hospice who provided refreshments to 350 walkers on the sponsored walk from Dover to Canterbury with a further optional leg from Canterbury to Wye. They were hoping to raise £100,000 for the charity. The number of people visiting the church continues to rise and 20 pilgrims have stayed overnight at the church. The number of visitors signing into our Visitors' book is being analysed by a lady from London to use the data for her Master's degree on the number of people undertaking pilgrimage. We have also been visited by a Swedish researcher, wanting to look at English churches offering overnight Sanctuary to pilgrims in England, with a view to introducing it along the pilgrim routes in Sweden, although all churches in Sweden are maintained and run by the Swedish State.

We now have an electronic card reader in the church, which allows visitors to use a card to donate to the church and sign up for Gift Aid to be added to their donation too. Many people readily use the machine. As there is no internet access at the church, the machine is periodically collected by Rev Estella Last and transactions downloaded once the internet can be accessed at the Vicarage.

The clock has continued to function spasmodically throughout the year, with visits from the clock engineers only temporarily solving the problem. The church yard continues to be maintained by Tim Millet, but the ground has been plagued by moles when the ground is wet. During the year we have hosted a hornet monitoring station in the churchyard as part of a network set up by East Kent beekeepers.

A rota for flowers at the altar in the church is managed by Mary Evans and we are very grateful to Rosemary Whatley for cleaning the church prior to our monthly service.

The Faculty for the extension at St Mary's was received in late December 2023, but in January the planning permission from Canterbury City Council expired so had to be applied for again. This was granted in March 2024. Once this was received applications for grants to fund the work were submitted but were unsuccessful. However, a donation of £100,000 towards the building

work was received from a private donor and work to build the extension on the north side of the church is due to commence in the spring of 2025. The Quinquennial Inspection was carried out by Andrew Clague, the church architect, in October and missing tiles and blocked gullies were rectified by Colman Contractors in November.

Andrea Nicholson and Pauline Pritchard  
Churchwardens.

### **St Peter's Bekesbourne**

#### **Services**

Our Songs of Praise service continues to be very popular. It is a lay-led service which takes place on the first Sunday of the month at 10.00am. The services are planned around a particular theme and led by different volunteers. We are grateful for all the advice and support we receive from Estella, our vicar and Miriam, our curate. Either one or both attend the services. Refreshments are served after the service, and everyone is encouraged to stay and chat.

In 2024, four Parish Communion services were held (January, March, June and August)

The Carol service on Christmas Day at 11.00am was enjoyed by a congregation of 120 and 11 dogs

In September the bellringers from the South East area met to ring together and hold their Annual Service and AGM in the church with refreshments afterwards.

In 2024, there was one funeral (Alan Hayes) and one Baptism (Georgina Cox)

#### **Bell Ringers**

We have an enthusiastic band of bellringers who meet to practice every Monday evening. They ring before all our services and many of them stay and participate in the service. In May they held an Open Afternoon when people were invited to come along and find out what bell ringing was all about. Four beginners were recruited. Two of them have dropped out for various reasons but two remain. Dave Durrell has organised an additional practice session for them on a Friday morning.

#### **The Church Building**

A faculty to restore the lychgate has been approved. Mervyn Gulvin has drawn up the plans. They have been sent out to tender. We are hoping the work can be agreed and completed with as little disruption as possible.

Our Bevington organ is regularly serviced and is normally played at all services. Andrew, our organist, plays at all our Songs of Praise services and does not take payment. We give him a 'thank you' gift at the end of the year. We would welcome visiting organists to come and play as the organ would benefit from being used more often.

The churchyard is an 'open churchyard' and is maintained by volunteers. It continues to be our policy to maintain the churchyard by balancing ecologically sound management, good accessibility for present and former parishioners to visit their family graves, and a beautiful setting for the church. Several working parties organised by Ian Gillanders tidy the churchyard and cut back trees and shrubs where necessary. We have welcomed two new younger members to the group this year.

Regular mowing is carried out by a contractor. The Parish Council of Bekesbourne with Patricbourne pay a substantial grant towards this.

Nicky Fry, Churchwarden

### **St Mary's Nackington**

An uneventful year during which John Meardon has spent considerable time on work towards the church improvement programme. The Faculty has been granted and the Canterbury City Council has given planning permission for the proposed works to proceed. The first phase of the project is planned to start after Easter.

The service pattern remains unchanged with 8 am Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month and Morning Prayer on the third Sunday. The attendance numbers have not significantly changed this year. There have been four weddings, all very different, during this past year. There was a large one in the summer when the church was full to capacity; following the service the guests were entertained by a white suited Dixie Band in the church yard as they waited for the Red Route Master bus to take them away to the reception. A smaller wedding took place, when the best man/ ring bearer was a fairly well-behaved black dog. The final smaller wedding just after Christmas had a delightful string quartet to entertain the guests. Other services during the year have been held for Easter, Ascension Day, Benefice Harvest & Remembrance Sunday.

The Christmas Eve service was well attended and appreciated by the congregation. Gerard played for this service. We have also held one funeral and three services for interment of ashes.

Several longstanding and loyal members of the congregation have died this year.

Bob Thomas died last Spring. The church was full for a service which was live streamed to Parsonage Farmhouse Barn where a further 90 friends and colleagues were present. Bob has been a hugely active and involved member of the local community and surrounding area over a long time; he was a Church Warden and member of the Parish Council for over 40 years. Bob organised the last church refurbishment, the church yard extension and the relocation from the old village hall to the new site.

Margaret Clarke died in the Autumn. Her funeral was held in Bridge Church and then there was a lively tea party in Parsonage Farmhouse Barn for her many friends and family. Margaret was a good friend to Nackington, and always supportive of any Friends event that was being held.

We thank John and Ann for their help and support over the year, and Philip & Susan Cheetham for their help with our music.

Daphne Reece & Scilla Wright  
Churchwardens

### **St Mary's Lower Hardres**

We have continued with the same pattern of services this year with Lower Hardres having the Parish Communion Service at 10am on the fourth Sunday of the month. This service continues to be well supported with people from across the wider parish. There are always refreshments available at the end of the services for people to enjoy while they chat and catch up with each other.

We were delighted to have the Easter Sunday Communion Service in St Mary's Lower Hardres this year. The church was beautifully decorated with flowers and the service was very well attended. Hot cross buns were served afterwards and there was an Easter Egg Hunt in the churchyard for the children.

On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June, at 8.45pm, a special Commemoration Service was held in the church to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings. A peace lantern was lit at 9.15pm to join with the 800 beacons being lit at this time along the coastline and across the countryside with hundreds of smaller lamp lights to mark the occasion.

A short memorial service was held as usual at the war memorial in Lower Hardres on Remembrance Sunday at 10.45am. The service was led by Miriam Westendarp, our Lay Chaplain, and was attended by more than 30 people. Douglas McCully laid the poppy wreath and read the Roll of Honour and the National Anthem was sung.

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm, the Community Carols were held in the church instead of the John Baker White hall which meant that the Carol singing could be combined with the telling of the Christmas Story and the setting up of the crib with the help of the children. Mulled wine, hot chocolate, sausage rolls and mince pies were served and a Christmas tree was decorated in the church. This went well and over 60 adults and children attended.

There were no baptisms, weddings or funerals this year in the church but Margaret Clarke was received into the church on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September at 4.30pm prior to her funeral the next day in Bridge Church. Margaret Clarke had served as a Lay Reader in the parish for nearly 30 years and had devoted much of her time, energy and love to the church in Lower Hardres and the people in the parish. There was an opportunity for people who knew her from Lower Hardres or were connected to her through her services and outreach in the village to come and light a candle and spend some quiet time with her for the last time. The church was beautifully decorated, absolutely full of flowers of every colour and the fragrance in the church was wonderful. A large team of volunteers spent much time and love making the church look special for Margaret. She will be sorely missed.

St Mary's Church is open as usual, all day, every day of the year for visitors and private prayer.

I am very grateful to the small team of helpers who keep the church clean and tidy and who help make the church beautiful with flower arrangements throughout the year.

The churchyard is open and is mown regularly by Mr Chris Tanton. We are grateful to the Parish Council who make a donation towards the upkeep of the churchyard every year which enables us to keep it looking well cared for. I would also like to thank David and Ann Nicholls who have helped keep the churchyard clear and tidy again this year. Areas of the churchyard are left 'wild' to encourage wildlife and we have been part of the God's Acre Project for many years. This is all part of our efforts to be as environmentally friendly as possible in all aspects of the church and its grounds.

I would like to thank the Friends of St Mary's Lower Hardres and the members of our church team for their interest and support. I would especially like to thank Ann Nicholls for all that she has done throughout the year to help and support the church in Lower Hardres and myself as Churchwarden.

Carol Day, Churchwarden

## **Friend's Organisations**

### **Friends of St Peter's Bridge (FOSP)**

Established 2014 for major fabric repairs and outreach into the community, Coffee & Cake Concerts began with Carols in 2016 . They remain popular and the concerts in 2024 were:

- (1) Jan - Classical Concert (Violin & Piano) [£100 to Porchlight & £100 to Church\*]
- (2) Feb - Favourite Things (Bill Lloyd Hughes) [£120 to Médecins sans Frontières & £124 to Church\*]
- (3) Mar – Spring Show (Sharon & Amanda) [£115 to Guide Dogs for the Blind & £120 to Church\*]
- (4) Apl – ‘A Shelter for Sadness’ (Anne Booth) [£200 to Porchlight & £125 to Church\*]
- (5) May – ‘The Gypsy’s Bride’ (Katie Hudson) [£196 to Christian Aid\*]
- (6) Sept – Charles Wills (95 years in Bridge) [ £180 to Foodbank & £35 to Church\*]
- (7) Oct – Canterbury Ladies Choir & Canterbury Voices [£200 to Canterbury Vocals Scholarship Fund & £106 to Church\*]
- (8) Nov – Another morning of songs (Allan Richardson) [£120 to Christian Aid & £80 to Church\*]
- (9) Dec – 8th Annual Carol Concert [£275 to Embrace the Middle East & £51 to Church\*]

Total Proceeds £2247 with £1506 going to various charities and £741 to Bridge Church General Fund.

[\* Sharing arrangements agreed with Concert givers]

**NOTE** – Coffee & Cake Concerts are planned monthly through to June 2025

Alan Barber

### **Friends of Bekesbourne Church**

The Friends' strongly believe our work helps towards protecting the future of our Church building. We do this by organising various events bringing the community together throughout the year.

Last year's events are listed below together with the profit made from each event.

100 club Draw, organised by Steve Thomas, raised £1250 in 2024  
Wine & Wisdom Quiz Night in the Village Hall, raised £506.50 in May  
Summer Lunch Party at the Old Palace, raised £460 in July  
Charlie Sings Evening in the Village Hall raised £140 in October  
Xmas Bazaar in the Village Hall, raised £552 in December

We have also received donations of £300. Our reserves currently stand at a healthy £18,776 some of which will be used to towards restoration of the Lych Gate. We also funded the replacement of a new Chancel ceiling light, costing £338.

We wish to thank our wonderful volunteers who enable us to run these. At the same time we are very keen to encourage all villagers to be involved and support the events we organise throughout the year. These events bring together newcomers and encourage them, and the stalwarts, to enter into the community spirit. We would like to thank the villagers who have supported and helped at our events during 2024 and hope you continue, and more villagers will follow your example in the future. Please spread the word and look out for events the Committee is organising this year. If any of you have your own ideas of what you would like to see us organise, please do not hesitate to contact any one of us. Again, thank you all for your continuing support, and we will endeavour to achieve a successful and profitable 2025 continuing to support the fabric of our beautiful church.

Christine Dutfield, Chair Friends' of Bekesbourne Church

### **The Friends of Nackington Church**

In April, a talk by Dick Bolton entitled "Gardens Great and Small" was cancelled as Dick was ill. However, the talk was re-scheduled and took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024. Ticket sales and generous donations amounted to £600.

On 4<sup>th</sup> December, The Salvation Army Band came to Parsonage Barn for Carol Singing and refreshments. This event made £400 in ticket sales and donations for the church, and the retiring collection for the Salvation Army amounted to another £300. Thanks to Scilla and Evelyn Wright for allowing us to use their Barn for these events.

We have now received both the Faculty for the development project and planning consent from the City Council. We are hoping that work will start after Easter with the installation of the new heating system as the first stage.

There will be further fundraising events to raise money for the full project during the year.

Ann Meardon

### **Deanery Report**

During 2024 new appointments have been made in the Deanery. The Rev Caroline Turvey has been appointed to the Canonry Benefice and Rev Clary Read has become the Curate in the Barham Benefice. The Rev Estella Last is the new Area Dean.

In 2024 three Deanery synod meetings were held and a joint East Bridge and West Bridge Deanery Roadshow was held in September. The May Deanery meeting looked at what was working well in our Parishes and what could be even better. The July meeting looked at the Diocesan 3 bold outcomes, which are:

- 1) Doubling the number of children and young disciples in today's church.
- 2) Creating 200 new Christian communities by 2030
- 3) Every Parish, Benefice and Deanery should be showing signs of revitalisation by 2030.

The September Joint Deanery Roadshow was attended by Bishop Rose and various Diocesan officers and offered four workshops looking at:

- 1) Creating routes for growing young disciples
- 2) Noticing and naming God's movement in the world around us
- 3) Mission Action Planning
- 4) Parish Share and how will we be able to afford it.

With many members of both deaneries present, lively discussion took place in each workshop and such joint working proved to be very inspiring.

The November meeting spent time looking at the Diocesan budget and how it would affect Parish Share in the coming year. Representatives were also asked to suggest topics for forthcoming Deanery Synod meetings. The issue of appointing a new Lay Chair is still to be resolved.

Andrea Nicholson, Deanery Synod Representative 2024.

### **Christian Aid report**

Christian Aid Week in 2024 focused on Burundi. At the start of Christian Aid Week a film was shown at Bridge about a community raising themselves out of poverty by setting up a savings and loan society funded by a Christian Aid partner organisation.

As in 2023 Christian Aid Week was celebrated in our Parish over the whole month of May, with money raised in several ways. The May Coffee and Cake concert raised £196, envelopes in our five churches £129, deliver-only envelopes in selected roads in Bridge £429.19, a Plant Sale at Bekesbourne Wednesday Coffee Morning £119.70 and the Parish online e-envelope £652, totalling £1,525.89, only a little less than in 2023. The majority of donations were Gift-Aided.

Bridge and Patrixbourne Primary School took part in the 70k Challenge. All the children walked around the playground three times carrying a full cup of water to recognise how precious water is. This raised £269.18 in sponsorship.

In addition, the Count Your Blessings Lent Appeal envelopes raised £55, some late envelope returns and other donations £39.19 and the Bridge Flower Festival and Rosy Atkinson's retirement party in July £319. Therefore the total donation to Christian Aid for 2024 from the Parish was £1,935.08.

The Canterbury Christian Aid committee has met regularly to plan awareness and fund-raising events. We had a Christian Aid stall focusing on poverty and climate change at the Diocesan Eco Fayre and this was transferred to the Cathedral for Christian Aid Week. On Whitsunday at the end of Christian Aid Week the Cathedral hosted Patrick Watt, the Director of Christian Aid, who preached an inspiring sermon at the morning Eucharist.

Thank you to everyone who supports Christian Aid in the Parish in any way.

Jean Barber.

### **Parish Eco-Church Team**

Due to other commitments the Eco Church Team has found it difficult to come together regularly so has met only once this year. We have not started any new environmental projects but have continued to make progress with existing ones.

The Bridge Recycling Station continues to be well used. Soft plastics and blister packs are collected weekly and taken for recycling by two teams of volunteers. These containers in church are frequently over-flowing. More volunteers would be welcome, especially for the blister packs.

Bridge churchyard continues to be maintained by volunteers from the village. Some of the dangerous tree branches have been removed.

Bekesbourne Church had a successful volunteering day with people from the village helping in the churchyard and surrounding woodland. Families are being encouraged to explore and use the natural environment.

Bridge Eco Church had a display table at the Diocesan Eco Fayre at St Peter's Anglican Church in May. Interest was shown by people wishing to start their own Eco Church Group.

Three members of the Team attended the Diocesan 'Growing Greener' Conference in October. The focus was mainly on decreasing churches' carbon footprint by efficient heating, lighting and insulation. Churches were encouraged to do an Energy Audit.

An Eco Church Newsletter was produced in June and distributed to all five churches.

We had a Fairtrade stall at Bekesbourne Christmas Bazaar, focusing on ways of living more sustainably rather than fund raising. We sold Fairtrade goods from our local supermarkets at cost price to show how much is available locally and encourage people to shop fairly. We also had goods from the Refillable Van and ideas for cleaning with natural products, as well as Christmas wreaths using fresh foliage and fruits.

The Parish has achieved its target of having a single utilities contract for all its churches. The supplier is British Gas Lite. The Parish now has four smart meters, and the final two are due to be fitted soon.

A Rocha has published a revised Eco Church Survey which we will have to consider as we attempt to maintain our Eco Church Silver Award status. There are 10 silver level churches in Canterbury; we are responsible for five of them.

We would welcome support from more members of the church community to help us to reinvigorate our eco efforts!

Megan Shirley, Jean Barber, Nicky Fry.

### **Choir and music report for APCM 2025**

The choir has seven regular members (eight including the Vicar) but it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide a full number for Sunday services, due to travel and other commitments. This means the choir sings a Communion hymn or anthem only occasionally now. Hilary Whiting, who has sung in the choir for many years, has had to retire for family reasons but Rosy Atkinson is now singing regularly. Many thanks to Hilary for her strong commitment through the years.

It has been good to welcome children from the Bridge and Patricxbourne School Choir with their music teacher, Helen Brookes to lead two of our services in the past year and we look forward to them returning on Mothering Sunday.

The experimental 'Come and Sing' Evensongs started well and over a dozen new people have sung with the choir over the past year and a half, but numbers have now diminished and the

arrangement has become hard to sustain. Because of this and the dwindling Evensong congregation, it was decided to discontinue them and an evening service will now take place only on special occasions.

The Parish Choir continues to form the core of a community choir which performs at locally arranged Saturday Coffee and Cake Concerts. The Carol Service at Bridge went well with a few extra singers supporting. Some of the choir and other friends also sang carols at the Red Lion after the Christmas Farmers Market and at The Pig on Christmas Eve.

Many thanks to our regular team of organists in the Parish – Gerard Ahern (Bridge and Patricbourne), Andrew Cooper (Bekesbourne), and to Philip and Susan Cheetham for the music at Nackington. We are grateful to Dan Luck who plays for our Christingle services, sometimes for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Parish Communion at Bridge and covers on other occasions.

Mander Organ Builders continue to tune and maintain the organs annually.

Patricbourne and Bridge churches are affiliated to the RSCM and an annual fee is paid.

Jean Barber,

Bridge and Lower Hardres Organist.

### **Bridge CEP School**

The school remains oversubscribed with a full role of 420 pupils and 70 staff members. Estella is on the Board of Governors and PTA committee and the ministry team lead collective worship in school weekly. The PCC nominates two Foundation Governors (Graham Duplock and Victoria Pattison). During the year we sadly lost Margaret Clarke who had supported the school and children for so many years.

The House system and naming of classes continues to give children inspiration and ownership of their groups with House Behn winning the Cup for 2023-24. Parental Phonics and Reception workshops were held.

Our senior leadership structure has changed following KCC approach to second James Tibbles to provide School Improvement services for two days a week. He is now Executive Head with Michael Taylor becoming Head of School. This provides us with significant financial return to bolster our financial position.

The financial situation remained challenging this year, but school has retained its diversity and quantity of experiences for the children, protecting its arts/music provision, expanding Forest School and offering a great variety of visits and classroom focuses (many repeated each year) including:

Swimming lessons, exchange with pupils from Montpelier, Dutch teachers visited this year, year 5 pupils day at the Science Museum, a Safer Internet Day held, Museum of Kent Life visit, outdoor learning on site and Forest School visits at Covert Wood, Sports Day, year 5 & 6 residentials, year 6 production of The Wizard of Oz, full school year of class trips and interschool sporting events including: Tag Rugby, Girls & Boys Football, Dynamos Cricket, Netball, Hockey and Cross Country running.

Children have continued to visit Bridge Church for Lent, Easter, end of year, year R welcome with parents, Harvest Festival, Advent and year 2 Nativity services.

Working with the local community is important to the school with events: Messy Church at school, PTA Firework Display (raising >£15K) and joint Summer Fete (with Church) taking place. Our usual preparations for the Christmas Festival; Church Christmas Card design competition, Salvation Army concert, children's Nativities, senior citizen's party, Carols in the village took place.

We again had more than 50% of pupils assessed as eligible for grammar school places and our KS2-SATS results showing 85 – 90% meeting required standards for Reading, Writing, Grammar Punctuation Spelling and Maths compared to 70 – 75% nationally.

The foundation governors would like to thank the staff, parents and PTFA for their continued support for the school throughout the year. The school community has continued to provide a Christian foundation for its children and the community.

Graham Duplock  
Foundation Governor

### **Parents of Neurodivergent children coffee and catch-up**

This group meet approximately monthly during term time. It's a chance for parents and caregivers of neurodivergent children to share their experiences, and provide mutual support for some of the specific challenges facing these families. There is a core group of around 6-12 regulars, and we enjoy a cuppa and a chat, and share information and ideas. It has been well received again this past year.

We will continue meeting monthly for the current school year, and then there is a question to ask about how the group might continue (if parents would like it to) in my absence next year.

Miriam Bier Hinksman, Assistant Curate

### **Parish Magazine**

**On the Nail** is the Parish magazine for Bridge, Patricbourne and Bekesbourne.

10 editions were published in 2024. 500 copies are printed each month, of which 290 copies are delivered to subscribers in Bridge, 43 to Patricbourne and 115 to Bekesbourne.

Copies are available in each of our five churches. Rev. Estella has copies to hand out. Copies are available in some retail premises in Bridge. The Pig has copies to hand out to guests. Copies are posted to former residents.

The annual subscription remains at £5.00. Printing costs are higher (currently 59p per copy) but the advertising revenue helps cover this cost.

Megan Shirley, our Parish administrator, gathers the information monthly, edits and typesets the magazine prior to printing. Steve Thomas co-ordinates the advertising.

Our thanks go to Megan, Steve and all the volunteers who deliver the magazine across our three villages.

Laurence Dunderdale

## **Single Parish Electoral Roll 2024-5**

The total on the Electoral Roll for the parish this year is 157, three less than last year. A complete revision of the Electoral Roll will be made with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Rosemary Whatley  
Electoral Roll Officer

## **Safeguarding 2024-2025**

I am pleased to report that there have been no Safeguarding issues in the past year. In the light of recent events the importance of all concerned strenuously following Safeguarding guidelines, has been given even higher priority.

A Parish Policy for Safeguarding is in place. We encourage an open culture so that anybody with concerns regarding safeguarding issues knows that they can report them to me, the Vicar or Curate. Any concerns will be taken in strict confidence and referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for advice.

An online parish Dashboard and Hub for record keeping have been made available and we have begun to use these tools to help ensure that guidelines are being followed.

Training for those with a variety of roles in the Parish is proceeding on a three-year rolling programme. Churchwardens should now undertake the Leadership Level of training. There has been some delay for those trying to access this course due to high demand. Some have now completed the level, and others are about to do so.

Enhanced DBS checks for all lay people who assist in the parish are up to date. At present DBS checks are in place for 20 people and these too last for three years.

As Safeguarding Officer, I receive regular updates from the Diocese and will act on these as necessary so that the Parish continues to fulfil Safeguarding requirements.

Rosemary Whatley  
Parish Safeguarding Officer

## **Parish Giving Scheme**

The PGS continues to be an efficient, safe and popular way to support all our five churches. 63 individual donations are received monthly, paid by direct debit and received on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. PGS claim the gift aid on our behalf and this is paid monthly into our account with the donations. This enables the Finance Team to monitor our parish finances effectively.

Our thanks are expressed to all who donate to our churches, if you wish to consider either a one-off gift or make a regular donation, please see the weekly pew sheets for guidance or contact me on 01227 830960.

Evelyn Andrews  
PGS and Gift Aid Secretary

## **Financial Review for the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

Since the amalgamation of parishes in 2019 the financial figures represent a consolidated view of the accounts of the three former PCCs plus the Benefice Group. The results of the Friends of Bekebourne Church (FoBC), which had been reported separately in 2020, were integrated into the Parish accounts for the first time in 2021 and continue to be included in a comparable manner for 2024.

Each PCC is required to pay its allocated "Parish Share" to the Diocese of Canterbury, which goes towards the overall Diocesan budget for selection, training, stipends, housing and pensions of the clergy, and administration of the Diocese. Effectively it is the cost of providing ministry to the Parish.

The 2024 parish share was increased by approximately 5% compared to 2023, to £73,202.85 (from £69,703). As a group we successfully paid 97% of our Parish Share for 2024 (£71,202.85 in total). Although we did not quite fulfil the full Parish Share payment in 2024, we still successfully paid £1,499.85 (2%) more than in 2023. Due to our underpayment, we had an arrears in Parish Share of £1,999.89.

At the end of 2023 we had a Parish Share arrears, due to our underpayment of Parish Share during Covid of £21,824. During 2024, the Diocese offered the opportunity of a *two for one* offer to help pay off Parish Share arrears. We took up this offer and so paid £10,912 on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024, which enabled us to fully pay off our Covid Parish Share arrears. This was a very successful achievement.

The Statement of Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year is attached. As required by the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and the Charities Act 2011, this Statement has been subject to an independent examination.

We have had our challenges during 2024, in particular with the relatively high cost of energy again. This has meant that our energy bills have continued to be higher than we had previously become accustomed to. But we have managed to meet the challenges posed and 2024 started with our new energy provider (British Gas Lite), which was set up for all church energy accounts in December 2023.

Church building insurance premiums in some of the past years have been reimbursed/partially reimbursed from Restricted Funds (often from Friends' accounts) but for 2024, insurance premiums were funded from Unrestricted income and so this is a noteworthy success. In total for 2024, the insurance cost for all five churches was £10,855.

In Unrestricted Funds, our Planned Giving and Collections were higher than 2023, which reflects the success and hard work put in with the Parish Giving Scheme in particular. Our overall Unrestricted Voluntary income from Planned Giving and Collections was 5% higher in 2024 (£89,853) compared to 2023 (85,567).

For Restricted Funds, our income for 2024 was significantly higher than 2023, in total we received £230,757. This is in many ways, thanks to some extremely generous donations (£108,662.40 in a single donation to the Bridge Fabric Fund and a single donation of £100,000 to the Patribourne Fabric Fund). There were also a number of donations from supporters of our churches and interest (£15,793) to add up to the total. Due to the various donations our total in Restricted Funds has risen from £257,514 at the end of 2023 to £470,422. It should be noted that the Restricted Funds are for various designated uses, such as the project work at St Mary's Patribourne and improvement works at St Mary's Nackington, and we still very much require the ongoing generous Planned Giving and Collections to continue to fund the day to day running costs of our wonderful churches.

As in prior years, our churches received grants towards our churchyard maintenance and we are very grateful for the ongoing support of our Parish Councils who again, kindly provided these maintenance grants.

During 2024 we made a number of contributions to charities through a variety of fund-raising activities. Some of the charities supported were: Porchlight, Christian Aid, Red Cross, Canterbury Food Bank, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Royal British Legion and the Children's Society.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the support of all those who have generously contributed to the life of the Parish over the past year, especially in the areas of planned giving, collections and donations.

Peter Turrell

PCC Treasurer

### **Administrative information**

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006). Under these rules, the PCC must meet four times during the year and conduct an Annual Parish Meeting. The administrative load has increased since the formation of the single parish, and we have increased our number of meetings so that we meet every other month.

Since the formation of the Parish of the Bridge Group on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020, the annual turnover of the PCC has exceeded the threshold for registration with the Charity Commission. Registration was successfully completed on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022; the PCC's Registered Charity number is 1197483.

## **PCC Membership**

PCC members who have served during 2024 are:

### **Ex Officio members:**

Incumbent:	Rev'd Canon Estella Last	
Curate:	Rev'd Dr Miriam Bier Hinksman	
Lay Chaplain:	Miriam Westendarp	
Lay reader:	Margaret Clarke (deceased)	
Wardens:	Laurence Dunderdale	Nicola Fry
	Evelyn Andrews	Scilla Wright
	Andrea Nicholson	Daphne Reece
	Pauline Pritchard (Vice-Chair)	Carol Day

### **There are two Churchwarden Vacancies (Lower Hardres and Bekesbourne)**

Deanery Synod Members:

	Amanda Barker
	Andrea Nicholson
	Daphne Reece
Hon. Treasurer	Peter Turrell
Safeguarding and Electoral Roll Officer:	Rosemary Whatley (Co-opted member)
Secretary:	Rory Wetherell (also elected rep Patrixbourne)

### **Elected Members:**

Rosy Atkinson (elected rep Bridge)  
Alan Barber (elected rep Bridge)  
Bob Thomas (elected rep Nackington, deceased 11.3.24)  
John Meardon (elected rep Nackington)  
Amanda Barker (elected rep Bekesbourne)  
Graham Duplock (elected rep Bekesbourne)  
William Day (elected rep Lower Hardres)

### **There are 3 elected member vacancies (1 x Patrixbourne, 1 x Lower Hardres, 1 x Nackington)**

**Finance Committee** – appointed by the PCC as a sub-committee

Rev'd Estella Last (Incumbent)  
Peter Turrell (Treasurer)  
Evelyn Andrews  
(Gift Aid Secretary/Assistant Treasurer, Bridge, Patrixbourne,  
Lower Hardres & Nackington)  
Zan Clifford  
(Gift Aid Secretary/Assistant Treasurer, Bekesbourne)  
Laurence Dunderdale  
John Meardon

This Annual Report has been approved by the Parochial Church Council by correspondence (email) on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and signed on their behalf by

**Rev'd Canon Estella Last, PCC Chair**

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

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## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**

### **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

This report on the financial statements the PCC for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

#### **Respective Responsibilities of the PCC and the Examiner**

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations section 44(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

#### **Basis of this Report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) of the Act and to be found in the Church Guidance 2006 edition, issued by the finance division of the Archbishops' Council. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the financial statements with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements 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 financial statements.

#### **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:
  - a. Keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Act; and
  - b. To prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and 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 financial statements to be reached.

---

David Muggridge FCCA MAE  
Ackland Webb

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Date

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

	2024			2023		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS
	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2023
<b>RECEIPTS</b>						
<b>VOLUNTARY</b>						
Planned Giving	64,471	6,302	70,773	57,066	15,000	72,066
Collections	21,827	-	21,827	9,645	-	9,645
Gift Aid Recovery	3,555	-	3,555	18,856	-	18,856
<b>Voluntary Subtotal</b>	<b>89,853</b>	<b>6,302</b>	<b>96,155</b>	<b>85,567</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>100,567</b>
<b>OTHER</b>						
Parish Contributions to Benefice	-	-	-	834	-	834
Other Voluntary Receipts	17,660	208,662	226,322	25,912	4,438	30,350
Fund Generation Activities	11,981	-	11,981	10,136	3,959	14,095
Church Activities Receipts	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Receipts	-	-	-	1,900	-	1,900
Investment Income	552	15,793	16,345	533	7,612	8,145
<b>Other Receipts Subtotal</b>	<b>30,193</b>	<b>224,455</b>	<b>254,648</b>	<b>39,315</b>	<b>16,009</b>	<b>55,324</b>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>120,046</b>	<b>230,757</b>	<b>350,803</b>	<b>124,882</b>	<b>31,009</b>	<b>155,891</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>						
Church Costs						
Diocesan Share	87,902	-	87,902	64,873	-	64,873
Benefice Contribution	2,571	-	2,571	834	-	834
Church Activities Payments	1,033	2,469	3,502	10,659	-	10,659
Church Running Payments	48,389	5,545	53,934	48,493	11,210	59,703
Benefice Administration Payments	-	-	-	3,318	-	3,318
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>139,895</b>	<b>8,014</b>	<b>147,909</b>	<b>128,177</b>	<b>11,210</b>	<b>139,387</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(19,849)</b>	<b>222,743</b>	<b>202,894</b>	<b>(3,295)</b>	<b>19,799</b>	<b>16,504</b>
<b>MOVEMENT IN RESERVES DURING THE YEAR</b>						
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 1ST JANUARY</b>	<b>23,022</b>	<b>257,514</b>	<b>280,536</b>	<b>22,979</b>	<b>241,053</b>	<b>264,032</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(19,849)</b>	<b>222,743</b>	<b>202,894</b>	<b>(3,295)</b>	<b>19,799</b>	<b>16,504</b>
<b>FUND TRANSFERS</b>	<b>9,835</b>	<b>(9,835)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3338</b>	<b>-3338</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 31ST DECEMBER</b>	<b>13,008</b>	<b>470,422</b>	<b>483,430</b>	<b>23,022</b>	<b>257,514</b>	<b>280,536</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

	2024			2023
<b>CASH BALANCES</b>	<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>ALL FUNDS</b>
Bank Account (see notes 1 & 2)	2,238	14,423	16,661	22,770
CBF Deposits (see note 7)		438,075	438,075	229,812
Cash in Hand	-	-	-	-
<b>Cash at Bank and in Hand: End of Period</b>	<b>2,238</b>	<b>452,498</b>	<b>454,736</b>	<b>252,582</b>
<b>OTHER MONETARY ASSETS</b>				
Investments (see note 10)	10,769	17,924	28,694	27,953
<b>OTHER ASSETS</b>				
(See note 3)	-	-	-	-
<b>OTHER LIABILITIES</b>				
	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL ASSETS AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>13,008</b>	<b>470,422</b>	<b>483,430</b>	<b>280,535</b>

1 £500 is held in PCC St Marys Lower Hardres account which is restricted for use of the Lower Hardres 100 Club.

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

2 Bank balances as at 31st December (non CCLA/Investment Accounts):

	2024			2023
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	UNRESTRICTED
Bridge Group Parish PCC	1,433	N/A	1,433	8,685
The Bridge Group of Parishes	5	N/A	5	68
PCC of Bekesbourne Current Account	750	N/A	750	2,010
PCC Bekesbourne Reserve Account	N/A	14,423	14,423	10,268
PCC St Marys Lower Hardres (see note 7)	50	500	550	550
PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington	-	N/A	-	815
PCC St Marys Nackington	-	N/A	-	36
PCC Patrixbourne with Bridge	-	N/A	-	337
	<b>2,238</b>	<b>14,923</b>	<b>17,161</b>	<b>22,769</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

4 The Financial Statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, using the Receipts and Payments basis.

5 Other Assets - The Movable Church Furnishings are listed in the inventory (held by the Church Wardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal).

6 Reserves Policy - it is our policy to invest funds' balances with the CBF (Church of England

7 The Restricted Funds comprise the following accounts and values at year-end:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<u>St. Peter Bridge &amp; St Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Sale of Vicarage Land (General) Fund	137,095	136,685
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>137,095</b>	<b>136,685</b>
<u>St. Peter Bridge</u>		
Fabric Fund	109,517	14,926
Choir Fund	263	248
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>109,780</b>	<b>15,174</b>
<u>St. Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Fabric Fund	113,364	10,337
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>113,364</b>	<b>10,337</b>
<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>		
Friends of Bekesbourne Church	18,776	16,162
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>18,776</b>	<b>16,162</b>
<u>St. Mary Lower Hardres</u>		
Fabric Fund	4,131	2,079
Daisy Law Churchyard Fund	3,933	3,735
Friends of Lower Hardres Church	591	562
Lower Hardres General Fund	55	52
Lower Hardres 100 Club	500	500
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>9,210</b>	<b>6,927</b>
<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>		
Fabric Fund	21,587	20,477
Friends of Nackington Church	23,175	19,328
Nackington General Fund	2,917	2,770
Chancel Income Fund	2,171	1,952
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>49,850</b>	<b>44,527</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>438,075</b>	<b>229,812</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

- 8 Voluntary Parish Share contributions for 2020 and 2021 were not paid in full due to reduced income as a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The total arrears is shown against 2023.
- 9 Due to a slightly late payment for the December 2023 Parish Share, our accounts for 2023 show an underpayment. This was swiftly rectified in early 2024, as £5,808.58 was paid in January 2024.

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Total Parish Share Covid arrears:	-	21,824
Parish Share arrears:	-	5,809

10 The Investment Assets comprise the following accounts and valuations at year-end:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<u>St. Mary Lower Hardres</u>	<b>Units</b>	
<u>RECTORY LAND FUND (Unrestricted)</u>		
CBF Investment*	208.5	4,713
CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378	547

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund (PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington).

<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>		
<u>RECTORY LAND FUND (Unrestricted)</u>		
CBF Investment*	208.5	4,713
CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378	547

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund (PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington).

<b>TOTAL UNRESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>	<b>10,769</b>	<b>10,520</b>
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<u>NACKINGTON CHANCEL FUND (Endowment)</u>		
CBF Investment**	182	4,114

\*\*Dividends are credited to the Chancel Deposit Fund

<u>MISS DORIS RYE BEQUEST (Restricted)</u>		
CBF Fixed Interest Securities***	6515	9,430

\*\*\* The income from this bequest is restricted to the church's Fabric Fund and dividends are credited to the St. Mary Nackington Fabric Fund.

<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>		
<u>WARDELL BEQUEST (Endowment)</u>		
CBF Investment****	172	3,888

\*\*\*\* The income from this bequest is credited to the St. Peter Bekesbourne current account.

<b>TOTAL RESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>	<b>17,924</b>	<b>17,432</b>
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# **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP ACCOUNTS**

## **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

### **CONTENTS**

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Statement of Assets and Liabilities	3
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## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**

### **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

This report on the financial statements the PCC for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

#### **Respective Responsibilities of the PCC and the Examiner**

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations section 44(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

#### **Basis of this Report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) of the Act and to be found in the Church Guidance 2006 edition, issued by the finance division of the Archbishops' Council. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the financial statements with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements 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 financial statements.

#### **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:
  - a. Keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Act; and
  - b. To prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and 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 financial statements to be reached.

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David Muggridge FCCA MAE  
Ackland Webb

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Date

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

	2024			2023		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS
	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2023
<b>RECEIPTS</b>						
<b>VOLUNTARY</b>						
Planned Giving	64,471	6,302	70,773	57,066	15,000	72,066
Collections	21,827	-	21,827	9,645	-	9,645
Gift Aid Recovery	3,555	-	3,555	18,856	-	18,856
<b>Voluntary Subtotal</b>	<b>89,853</b>	<b>6,302</b>	<b>96,155</b>	<b>85,567</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>100,567</b>
<b>OTHER</b>						
Parish Contributions to Benefice	-	-	-	834	-	834
Other Voluntary Receipts	17,660	208,662	226,322	25,912	4,438	30,350
Fund Generation Activities	11,981	-	11,981	10,136	3,959	14,095
Church Activities Receipts	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Receipts	-	-	-	1,900	-	1,900
Investment Income	552	15,793	16,345	533	7,612	8,145
<b>Other Receipts Subtotal</b>	<b>30,193</b>	<b>224,455</b>	<b>254,648</b>	<b>39,315</b>	<b>16,009</b>	<b>55,324</b>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>120,046</b>	<b>230,757</b>	<b>350,803</b>	<b>124,882</b>	<b>31,009</b>	<b>155,891</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>						
Church Costs						
Diocesan Share	87,902	-	87,902	64,873	-	64,873
Benefice Contribution	2,571	-	2,571	834	-	834
Church Activities Payments	1,033	2,469	3,502	10,659	-	10,659
Church Running Payments	48,389	5,545	53,934	48,493	11,210	59,703
Benefice Administration Payments	-	-	-	3,318	-	3,318
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>139,895</b>	<b>8,014</b>	<b>147,909</b>	<b>128,177</b>	<b>11,210</b>	<b>139,387</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(19,849)</b>	<b>222,743</b>	<b>202,894</b>	<b>(3,295)</b>	<b>19,799</b>	<b>16,504</b>
<b>MOVEMENT IN RESERVES DURING THE YEAR</b>						
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 1ST JANUARY</b>	<b>23,022</b>	<b>257,514</b>	<b>280,536</b>	<b>22,979</b>	<b>241,053</b>	<b>264,032</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(19,849)</b>	<b>222,743</b>	<b>202,894</b>	<b>(3,295)</b>	<b>19,799</b>	<b>16,504</b>
<b>FUND TRANSFERS</b>	<b>9,835</b>	<b>(9,835)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3338</b>	<b>-3338</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 31ST DECEMBER</b>	<b>13,008</b>	<b>470,422</b>	<b>483,430</b>	<b>23,022</b>	<b>257,514</b>	<b>280,536</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

	2024			2023
<b>CASH BALANCES</b>	<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>ALL FUNDS</b>
Bank Account (see notes 1 & 2)	2,238	14,423	16,661	22,770
CBF Deposits (see note 7)		438,075	438,075	229,812
Cash in Hand	-	-	-	-
<b>Cash at Bank and in Hand: End of Period</b>	<b>2,238</b>	<b>452,498</b>	<b>454,736</b>	<b>252,582</b>
<b>OTHER MONETARY ASSETS</b>				
Investments (see note 10)	10,769	17,924	28,694	27,953
<b>OTHER ASSETS</b>				
(See note 3)	-	-	-	-
<b>OTHER LIABILITIES</b>				
	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL ASSETS AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>13,008</b>	<b>470,422</b>	<b>483,430</b>	<b>280,535</b>

1 £500 is held in PCC St Marys Lower Hardres account which is restricted for use of the Lower Hardres 100 Club.

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

2 Bank balances as at 31st December (non CCLA/Investment Accounts):

	2024			2023
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	UNRESTRICTED
Bridge Group Parish PCC	1,433	N/A	1,433	8,685
The Bridge Group of Parishes	5	N/A	5	68
PCC of Bekesbourne Current Account	750	N/A	750	2,010
PCC Bekesbourne Reserve Account	N/A	14,423	14,423	10,268
PCC St Marys Lower Hardres (see note 7)	50	500	550	550
PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington	-	N/A	-	815
PCC St Marys Nackington	-	N/A	-	36
PCC Patribourne with Bridge	-	N/A	-	337
	<b>2,238</b>	<b>14,923</b>	<b>17,161</b>	<b>22,769</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

- 4 The Financial Statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, using the Receipts and Payments basis.
- 5 Other Assets - The Movable Church Furnishings are listed in the inventory (held by the Church Wardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal).
- 6 Reserves Policy - it is our policy to invest funds' balances with the CBF (Church of England)
- 7 The Restricted Funds comprise the following accounts and values at year-end:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<u>St. Peter Bridge &amp; St Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Sale of Vicarage Land (General) Fund	137,095	136,685
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>137,095</b>	<b>136,685</b>
<u>St. Peter Bridge</u>		
Fabric Fund	109,517	14,926
Choir Fund	263	248
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>109,780</b>	<b>15,174</b>
<u>St. Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Fabric Fund	113,364	10,337
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>113,364</b>	<b>10,337</b>
<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>		
Friends of Bekesbourne Church	18,776	16,162
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>18,776</b>	<b>16,162</b>
<u>St. Mary Lower Hardres</u>		
Fabric Fund	4,131	2,079
Daisy Law Churchyard Fund	3,933	3,735
Friends of Lower Hardres Church	591	562
Lower Hardres General Fund	55	52
Lower Hardres 100 Club	500	500
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>9,210</b>	<b>6,927</b>
<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>		
Fabric Fund	21,587	20,477
Friends of Nackington Church	23,175	19,328
Nackington General Fund	2,917	2,770
Chancel Income Fund	2,171	1,952
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>49,850</b>	<b>44,527</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>438,075</b>	<b>229,812</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

- 8 Voluntary Parish Share contributions for 2020 and 2021 were not paid in full due to reduced income as a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The total arrears is shown against 2023.
- 9 Due to a slightly late payment for the December 2023 Parish Share, our accounts for 2023 show an underpayment. This was swiftly rectified in early 2024, as £5,808.58 was paid in January 2024.

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Total Parish Share Covid arrears:	-	21,824
Parish Share arrears:	-	5,809

10 The Investment Assets comprise the following accounts and valuations at year-end:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<u>St. Mary Lower Hardres</u>	<b>Units</b>	
<u>RECTORY LAND FUND (Unrestricted)</u>		
CBF Investment*	208.5	4,713
CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378	547

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund (PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington).

<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>		
<u>RECTORY LAND FUND (Unrestricted)</u>		
CBF Investment*	208.5	4,713
CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378	547

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund (PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington).

<b>TOTAL UNRESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>	<b>10,769</b>	<b>10,520</b>
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<u>NACKINGTON CHANCEL FUND (Endowment)</u>		
CBF Investment**	182	4,114

\*\*Dividends are credited to the Chancel Deposit Fund

<u>MISS DORIS RYE BEQUEST (Restricted)</u>		
CBF Fixed Interest Securities***	6515	9,430

\*\*\* The income from this bequest is restricted to the church's Fabric Fund and dividends are credited to the St. Mary Nackington Fabric Fund.

<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>		
<u>WARDELL BEQUEST (Endowment)</u>		
CBF Investment****	172	3,888

\*\*\*\* The income from this bequest is credited to the St. Peter Bekesbourne current account.

<b>TOTAL RESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>	<b>17,924</b>	<b>17,432</b>
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# Accounts

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**DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY**  
**The Parish of the Bridge Group**

Comprising the churches of St Peter's Bridge, St Mary's Patrixbourne, St Peter's  
Bekesbourne, St Mary's Lower Hardres and St Mary's Nackington.

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE  
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023

**Incumbent**

Reverend Canon Estella Last

**Bankers**

*In respect of The Bridge Group Parish*

The Co-operative Bank PLC

*and*

The CBF Church of England Funds  
85 Queen Victoria St, London EC4 4ET

*There are residual bank accounts in respect of  
Bridge, Patrixbourne, Lower Hardres and Nackington held with*

Lloyds TSB bank PLC  
49 High Street, Canterbury Kent CT1 2SE

*And in respect of St Peter's Bekesbourne*  
Natwest

**Independent Examiner**

David Muggridge FCCA MAE  
Ackland Webb Ltd

## **Introduction**

Since January 2020, the churches of St Peter's Bridge, St Mary's Patricxbourne, St Peter's Bekesbourne, St. Mary's Lower Hardres and St Mary's Nackington have formed one ecclesiastical parish. This is now known as The Parish of the Bridge Group in the County of Kent, within the East Bridge Deanery of the Diocese of Canterbury of the Church of England.

We are an episcopal church led by our bishop, The Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury. He is assisted by The Rt Rev'd Rose Hudson Wilkin, the Bishop of Dover. Our Patrons are The Archbishop of Canterbury and the President and Scholars of St John's College Oxford. This is the fourth Annual Report of the newly created Parish of the Bridge Group.

## **Aims and Purposes of this report**

This annual report is made to the parishioners of the Bridge Group of churches and the members on the church electoral roll who live within or outside the parish. The Church Representation Rules (Rule 9 (1) (b)) require 'an annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the church generally' to be received by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), to be held this year on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024. The APCM is invited to discuss it.

The PCC sincerely thank all those people who voluntarily give their time and money to serving the church in many ways thus enabling the five churches in our Parish to flourish as a Christian community.

## **2023 – Onward and Upward**

Toward the end of the year, the PCC took the decision to return to the administration of Eucharist using the common cup. This was a significant moment which had been anticipated for some time; the majority have found the restoration of our traditional practice to be of great comfort and there has been no reported incidence of Covid following this measure. It also represents a moment when the devastating effects of the pandemic can be said to have come to an end in our everyday church life.

There remains the knotty problem of the Parish Share arrears dating from the 'pandemic years' 2020 and 2021. This commitment will not go away and there has been a very generous, recent offer from the Diocese which we are considering. There is the possibility that the arrears can be cleared, on favourable terms, early in 2024.

In the meantime, there has been slow but steady progress on the applications to commence the planned extension works at St Mary's Nackington and St Mary's Patricxbourne, and the possibility of proceeding with restoration of the lychgate at St Peter's Bekesbourne is also being explored. These are exciting projects with great potential for our churches, and fundraising to find the money required to complete them will commence over the next twelve months.

The insurance for all five churches has been brought under a single policy with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Office, which will result in some cost savings and will considerably reduce administration. This has been organised by John Meardon, to whom the PCC extends its warm appreciation. The energy supplies for all five churches are now managed through a single account with a 'green' supplier.

Finally, our Treasurer, Peter Turrell has done sterling work over the past three years to streamline and rationalise the PCC's financial affairs into a more manageable structure with a single bank account. This work has almost been completed, and the PCC extends its thanks to Peter for his efforts over the past years. He will be retiring from this role at the APCM, and at the time of writing, a replacement as Treasurer is being sought.

Rory Wetherell , PCC Secretary

## **Vicar's Report**

It's interesting to look back over a year and reflect, the thing being, we don't know what we don't know. I had no idea as I wrote my piece for the Annual Report in 2022 that really we had spent much of that year still striving to recover from all the change that the Pandemic had brought. I didn't know we hadn't truly recovered until we reached Christmas and our Christmas Services in 2023 had the highest numbers we have had at Christmas since before the pandemic!

As I come to reflect back on the year that was 2023 I think what I see is a year in which we began to live more 'normally' again. We have worshipped together, prayed together, studied scripture together and we have worked together to continue to streamline our administrative and financial arrangements. We continued to tweak our Single Parish worshipping arrangements with what has proved to be a successful swap of 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Evensong (now held at Bridge) with 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday 10am Eucharist (now held at Lower Hardres). Every week I am encouraged by the way in which people from every village in our Parish have embraced our new way of worshipping, developing the understanding that we do have a service every week that we can attend and enjoy, even if it isn't in the village in which we live. I hope and pray that this will continue in the coming year and would encourage those who haven't yet taken up the opportunity of joining regular worship in the other churches to make this year the opportunity to do so.

Of course, our life together as Christian Community isn't just about what we do on a Sunday and there is much that goes on week in week out, in our communities, some facilitated by the church, some by other community groups. Our social life has recovered too and I think our faith is well witnessed to when I see folk from our churches engaging and making a positive contribution to their local community.

At this point I would like to thank all those who work so hard to keep our churches looking lovely and supporting all the work and worship of the churches in the parish, every day and every week. To give you an idea of the additional ministry we carry out together, here is a summary of 2023 in numbers:

Weddings: 5

Baptisms: 13

Confirmations: 7 (5 young people and 2 adults)

Funerals: 24 and 10 Interments of Ashes on a separate occasion (note some of these were in churches outside our parish to assist parishes in vacancy or due to pastoral connections)

Last year after some work together on a new vision for our parish, we set ourselves a target mindful of 'the gap', the separation between young and old in our worshipping community:

**“We, the churches of the Bridge Group Parish, aspire to becoming a fully intergenerational worshipping community which is welcoming and inclusive for people of all ages.”**

**(October 2022)**

I said at the time that this would not be something that we could achieve overnight and that it would take time to bring to fruition. I think this remains our greatest challenge in the year to come. We have a regular Family Service and Messy Church; we also have our toddler group ‘Little Lambs’ running weekly and the new addition of the much-needed peer support group for parents of Neuro-diverse children. All of these stand or fall though on the capacity of our clergy supported by a very small number of very dedicated volunteers. It is hoped that in 2024 these (and perhaps other) activities will continue to deepen our connection with younger people in our Parish.

All of this is balanced by other regular ministry in the community, with regular visits to our care homes, Saxon Lodge & Bridge Haven, where we hold regular monthly communion services (and also at Mansfield Court) and Highfield where due to the care requirements of the residents we visit room to room with those who have expressed a wish for a visit, for prayer or to receive Holy Communion. We also have a list of those who are unable to attend church for various reasons, who are regularly visited at home for prayer or communion.

In addition to our regular volunteers, elected officers and PCC members, the support from Miriam Westendarp, as our Lay Chaplain, continually praying with and for us, preaching and visiting and Margaret Clarke as our Lay Reader, continuing her ministry of reading and praying in our services around the parish has also been a great blessing to us all. We have enjoyed too another year of shared ministry with our Curate Rev’d Miriam (part-time) and her pastoral gifts, biblical knowledge and collegial approach are highly valued by us all. We are continually reminded of how valuable it is to have a team in ministry and personally I am very grateful for all that I learn from my colleagues as we minister together in this Parish.

In Galatians chapter 6 we read “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up”. There is so much to be thankful for as we look around our Parish. In the year ahead may we continue to grow together in love and faith, may we continue to be and to bring good news of hope and salvation to those living in our villages and may we continue to know the love of the God who is with us each and every day.

Rev’d Canon Estella Last

Vicar

## **Updates from each of our Churches**

### **St Peter’s Bridge**

Our service pattern consisted of: -

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	Choral Evensong at 6pm
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	Parish Communion at 10am
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	Family Service at 4pm

Additional services (known as Occasional Offices) included –

Ash Wednesday Communion, Maundy Thursday evening Tenebrae, Remembrance Day service at the War Memorial with the Scouts and Cubs attending, Carol Service and two Christingle services. There were 7 Baptisms, 2 Weddings, 3 Funeral services and 2 Interment of Ashes.

The school held services for Easter, Summer, Year R Reception, Harvest, Advent, and Year 2 Nativity. In addition the School organised for the children to participate in Lent Prayer Stations, which they attended over two days.

The Scouts/Cubs held their Christmas service in church.

In addition to the above, for four evenings in May, 'Murder in the Cathedral' by T S Eliot was performed in Church by a local amateur group.

### **Church Building**

The building is mainly in good order.

Outstanding works to the stonework and Belfry netting are still awaiting to be addressed (the Architect has been reminded).

A few loose floorboards in the Nave and Choir Vestry were re-secured by Steve Briant. He also re-varnished one of the external notice boards and made a glass fronted case for the other notice board.

The fire extinguishers were serviced/inspected in February.

The organ had its annual tuning in December prior to the Carol service.

The piano was replaced by a more up to date model, kindly donated by a parishioner.

The church silver and vestments remain in good order.

The Choir is led by Jean Barber, who is also our main organist.

Rosemary Whatley is our Sacristan (she also undertakes other roles within the whole Parish)

Numerous volunteers carry out flower arranging, cleaning, clock maintenance, flag flying and Eco Church recycling for which, as Churchwardens, we are extremely grateful.

### **Churchyard**

The churchyard is a "Closed Churchyard" for the upkeep of which Canterbury City Council is responsible. They cut/trim the grass during the growing season (March – October) but little else was done by them in 2023 (budget restraints).

The 'Churchyard Volunteers', spearheaded by Mark Esdale and Deborah Beaumont, continued to keep the churchyard as tidy as possible, meeting weekly on a Tuesday afternoon (weather permitting). Other volunteers assist when they can, including garden staff from The Pig when available.

Dead tree branches overhanging the churchyard from the neighbouring strip of land were still of concern., After much chasing the landowner had some of the accessible branches removed. There remain some (dead) branches 'of concern' but it will require the landowner to engage a tree surgeon. During the storms towards the end of the year further branches and a substantial tree trunk fell into the churchyard (narrowly missing a Commonwealth War Grave). The fallen trunk has yet to be cut up and removed. We keep the City Council "in the loop" over this.

Laurence Dunderdale and Evelyn Andrews, Churchwardens

### **St Mary's Patrixbourne**

Services continue on the third Sunday of the month throughout the year. A regular congregation of 25-35 comes to the service, despite the road from Bridge to Patrixbourne being blocked by road works to the A2 bridge throughout the autumn. One funeral, with burial in the churchyard, was held in June 2023. Year six pupils from Bridge Church once again held a Remembrance Day service at the church by the War Memorial. A well-attended Carol Service on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December

followed the format of last years' service, when readings were interspersed with Carols chosen by the congregation.

The year started with the completion in January of the work to the lighting in the church. The whole church is now lit with LED lights, which are more energy efficient and dimmable. The first test of being able to tailor the lighting to the event, was at a concert in March by the Snowdown Male Voice Choir, when the singers standing at the chancel steps were clearly seen by all, illuminated by the new lighting system.

During the year several repairs were carried out to the clock, and after several activations in January, usually at night, the roof alarm had a cover reinstated on one of the sensors. Why this was displaced is uncertain, but all the lead it is protecting appears to be intact.

There have been many visitors to the church during the year. After many delays, such as COVID, Kevin Grafton of Kent Church Organists Association visited with a party of members on 20<sup>th</sup> May to see the church and play the organ. They also visited Bridge and Bekesbourne Churches. The Pilgrims Hospice held its annual sponsored walk on 10<sup>th</sup> June and used the church and churchyard as a refreshment stop, on what is one of their major annual fundraiser events. Canterbury City Councillor Connie Nolan came to the church service on 19<sup>th</sup> June to talk about how she can become involved in the Via Francigena, as part of her role with the council.

The number of visitors and pilgrims coming to the church continues to increase, though many more pilgrims appear to pass by the church without stopping. Many pilgrims are not only following the Via Francigena, but the other pilgrim routes that pass the church. Generous donations are left in the wall safe, and the number of pilgrims requesting to stay overnight (28) has surpassed all previous years, despite the current lack of facilities. One pilgrim who was returning to Scotland from Rome, arrived accompanied by her donkey, which stayed overnight in the churchyard.

Discussions continued with the Diocesan Advisory Committee about the granting of the faculty, for the planned extension to the church, to include a disabled accessible toilet, shower, and kitchen, situated on the North side of the church. After many delays permission was finally granted on 21<sup>st</sup> December. Building work is hoped to start in 2024 once planning permission has been re-granted and funding secured.

Many thanks are given to all who help look after the church, by helping with the cleaning, arranging the flowers, and participating in services by giving the readings and prayers. Many thanks are also due to our neighbours, opposite the church, who cleared the rubbish from the shed in the churchyard.

Andrea Nicholson and Pauline Pritchard, Churchwardens

### **St Peter's Bekesbourne**

Our Songs of Praise service continues to be very popular. It is a lay-led service which takes place on the first Sunday of the month at 10.00am. The services are planned around a particular theme and led by different volunteers. We are grateful for all the advice and support we receive from Estella, our vicar and Miriam, our curate. Either one or both attend the services. Refreshments are served after the service, and everyone is encouraged to stay and chat.

In 2023, 4 Parish Communion services were held (January, March, August and October) There was a Mothering Sunday service and a Carol service on Christmas Day.

In 2023, there were 5 funerals; 2 weddings; 2 baptisms.

### **Bell Ringers**

On 14<sup>th</sup> January the Bekesbourne ringers attended a quarterly bell ringers meeting held at St Mary's church in Chartham where Joanne, Chris and Danny were all nominated and elected as members of the KCACR. (Kent County Association of Change ringers)

The AGM was held at the home of Gill and Sid Moon on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December. Gill was re-elected as tower captain/treasurer and Wendy as secretary.

Ian and David have done an inspection of the bell tower. There is a slight crack on the stay of the treble bell which he will keep an eye on. Otherwise everything is satisfactory.

All the ringers have completed the online safeguarding course. Gill has also completed the online Leaders course and attended the Leadership Pathway Cof E module at Diocesan House in Canterbury.

Sadly Roger died in August. He was a stalwart member of the ringing band and is greatly missed. The bells were rung half muffled at his funeral.

### **The Church Building**

We have applied for a faculty to restore the lychgate. The plans submitted are insufficient. It requires an architect's plan and more detail on the materials to be used. This will be done next year. We are grateful to Peter Rothwell and the volunteers for their commitment in organising any necessary work and monitoring the condition of the fabric of the church and keeping the Terrier and Log Book up to date.

Our Bevington organ is regularly serviced and is normally be played at all services. Andrew, our organist, plays at all our Songs of Praise services and does not take payment. We give him a 'thank you' gift at the end of the year. We would welcome visiting organists to come and play as the organ would benefit from being used more often.

The churchyard is an 'open churchyard' and is maintained by volunteers. It continues to be our policy to maintain the churchyard by balancing ecologically sound management, good accessibility for present and former parishioners to visit their family graves, and a beautiful setting for the church. Several working parties organised by Ian Gillanders tidy the churchyard and cut back trees and shrubs where necessary. Regular mowing is carried out by a contractor. The Parish Council of Bekesbourne with Patricxbourne pay a substantial grant towards this.

As part of the Coronation celebrations, we organised a 'Helping Out' day in the church and churchyard. Several families from the village came along and enjoyed clearing some of the invasive brambles and ivy and tidy around some of the graves. They were able to explore some of the older gravestones and discover the amazing variety of wildlife. Inspired by this, a group of home-schooled children used the churchyard and the woods behind to complete the first part of the John Muir award.

Nicky Fry, Churchwarden

### **St Mary's Nackington**

Nackington continues with the same service pattern; 8 am Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month and Morning Prayer on the third Sunday, apart from August, January and February. The congregation numbers remain constant.

On 7th May a very successful community party was held in the village hall to celebrate the Coronation. Over 100 young and old enjoyed themselves in the bright warm sunshine, an excellent hog roast, a bouncy castle and an ice cream van all added to the excitement. We thank Sean Bone- Knell for his enthusiastic organisation of this happy event.

On Ascension day Holy Communion was held at Nackington. On Remembrance Day there was morning prayer followed by a wreath laying ceremony at the war memorial.

Christmas Eve 10 pm Holy Communion continues to be popular with a congregation over 70. This past year there has been one funeral and three interments of ashes.

The project to improve the church facilities has slowly come together and progress has been made on upgrading the electric power supply which is now complete with 3 phases and capable of supporting an electric heating system. The switch to British Gas Lite as the energy provider during the latter part of the year was actually helpful as they expedited the final links in the power upgrade, though we are still waiting for a Smart meter.

This has been achieved by the continued perseverance of John Meardon who we thank sincerely.

We now await the Faculty permission in order to proceed with the installation of a new electrical heating system. The Faculty Application for the whole project was submitted to the DAC in January 2024 and they were due to consider it on 9 February.

We thank John & Ann for their constant help and support with St Mary's, and Philip & Susan for the music.

Daphne Reece and Scilla Wright, Churchwardens

### **St Mary's Lower Hardres**

After the winter pattern of single Benefice Eucharists rotating round the five churches, we returned in March to the normal pattern set the previous year, with an Evensong Service on the first Sunday of the month. After some discussion it was decided that it might be better to have this service at Bridge where the night time lighting was better in the winter months and instead to trial having the Parish Communion at Lower Hardres on the fourth Sunday in the month. This has been very well attended with an average congregation of 40 over the rest of the year.

On Mothering Sunday there was a Tea, Cake and Celebration Service at 11am taken by Miriam, our curate. Miriam provided flowers and foliage and everyone had the opportunity to make a posy for their mother during the service.

On Easter Sunday we offered tea and cakes at 11am followed by an Easter Celebration Service. As part of the service, children and other members of the congregation joined together to make two big Easter Gardens which were displayed in the church. The planned Easter Egg Hunt in the churchyard was abandoned due to unfavourable weather.

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May, a village party was held in the John Baker White Hall and grounds to celebrate the Coronation. There was a children's party followed at 1pm by a Hog Roast for all villagers with music, a Coronation Cake competition, raffle and an ice cream van. It was a hot, sunny day and everyone had a great time celebrating the Coronation together.

On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June, the Friends of St Mary's, Lower Hardres held an 'Afternoon in a Country Garden' at Netherwood by kind permission of Mrs Elizabeth Cox. Money was raised for the Pilgrims Hospice, the local RDA and for St Mary's Church.

On Remembrance Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> November, there was a wreath laying service led by our Curate, Miriam, at 10.45am at the War Memorial in Lower Hardres. The wreath was laid and the Role of Honour was read by Douglas McCully, the National Anthem was sung and the Last Post and Reveille was played by Iain Carpenter, a member of the Canterbury Brass Band. More than 30 villagers attended.

In December the decorated Advent numbers were organised again by request. Different households produced a decorated number in the countdown to Christmas Day and displayed it outside their home.

On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December, the village social committee and the Friends of St Mary's Church organised Community Carols in the John Baker White hall. The singing was led by Estella, our Vicar, and accompanied by Tobin. Donations were accepted for the Canterbury Umbrella Centre and any food items received were sent to the Canterbury Food Bank. This was well attended by over 40 adults and children.

The Parish Communion Service at Lower Hardres fell on Christmas Eve this year. The church was decorated beautifully for the service and the crib was decorated too. Mulled wine, coffee, cake, mince pies, sausage rolls and other savouries were served after the service.

During this last year there has been one baptism, one funeral and one wedding in the church.

### **The Church Building**

We have received two quotes for the electrics in the church to be updated. This work was recommended by the electrician and marked as requiring priority by the architect in the Quinquennial Report carried out in 2022. We are waiting for more details of the work involved in order to decide whether a faculty will be required.

The repair work to the area of blown plaster in the nave was started in the first week of December by Eric Colman's men. The weather and time of year has meant that the layers of plaster work have taken longer to dry than they might have done and so the work is still unfinished at the moment, but it already looks much better than before. Following the theft of the old wall safe, the replacement safe has been installed and the damage to the wall repaired. We are so grateful for the generosity and thoughtfulness of the kind benefactor who has already paid for all this work to be done.

St Mary's Church is open every day of the year for visitors and private prayer.

I am very grateful to the small team of helpers who keep the church clean and tidy and who provide flower arrangements throughout the year. The churchyard is open and is mown regularly by Mr Chris Tanton. We are grateful to the Parish Council who make a donation towards the upkeep of the churchyard. I would also like to thank David and Ann Nicholls who have taken on much of the maintenance work in the churchyard again this year. Areas of the churchyard are left 'wild' to encourage wildlife and we have been part of the God's Acre Project for many years. This is all part of our efforts to be as environmentally friendly as possible in all aspects of the church and its grounds.

I would like to thank all the Friends of St Mary's Lower Hardres and the members of our church team for their invaluable support over the past year. I would especially like to thank Ann Nicholls again for all the work she has done and support she has given to the church and myself over the past year. It is greatly appreciated as always.

Carol Day (Churchwarden)

## **Friend's Organisations**

### **Friends of St Peter's Bridge (FOSP)**

The Friends aim to increase our outreach into the local community. In December 2016 FOSP experimented with holding a Coffee & Cake Concert: it was an enjoyable success, and a regular programme of musical events has followed. The concerts in 2023 were:

- Feb – Classical Music Concert by the Bourne Players (£375 - Porchlight & Church)
- April – Coronation Concert (£320 - Christian Aid)
- June – An Audience with Rev Ravi Holy (£180 - to his 'Heal for Life' charity)
- Sept – Matt Miles Saxophone Quartet (£390 - Church funds)
- Oct – SingSpace Musical (£265 – Canterbury Foodbank & Church)
- Nov – Irena Reiband-Capper – French Horn (£305 – Church Funds)
- Dec – 7th Annual Carol Concert (£280 - Porchlight, Embrace & Church)

Total Proceeds £2,115.00.

Note – no C&C Concert in May but support for MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL which raised £1075 for Church Funds.

More Coffee & Cake Concerts will take place in 2024.

Alan Barber

### **Friends of St Mary's Patricbourne (FOSM)**

We had another relatively quiet year while we awaited the granting of the Faculty for our building project. The only major fundraising event during 2023 was another successful concert by our old friends the Snowdown Colliery Welfare Male Voice Choir, organised to coincide with St David's Day. We experienced their new look, bigger choir singing a more modern repertoire, as well as a section devoted entirely to Welsh music.

Now that the Faculty has finally been granted, we look forward to more active fundraising in 2024.

Pauline Pritchard

### **Friends of Bokesbourne Church**

The work of the Friends of Bokesbourne Church aims to raise funds for the benefit of the church building in Bokesbourne.

We do this by organising various events throughout the year. The events are listed below together with the profit made from each event.

- 100 club Draw, organised by Steve Thomas, raised £1750 in 2023
- Lees Court Music Choir Concert in the Church, raised £435 in May
- Summer Lunch Party at the Old Palace, raised £470 in July
- Wine & Wisdom Quiz Night in the Village Hall, raised £491 in November
- Xmas Bazaar in the Village Hall, raised £552 in December

Our reserves currently stand at a healthy £16,162. We could not do this without the help of our wonderful volunteers who help to run these events.

At the same time we are very keen to encourage all villagers to be involved and support the events we organise throughout the year. These events bring together newcomers and encourage them, and the stalwarts, to enter into the community spirit.

We would like to thank the villagers who have supported and helped at our events during 2023. The Committee is meeting to discuss ideas for this year, and if any of you have your own ideas of what you would like to see us organise, please do not hesitate to contact any one of us.

Christine Dutfield, Chair

### **Friends of St. Mary's, Lower Hardres**

The Friends of St Mary's, Lower Hardres met several times in the first half of the year to discuss ideas for raising money, encouraging community participation and to organise the main fund raising event to be held in the summer. Elizabeth Cox had kindly offered the use of her garden and it was agreed that we would hold an 'Afternoon in a Country Garden'. There was an entrance fee of £5, teas and cakes, books and plants, home produce and a raffle. We eventually managed to raise £1000 which was shared between the local RDA, the Pilgrim's Hospice and St Mary's Church in Lower Hardres.

Our plans were to raise money by offering Cream Teas every weekend through the summer months outside the Farm Shop in Lower Hardres but the terrible weather that we received throughout the summer meant that this did not take place, so we will consider trying this again this year weather permitting.

The Friends also helped the village social committee organise the Coronation celebrations on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May and provided the refreshments for the Community Carols in December.

They will be meeting with the social committee in March to begin the preparations for another village event to be held in June this year, 2024. This event will be to recognise and celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D Day landings on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944.

The Friends will also be supporting the newly set up Community Coffee morning on the third Friday morning of each month and will continue to work with the social committee and other village organisations to help build stronger relations with the church in the community.

The Friends will be relaunching the 100 Club early in 2024 having now organised a separate bank account specifically for the use of the Club which will make it much easier to run efficiently. We

hope that the relaunch will be as successful as the original launch of the club and help raise much needed funds for the upkeep of the church in the village.

Carol Day

## **The Friends of Nackington Church**

During the year the Friends held two successful events in Parsonage Barn: in August a concert by the Concoria Ensemble raised £350 for the Friends and £330 for the Sick Children's Trust. In December, the Salvation Army Band Carol Singing event raised £435 for the Friends in ticket sales and donations, and a collection for the Salvation Army also raised £435.

The electrical power upgrade to the church has been completed by UK Power Network, which will enable installation of a new electric heating system. The total cost of the upgrade was paid by the Friends and amounted to £5,554.

Ann Meardon

## **Deanery Report**

The Deanery Synod met three times during 2023. The Rev Dr Lesley Hardy was, appointed as Priest in Charge of Little Stour Benefice with effect from 1 August, and the vacancy in the Canonry Benefice has been advertised.

The Bridge Group benefice has been appointed as lead for the Deanery on Eco Church & Carbon Net Zero matters. Other churches in the Deanery are encouraged to apply for the Eco- Church award. The subject of encouraging young people into the church was also discussed.

The September meeting was a Deanery Roadshow where officers from the Diocese presented information about diocesan finances and encouraged all benefices to commit to paying their Parish Share in full and on time.

Andrea Nicholson, Amanda Barker, and Daphne Reece - Deanery Synod Representatives

## **Christian Aid report for APCM 2023**

Christian Aid Week in 2023 focused on Malawi and how drought caused by climate change has affected people's ability to grow food to feed their families. Christian Aid's partners encourage people to grow drought-resistant pigeon peas which are nourishing and can be used to make bread and to sell. At the Bridge Parish Communion service at the start of Christian Aid Week a film was shown about a community in Malawi raising themselves out of poverty in this way. Christian Aid Week was celebrated in our Parish over the whole month of May. This enabled us to collect money in a variety of ways, replacing the house-to-house collections of the past, and hopefully this will set the pattern for future years. For the first time we set up an on-line e-envelope which was available for individuals to make their own donations but was also a place to put the money raised from other events and activities. These included – the Lent Group soup lunches, the Coronation Coffee and Cake Concert, refreshments from the play 'Murder in the Cathedral', a collection at Messy Church and a Grand Raffle. Together with individual donations

this amounted to £1,348.06. Cash and cheques collected separately came to £230 so the total raised during the month was £1,578.06, plus an additional £236.75 in Gift Aid. The school also used Christian Aid resources to teach the children about people in Malawi and they made a coin collection which was paid direct to Christian Aid.

In Canterbury the Christian Aid committee is well represented by most churches. In 2023 it organised a plant sale, a concert and a Pan-European Feast which raised a total of £1,070.11. More events are planned for this year. An annual service is no longer held in Canterbury because of lack of support, but individual churches are encouraged to organise their own services for Christian Aid Week.

As always, many thanks to everyone who supports Christian Aid in any way.

Jean Barber.

### **Parish Eco-Church Team**

The eco- team have spent the last 12 months continuing to maintain our silver church statuses. We have reaffirmed our commitment to monitor these at least every three years and are helping to spread the eco church message by supporting other churches within our diocese to sign up to eco church.

The recycling station continues to be well used and the team assesses which products are most frequently recycled and updates the station accordingly. We would welcome anyone from the local community who may be interested in joining or supporting the team with collections and delivery of recyclables.

At St Peter's Bekesbourne visitors are welcome to take a Churchyard Trail and a group of home-schooled children now use the churchyard and the woods beyond as their wild space to explore and learn. In our twice-yearly Eco Newsletter we published a recipe for an eco-friendly weed-killer based on white vinegar which has been used to clean our churchyard pathways.

Two big changes in the past year have been the move to a more ethical bank. We now have a Co-op bank account and a more environmentally friendly energy supplier. At the time of writing two of our five churches now have a smart meter for electricity and the others will hopefully be installed soon.

Megan Shirley

### **Choir and music report for APCM 2024**

The Parish choir is now very small in number and other commitments sometimes prevent singers from being available for Sunday services. We met during the summer to discuss this and agreed that Friday choir practices would only occur when all could sing on the following Sunday. A Communion hymn or motet would be sung when a full choir was available and a congregational Communion hymn sung if not.

In September a 'Come and Sing' Evensong was introduced at Bridge for the first Sunday of the month to encourage more people to be involved in sung worship. This has been successful and 12 people have so far sung in at least one service, on the understanding that there is no commitment to join the choir on a permanent basis. The 'Come and Sing' follows the usual

Evensong pattern but is more informal, with no processing or robing, and the pre-service rehearsal is followed by tea and cake so that people can socialise.

The Parish Choir has formed the core of a 'community choir' which has performed at three Saturday Coffee and Cake Concerts. We were pleased to welcome a number of extra singers who joined us for the December Carol Service at Bridge. Some of us also sang carols at the Red Lion, The Pig and Highfield Care Home.

We are indebted to Bill and Dorothy Lloyd-Hughes for the gift of their piano to Bridge Church. It replaces an older piano which has now been relocated to the Village Hall. The new piano is of a higher quality and this has been appreciated by performers at our Coffee and Cake Concerts and on other occasions.

In addition to our regular team of organists – Gerard Ahern (Bridge and Patricxbourne), Andrew Cooper (Bekesbourne), Susan and Philip Cheetham (Nackington) and myself (Bridge and Lower Hardres) Dan Luck has recently (2024) started playing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Parish Communion at Bridge, as well as continuing to play for the Bridge Family Service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. Fees for organists have recently been updated.

Mander Organ Builders continue to tune and maintain the organs annually.

Patricxbourne and Bridge churches are affiliated to the RSCM and an annual fee is paid.

Jean Barber.

## **Bridge CEP School**

The school remains oversubscribed with a full role of nearly 420 pupils and 70 staff members. Estella is on the Board of Governors and PTA committee and the ministry team lead collective worship in school weekly. The PCC nominates two Foundation Governors (Graham Duplock and Victoria Pattison).

During the year a house system was introduced with names reflecting historical figures<sup>1</sup> who have influenced the local area. This is designed to encourage children's team spirit with the ethos of everyone "playing your part" and to reflect school values<sup>2</sup>. For the new school year classes were given the names of Kentish trees<sup>3</sup>. For parents, the new "Arbor" system was introduced to aid communications and payments. A parental Maths workshop was held.

The school has faced a challenging financial situation this year, with some staff not being replaced. We are resolved to protect the schools' arts provision (awarded Gold Arts Mark) and the scope of experiences for pupils at all stages. These include:

Swimming lessons have resumed, an exchange with pupils from Montpellier has been set up, Japanese students again visited to experience the British education system, pupils attended Young Voices at the O2 arena, a Safer Internet Day held, Hari Budha Magar (double amputee, Gurka) visited to describe his Everest attempt, outdoor learning on site and Forest School visits at Covet Wood, Bridge musical prom on the field, Coronation song celebration, Sports Day, year 5 & 6 residentials, year 6 production of Bugsy Malone, full school year of class trips and interschool sporting events .

Children have visited Bridge Church for Lent, Easter, end of year, year R welcome with parents, Harvest Festival and year 2 Nativity services.

Working with the local community is important to the school with events: Messy Church at school, PTA Firework Display and joint Summer Fete (with Church) taking place. Our usual preparations for the Christmas Festival; Church Christmas Card design competition, Salvation Army concert, children's Nativities, senior citizen's party, Carols around the village took place.

Our expected Ofsted inspection eventually took place in October. This was a short (ungraded) inspection confirming we are still a "Good School". The inspector recognised our curriculum scope, strong early years provision, reading curriculum and support, childrens' good behaviour, opportunities for pupils broader development and extra-curricular activities, effective safeguarding and support for staff.

Rev'd Estella visits the school every week to lead Collective Worship with the whole school, she also supports the staff team with planning their church services and prayer stations and visits at other times to support the RE curriculum. Rev'd Estella also holds the role of Safeguarding Governor which involves regular monitoring of the Safeguarding policies and practices of the school and reporting to the Governing body.

We again had more than 50% of pupils assessed as eligible for grammar school places and our KS2-SATS results showing 85 – 90% meeting required standards for Reading, Writing, Grammar Punctuation Spelling and Maths compared to 70 – 75% nationally.

The foundation governors would like to thank the staff, parents and PTFA for their continued support for the school throughout the year. The school community has continued to provide a Christian foundation for its children and the community.

Graham Duplock, Foundation Governor

1 House names: Lovelace, Behn, Shirley, Zoboroski, Fairservice and Hadrian

2 School values: Compassion, Trust, Generosity, Forgiveness, Service

3 Class names: Ash, Elm, Willow, Rowan, Pine, Oak, Beech, Chestnut, Hazel, Birch, Maple, Holly, Poplar, Sycamore

### **Parents of Neurodivergent children coffee and catch-up**

This new group arose out of discussions with parents on the school run and at Little lambs about the specific challenges associated with parenting neurodivergent children. A proposal for the group was brought to the PCC in September and the idea was developed in conversation with the school SENCO and team. There was an existing termly meeting in school for parents of children on the autistic spectrum, but it was felt there was a need for a more informal gathering of SEN parents, to share experiences and provide mutual support.

The group met for the first time in October 2023, and now runs once a month, meeting in the Pavilion on a Friday afternoon. The group has been well received by both parents and the school SEN team, and usually attracts a group of 6-12, with a core group who have quickly become 'regulars.' We have coffee and a chat, and share experiences, ideas, and resources.

This has been an opportunity for us to provide support in an area where there is a need in our community. We will continue meeting monthly for the current school year and then evaluate in conversation with parents and the school SEN team.

Miriam Bier Hinksman, Assistant Curate

## Parish Magazine

**On the Nail** is the Parish magazine for Bridge, Patrixbourne and Bekesbourne.

In 2023 there were 11 monthly editions from February to December. Currently there are 500 copies printed monthly. Of these 46 are distributed in Patrixbourne, 115 in Bekesbourne and 290 in Bridge.

Copies are available in each of our 5 churches. Complimentary copies are available at The Pig for guests. Copies are posted to former residents. Rev. Estella has copies to hand out as she wishes. The annual subscription remains at £5.00 per year. (This has not been reviewed for a few years). Current printing costs are higher (59 pence per copy) but the advertising income helps cover this. Some advertisers have chosen not to renew.

Megan Shirley, our Parish administrator, edits and typesets the magazine prior to printing. Steve Thomas co-ordinates the advertising.

Our thanks go to Megan, Steve and all the volunteers who deliver the magazine across our 3 villages.

Laurence Dunderdale

## Single Parish Electoral Roll 2023-4

The total on the Electoral Roll for the parish was 160, 2 less than the previous year.

The figures break down as follows:

	<b>2020/1</b>	<b>2021/2</b>	<b>2022/3</b>	<b>2023/4</b>
Bridge/Patrixbourne	66	66	63	61
Bekesbourne	61	59	59	59
Lower Hardres/Nackington	39	39	40	40

## Safeguarding 2023-2024

I am pleased to report that there have been no Safeguarding issues.

Training for those with a variety of roles in the Parish is proceeding on a three-year rolling programme. The Basic and Foundation courses have been updated. These are available for all to access on the Canterbury Diocese website.

We aim to encourage an open culture in the parish so that should anybody have concerns regarding safeguarding issues they know that they can report them. A new Safeguarding poster is in each church and this too sets out how to report concerns.

Enhanced DBS checks for all lay people who assist in the parish are up to date. At present DBS checks are in place for 20 people and these too last for three years.

As Safeguarding Officer, I receive regular updates from the Diocese and will act on these as necessary so that the Parish continues to fulfil Safeguarding requirements.

Rosemary Whatley (Parish Safeguarding and Electoral Roll Officer)

## **Parish Giving Scheme**

The Parish Giving Scheme is proving to be a most successful introduction to our Parish. PGS is a simple, convenient, and secure way for churches to receive money donated by individuals either monthly, quarterly, or annually by direct debit.

63 regular donations are received monthly in our Parish account which enables us to monitor our finances considerably. Six one off payments have also been received. Gift Aid is claimed on each donation each quarter.

Our sincere thanks are expressed to all who support our five churches by giving through the PGS. More information is available on the weekly pew sheet, alternatively contact Evelyn on 01227 830960.

Evelyn Andrews, Gift Aid Secretary

## **Financial Review for the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

Since the amalgamation of parishes in 2020 the financial figures represent a consolidated view of the accounts of the three former PCCs plus the Benefice Group. The results of the Friends of Bekesbourne Church (FoBC), which had been reported separately in 2020, were integrated into the Parish accounts for the first time in 2021 and continue to be included in a comparable manner for 2023.

Each PCC is required to pay its allocated "Parish Share" to the Diocese of Canterbury, which goes towards the overall Diocesan budget for selection, training, stipends, housing and pensions of the clergy, and administration of the Diocese. Effectively it is the cost of providing ministry to the Parish.

The 2023 parish share quota was increased by approximately 1% compared to 2022 to £69,703. As a group we successfully paid the full amount of Parish Share for 2023 (noting that the final payment for 2023 was made at the beginning of January 2024, so it is not included within the 2023 final year accounts, but it was paid within the Diocese deadline, and hence we can state that we fully met our commitment).

This successful, *full* payment of our Parish Share is now the second consecutive year, since COVID19 that we have fully paid our Share. This continuation to meet all commitments in full, combined with the fact that we ended the year with cash reserves in our current accounts is felt to be another wonderful achievement and something our whole community should be proud of. We commenced the year paying the Parish Share from the newly opened (at the time) Group Co-Op account. We then made all subsequent payments throughout the year from this group account, apart from the final month, for Bekesbourne, which was paid from the PCC of Bekesbourne account (£987.46).

We have had our challenges during 2023, in particular with the high cost of energy again. This has meant that our energy bills have been higher than we were previously accustomed to, for the second consecutive year, and in 2023 we did not have the opportunity to receive grants towards our energy (we received £6,100 in energy grants in December 2022). But we have managed to meet the challenges posed by the high costs, and through hard work from the team, we have also moved to a new energy provider in December 2023. This has also helped to consolidate all

payments from a single account (the Group Co-Op account) and so future management/accounting is easier.

In Unrestricted Funds, our Planned Giving (and associated Gift Aid) were higher than 2022 which reflects the success and hard work put in with the Parish Giving Scheme. Unfortunately, our overall Unrestricted income was lower in 2023 compared to 2022 (approximately 11.5% lower, but as mentioned above, in 2023 we did not receive any energy grants, which contributed 4.3% of the 2022 Unrestricted income). Our Unrestricted Payments in 2023 were higher than 2022. Unrestricted payments rose to £128,177, a 2.5% increase on the previous year.

Church building insurance premiums in recent years have generally been reimbursed from Restricted Funds (often from Friends' accounts) but for 2023, the majority of costs for insurance premiums were funded from Unrestricted income and so this is a noteworthy success. Bekesbourne's Friends paid for the first 6 months of 2023 from their Friends account (£1,076), but this was the only contribution towards insurance from any of our Friends accounts with the remaining £8,455 for all other Churches and the second half of 2023 for Bekesbourne being paid by general income. We also made progress with consolidating our Church insurance premiums so that all the costs are now paid out of the Group Co-Op account (similar to the Energy consolidation). This helps with the ingoing management and accounting for these costs.

As in prior years, our churches received Parish Council grants for churchyard maintenance (£1,900 in total for 2023: £500 towards Bekesbourne, £400 towards Patrixbourne (£200 of which comes from Bridge Parish Council in recognition that since the closure of Bridge churchyard, people from Bridge are buried in Patrixbourne churchyard) and £1,000 towards Lower Hardres and Nackington). We are very grateful for the ongoing support of our Parish Councils who again, kindly provided these maintenance grants.

During 2023 we made a number of contributions to charities through a variety of fund-raising activities. In total £2,450 was raised, for the following charities: British Heart Foundation, Porchlight, Christian Aid, Red Cross (Ukraine Appeal), Canterbury Food Bank, Embrace the Middle East, Cobbes Meadow Riding School, Pilgrims Hospice and the Childrens Society.

For Restricted Funds, our income for 2023 was £10,885 higher than 2022. This is thanks to some very generous donations and increased interest, which was more than double that of 2022 (£7,028 compared to £2,977). Some of the notable works during the year included, £2,893.04 and £1,874.70 for power / electrical works at St Mary's Nackington and then £5,420 and £924 for lighting and electrical works at St Mary's Patrixbourne.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the support of all those who have generously contributed to the life of the Parish over the past year, especially in the areas of planned giving, collections and donations.

Peter Turrell (PCC Treasurer)

## **Administrative information**

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006). Under these rules, the PCC must meet four times during the year and conduct an Annual Parish Meeting. The administrative load has increased since the formation of the single parish, and we have increased our number of meetings so that we meet every other month.

Since the formation of the Parish of the Bridge Group on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020, the annual turnover of the PCC has exceeded the threshold for registration with the Charity Commission. Registration was successfully completed on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022; the PCC's Registered Charity number is 1197483

## PCC Membership

PCC members who have served during 2023 are:

### **Ex Officio members:**

Incumbent:	Rev'd Canon Estella Last	
Curate:	Rev'd Dr Miriam Bier Hinksman	
Lay Chaplain:	Miriam Westendarp	
Lay reader:	Margaret Clarke	
Wardens:	Laurence Dunderdale	Nicola Fry
	Evelyn Andrews	Scilla Wright
	Andrea Nicholson	Daphne Reece
	Pauline Pritchard (Vice-Chair)	Carol Day

### **There are two Churchwarden Vacancies (Lower Hardres and Bekesbourne)**

Deanery Synod Members:

	Amanda Barker
	Andrea Nicholson
	Daphne Reece
Hon. Treasurer	Peter Turrell
Safeguarding and Electoral Roll Officer:	Rosemary Whatley (Co-opted member)
Secretary:	Rory Wetherell (also elected rep Patrixbourne)

### **Elected Members:**

Rosy Atkinson (elected rep Bridge)  
 Alan Barber (elected rep Bridge)  
 Bob Thomas (elected rep Nackington)  
 John Meardon (elected rep Nackington)  
 Amanda Barker (elected rep Bekesbourne)  
 Graham Duplock (elected rep Bekesbourne)

### **There are 3 elected member vacancies (1 x Patrixbourne, 2 x Lower Hardres)**

**Finance Committee** – appointed by the PCC as a sub-committee

Rev'd Estella Last (Incumbent)  
 Peter Turrell (Treasurer)  
 Evelyn Andrews  
 (Gift Aid Secretary/Assistant Treasurer, Bridge, Patrixbourne,  
 Lower Hardres & Nackington)  
 Zan Clifford  
 (Gift Aid Secretary/Assistant Treasurer, Bekesbourne)  
 Laurence Dunderdale  
 Bob Thomas (retired 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 sadly died 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024)

This Annual Report has been approved by the Parochial Church Council by correspondence (email) on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and signed on their behalf by

**Rev'd Canon Estella Last, PCC Chair**

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

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## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

### PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP

This report on the financial statements the PCC for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

#### **Respective Responsibilities of the PCC and the Examiner**

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations section 44(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

#### **Basis of this Report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) of the Act and to be found in the Church Guidance 2006 edition, issued by the finance division of the Archbishops' Council. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the financial statements with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements 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 financial statements.

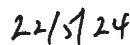
#### **Independent Examiner's Statement**

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:
  - a. Keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Act; and
  - b. To prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and 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 financial statements to be reached.



David Muggridge FCCA MAE  
Ackland Webb



Date

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

	2023			2022		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS
	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2022	Full Year 2022	Full Year 2022
<b>RECEIPTS</b>						
<b>VOLUNTARY</b>						
Planned Giving	57,066	15,000	72,066	48,088	0	48,088
Collections	9,645	0	9,645	12,884	0	12,884
Gift Aid Recovery	18,856	0	18,856	12,331	0	12,331
<b>Voluntary Subtotal</b>	<b>85,567</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>100,567</b>	<b>73,303</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73,303</b>
<b>OTHER</b>						
Parish Contributions to Benefice	834	0	834	7,343	0	7,343
Other Voluntary Receipts	25,912	4,438	30,350	31,758	9,248	41,006
Fund Generation Activities	10,136	3,959	14,095	26,540	7,315	33,855
Church Activities Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Receipts	1,900	0	1,900	1,900	0	1,900
Investment Income	533	7,612	8,145	423	2,977	3,400
<b>Other Receipts Subtotal</b>	<b>39,315</b>	<b>16,009</b>	<b>55,324</b>	<b>67,964</b>	<b>19,540</b>	<b>87,504</b>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>124,882</b>	<b>31,009</b>	<b>155,891</b>	<b>141,267</b>	<b>19,540</b>	<b>160,807</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>						
<b>Church Costs</b>						
Diocesan Share	64,873	0	64,873	67,940	0	67,940
<b>Benefice Contribution</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>7,343</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,343</b>
Church Activities Payments	10,659	0	10,659	6,943	0	6,943
Church Running Payments	48,493	11,210	59,703	35,668	21,026	56,695
<b>Benefice Administration Payments</b>	<b>3,318</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,318</b>	<b>7,211</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,211</b>
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>128,177</b>	<b>11,210</b>	<b>139,387</b>	<b>125,105</b>	<b>21,026</b>	<b>146,131</b>
<b>(DEFICIT) / SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>-3,295</b>	<b>19,799</b>	<b>16,504</b>	<b>16,162</b>	<b>-1,487</b>	<b>14,676</b>
<b>MOVEMENT IN RESERVES DURING THE YEAR</b>						
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 1ST JANUARY</b>	<b>22,979</b>	<b>241,053</b>	<b>264,032</b>	<b>20,088</b>	<b>229,269</b>	<b>249,357</b>
<b>(DEFICIT) / SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>-3,295</b>	<b>19,799</b>	<b>16,504</b>	<b>16,162</b>	<b>-1,487</b>	<b>14,676</b>
<b>FUND TRANSFERS</b>	<b>3,338</b>	<b>-3,338</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-13,271</b>	<b>13,271</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 31ST DECEMBER</b>	<b>23,022</b>	<b>257,514</b>	<b>280,536</b>	<b>22,979</b>	<b>241,053</b>	<b>264,033</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**  
**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

	<b>2023</b>			<b>2022</b>
<b>CASH BALANCES</b>	<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>ALL FUNDS</b>
Bank Account (see notes 1 & 2)	12,501	10,268	22,770	28,577
CBF Deposits (see note 7)		229,812	229,812	209,597
Cash in Hand	-	-	-	
<b>Cash at Bank and in Hand: End of Period</b>	<b>12,501</b>	<b>240,081</b>	<b>252,582</b>	<b>238,174</b>
<b>OTHER MONETARY ASSETS</b>				
Investments (see note 10)	10,521	17,433	27,953	25,859
<b>OTHER ASSETS</b>				
(See note 3)	-	-	-	-
<b>OTHER LIABILITIES</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL ASSETS &amp; LIABILITIES</b>	<b>23,022</b>	<b>257,514</b>	<b>280,536</b>	<b>264,033</b>

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

1 £500 is held in PCC St Marys Lower Hardres account which is restricted for use of the Lower Hardres 100 Club.

2 Bank balances as at 31st December (non CCLA/Investment Accounts):

	<b>2023</b>			<b>2022</b>
	<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>ALL FUNDS</b>
Bridge Group Parish PCC	8,685	N/A	8,685	10
The Bridge Group of Parishes	68	N/A	68	315
PCC of Bekesbourne Current Account	2,010	N/A	2,010	3,285
PCC Bekesbourne Reserve Account	N/A	10,268	10,268	14,752
PCC St Marys Lower Hardres	550	N/A	550	488
PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington	815	N/A	815	652
PCC St Marys Nackington	36	N/A	36	500
PCC Patrixbourne with Bridge	337	N/A	337	8,575
	<b>12,501</b>	<b>10,268</b>	<b>22,770</b>	<b>28,577</b>

3 As at 31st December 2023 £1,097.69 of gift aid is recoverable from gifts received during 2023.

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

- 4 The Financial Statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, using the Receipts and Payments basis.
- 5 Other Assets - The Movable Church Furnishings are listed in the inventory (held by the Church Wardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal).
- 6 Reserves Policy - it is our policy to invest funds' balances with the CBF (Church of England)
- 7 The Restricted Funds comprise the following accounts and values at year-end:

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<u>St. Peter Bridge &amp; St Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Sale of Vicarage Land (General) Fund	136,685	138,753
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>136,685</b>	<b>138,753</b>
<u>St. Peter Bridge</u>		
Fabric Fund	14,926	13,374
Choir Fund	248	127
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>15,174</b>	<b>13,500</b>
<u>St. Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Fabric Fund	10,337	9,578
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>10,337</b>	<b>9,578</b>
<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>		
Friends of Bekesbourne Church	16,162	12,387
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>16,162</b>	<b>12,387</b>
<u>St. Mary Lower Hardres</u>		
Fabric Fund	2,079	966
Daisy Law Churchyard Fund	3,735	3,619
Friends of Lower Hardres Church	562	544
Lower Hardres General Fund	52	50
Lower Hardres 100 Club	500	500
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>6,927</b>	<b>5,180</b>
<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>		
Fabric Fund	20,477	5,863
Friends of Nackington Church	19,328	20,371
Nackington General Fund	2,770	2,684
Chancel Income Fund	1,952	1,781
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>44,527</b>	<b>30,699</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>229,812</b>	<b>210,097</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP****NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

8 Voluntary Parish Share contributions for 2020 and 2021 were not paid in full due to reduced income as a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The total arrears is shown against 2023.

9 Due to a slightly late payment for the December 2023 Parish Share, our accounts for 2023 show an underpayment. This was swiftly rectified in early 2023, as £5,808.58 was paid in January 2024.

	2023	2022
Total Parish Share Covid arrears:	21,824	-
Parish Share arrears:	5,809	-

10 The Investment Assets comprise the following accounts and valuations at year-end:

	2023	2022
<u>St. Mary Lower Hardres</u>	<b>Units</b>	
<u>RECTORY LAND FUND (Unrestricted)</u>		
CBF Investment*	208.5      4,713	4,307
CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378      547	518

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund (PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington).

<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>			
<u>RECTORY LAND FUND (Unrestricted)</u>			
CBF Investment*	208.5	4,713	4,307
CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378	547	518

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund (PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington).

<b>TOTAL UNRESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>	<b>10,521</b>	<b>9,650</b>
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<u>NACKINGTON CHANCEL FUND (Endowment)</u>			
CBF Investment**	182	4,114	3,758

\*\*Dividends are credited to the Chancel Deposit Fund

<u>MISS DORIS RYE BEQUEST (Restricted)</u>			
CBF Fixed Interest Securities***	6515	9,430	8,900

\*\*\* The income from this bequest is restricted to the church's Fabric Fund and dividends are credited to the St. Mary Nackington Fabric Fund.

<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>			
<u>WARDELL BEQUEST (Endowment)</u>			
CBF Investment****	172	3,888	3,551

\*\*\*\* The income from this bequest is credited to the St. Peter Bekesbourne current account.

<b>TOTAL RESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>	<b>17,433</b>	<b>16,209</b>
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# Accounts

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**DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY**  
**The Parish of the Bridge Group**

Comprising the churches of St Peter's Bridge, St Mary's Patricxbourne, St Peter's  
Bekesbourne, St Mary's Lower Hardres and St Mary's Nackington.

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE  
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST  
DECEMBER 2022

**Incumbent**

Reverend Estella Last

**Bankers**

*In respect of Bridge, Patricxbourne, Lower Hardres and Nackington*

Lloyds TSB bank PLC

49 High Street, Canterbury Kent CT1 2SE

*And in respect of St Peter's Bekesbourne*

Natwest

*In respect of The Bridge Group Parish*

The Co-operative Bank PLC (account opened December 2022)

and

The CBF Church of England Funds  
85 Queen Victoria St, London EC4 4ET

**Independent Examiner**

David Muggridge FCCA MAE

Ackland Webb Ltd

## **Introduction**

Since January 2020, the churches of St Peter's Bridge, St Mary's Patrixbourne, St Peter's Bekesbourne, St. Mary's Lower Hardres and St Mary's Nackington have formed one ecclesiastical parish. This is now known as The Parish of the Bridge Group in the County of Kent, within the East Bridge Deanery of the Diocese of Canterbury of the Church of England.

We are an episcopal church led by our bishop, The Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury. He is assisted by The Rt Rev'd Rose Hudson Wilkin, the Bishop of Dover. Our Patrons are The Archbishop of Canterbury and the President and Scholars of St John's College Oxford. This is the third Annual Report of the newly created Parish of the Bridge Group.

## **Aims and Purposes of this report**

This annual report is made to the parishioners of the Bridge Group of churches and the members on the church electoral roll who live within or outside the parish. The Church Representation Rules (Rule 9 (1) (b)) require 'an annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the church generally' to be received by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). The APCM is invited to discuss it.

The PCC sincerely thank all those people who voluntarily give their time and money to serving the church in many ways thus enabling the five churches in our Parish to flourish as a Christian community.

## **2022 - the new normal?**

It is becoming hard to recall the level of restrictions which were still in place at the start of 2022, as the Omicron variant of Covid swept the country. This proved to be the turning point, and over the following months the nation gradually returned to more normal patterns of work and facemasks in communal settings became the exception rather than the rule.

The easing of Covid restrictions made possible an incremental return to more normal patterns of worship and the restoration of activities outside the church much missed during the pandemic. In addition to Messy Church and Little Lambs, a new Family Service was started and runs at 4pm on the third Sunday each month. School liaison, maintained with some ingenuity during the last two years, has been easier during the year. Services were held in June to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, an almost unique occasion and the source of great joy. This was followed all too soon by her death in September, again marked by special services and the opening of our churches for prayer and reflection.

In July we were delighted to celebrate the ordination of our Curate, Miriam Hinksman, with a 'bring & share' lunch. As a church community, we are indeed fortunate to have such vibrant and inspirational leaders as Estella and Miriam.

The PCC's financial situation remains challenging but under control. We have a new Treasurer who has been tackling the daunting task of amalgamating the finances of five separate parishes into a single, streamlined accounting system. After months of negotiation and bureaucracy a new Community Account has been opened with the CoOp Bank, and the unrestricted 'general' funds of all five churches are being steadily transferred into this. The PCC is now registered with the Charity Commission and will shortly be registered with HMRC for the purpose of reclaiming tax on donations made by GiftAid. The Parish Giving Scheme, set up to simplify regular donations and the claiming of GiftAid relief, has been rolled out across the Benefice with general approval and has made a significant difference to our income and cash flow this year.

The period since the imposition of lockdown at the start of the pandemic has seen events unprecedented in our nation's history and an unimaginable death toll. While there can be no silver lining to this, the consolidation of services during pandemic has brought our worshipping community closer and accelerated the unity of purpose envisaged when the Single Parish initiative was first planned over five years ago. There remains much work to be done.

Rory Wetherell  
PCC Secretary

## **Vision for 2023**

During the course of 2022 we have regrouped sufficiently as a Parish and as church communities, following the disruption caused by the pandemic, to begin to think about what we would like the future of our church to look like. Without fanfare or celebration we came to the gradual realisation that our previous 'vision' of becoming a single parish has substantively been achieved and that whilst there are still some aspects of our single parish life that we are working out together, the time had come us to think more carefully about where we go from here.

On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022 we held a Parish Vision Day at Lower Hardres Village Hall at which we reflected on and reviewed prayerfully where we have got to together and how we want to grow as a church community. Then during our Summer Service rotation we gave every congregation the opportunity to contribute their thoughts on our parish priorities on slips of paper collated in our 'priorities box'. The notes from the Vision morning and the Priorities box were drawn into some key themes and presented to the PCC by our Curate Rev'd Miriam Bier Hinksman, broad agreement was reached on the direction of travel and PCC permission granted for this to be communicated to the wider Parish.

The Vision and Mission Update leaflet which was produced and circulated in October 2022 recognises that in the life of our churches, while we have good relationships within our local Church of England Primary School in Bridge and some good work for children and families taking place, it is clear that we have all become mindful of 'the gap', the separation between young and old in our worshipping community. So the new Vision we have set for ourselves in 2022 is:

**“We, the churches of the Bridge Group Parish, aspire to becoming a fully intergenerational worshipping community which is welcoming and inclusive for people of all ages.”**

**(October 2022)**

This is not something that will be achieved overnight and it will take time to bring to fruition but it is a vision, which like the aim of becoming a single parish, will we hope begin to infiltrate and inform everything that we do together as we seek prayerfully to grow our church and share the gospel with a wider demographic in our community.

We are of course always aiming to continue to work towards a sustainable future for a flourishing church community as One Parish, Five Places of Worship. The work on proposed

reordering projects for St Mary's Patricxbourne and St Mary's Nackington continue to play an exciting part in the future of our Parish and being responsible for the stewardship of our ancient buildings remains an important part of what we do together.

Rev'd Estella Last  
Vicar

## **Updates from each of our Churches**

### **St Peter's Bridge**

#### **Services**

Our service pattern has returned to normality following the Covid pandemic. The monthly service pattern consists of two communion services (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays) with a family service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, in the afternoon.

Additional services (occasional offices) included Ash Wednesday, World Day of Prayer, Maundy Thursday, a Remembrance Day Service and the Platinum Jubilee Celebration. A service of Prayer and Reflection was held after the death of the late HM Queen Elizabeth II.

There were five baptisms, three weddings, a wedding blessing and five funerals. The school held seven services, two pre-school services and the Scouts held one service. Bridge hosted the All-Souls Evensong. There was a Carol Service and two Christingle services in December.

#### **Church Building**

In mid-June the two 21-year-old gas boilers were replaced with two new (hopefully more efficient) 'A' rated gas boilers. At the same time the circulating pump was stripped down and overhauled. The new boilers keep the Church 'comfortably warm' as we try to keep our energy bill to an acceptable level. St Peter's, like the other churches, was granted financial assistance from the Diocese to help with rising energy costs.

In mid-August \*\*\*\*\*, our Architect, visited. He inspected the internal wall on the south side of the chancel which had been drying out for a year following redecoration in 2021. He was satisfied that it could be given another coat of paint, subsequently applied by \*\*\*\*\*. Andrew also inspected a flaking capping stone on the sloping roof to the Vicar's vestry. He sought a quote for a replacement from Colman's Builders (not yet received). The metal sloping roof to this vestry was painted with bitumastic paint to keep its appearance good, also carried out by \*\*\*\*\*.

The fire extinguishers were serviced in mid-February. The organ was tuned in early December prior to the Carol Service. Cleaning, flower arranging, clock maintenance, flag flying are all tasks carried out by numerous volunteers, to whom we are extremely grateful. Rosemary Whatley is our Sacristan (along with other roles for the whole Parish) who amongst other things ensures the correct colour altar frontal is in place during the year. The church silver and vestments remain in good order.

#### **Churchyard**

The churchyard is mown by the City Council's Contractor during the mowing season, normally fortnightly but during the very hot, dry summer this was on a 3-weekly cycle.

The Churchyard Restoration Group, led principally by \*\*\*\*\*, resumed in late February. Volunteers meet for 3-4 hours on a Tuesday afternoon. When available a gardener from The Pig helps. The work during the year mainly consists of ongoing tidying, weeding, leaf clearance etc, and work finished for the winter at the end of November. The City Council employed their contractor to successfully remove a diseased sycamore tree.

Laurence Dunderdale and Evelyn Andrews, Churchwardens  
Sacristan: Rosemary Whatley

## **St Mary's Patrixbourne**

Services have been held monthly throughout the year with a congregation of between 25 and 40 coming from across the Parish. One wedding, one funeral and one burial, after a funeral service at Bridge, have taken place over the course of the last year.

Early in the year storms caused damage to two mature larch trees in the churchyard, with one large branch coming down over gravestones in the front of the churchyard. We are grateful to Mr and Mrs \*\*\*\*\* from Bridge for removing the branches in a prompt manner; luckily no lasting damage was done to the gravestones. An inspection of the trees suggested larch beetle activity. A tree surgeon removed the tree from the front of the churchyard and removed branches to the trees at the rear to make the trees safe. The cost of the work was kindly funded by a Patrixbourne resident.

Moles in the churchyard have been a problem but have been deterred with apparent success by solar powered sonic devices. We now have a neighbour's beehive in the churchyard. They are hoping that when the bees in the church chimney swarm this coming summer some might settle in the beehive. We are trying to look after the churchyard, being mindful that we are an eco-church. The weeds on the church path have been treated using a solution made from non-toxic ingredients.

The church is kept open every day and visitors started to return in the spring. The number of people undertaking pilgrimage, especially along the Via Francigena has increased dramatically in the last year and some pilgrims have stayed overnight in the church. In September St Mary's participated in the Dover Pilgrim Festival with an evening of poetry and music, 'O Roma Nobilis', staged by \*\*\*\*\* and\*\*\*\*\*.

Late in the year \*\*\*\*\* who was walking the whole of the Old Way from Southampton and back also stayed overnight in the church. His whole journey, including his time in our church, when he recorded himself singing, was published on Twitter. We continue to have a fruitful relationship with \*\*\*\*\* of the British Pilgrimage Trust especially with their Sanctuary Project. The church was once again used by the Pilgrims

Hospice as a refreshment stop on the day of their Annual Sponsored Walk in June, and the church again participated in the Friends of Kent Churches Sponsored Bike Ride in September.

Fundraising to allow us to build our extension is on-going but funds are difficult to come by. One funding organisation responded to a grant application by saying that at present all their money is being donated to the Trussell Trust. We are grateful for all who supported the on-line Auction early in the Year.

The faculty to allow us to complete the project to renew all the lighting in the church with LED lights was finally obtained in the Autumn. Work commenced in December and is due to finish early in 2023. The clock and the roof alarm system have also required attention.

The sudden death of Queen Elizabeth II resulted in the postponement of our harvest Festival until October. A photograph of the Queen was placed in the church along with a Book of Condolence for people to sign. Remembrance Day was marked by the Year 6 Children of Bridge School who walked to the church and held a very moving service at the War Memorial in the churchyard.

The Carol Service on December the 23<sup>rd</sup> was well attended and took a different format this year. Early in December we asked the residents of Patricbourne for nominations for Carols to be included in the service and the most popular carols were sung at the service. Patricbourne residents read the lessons. The service was much enjoyed and concluded with singing the rousing choice of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen".

The churchwardens would like to thank everyone who helps at the church with flowers and cleaning, the services, looking after the churchyard and supporting fundraising concerts and other events.

Andrea Nicholson and Pauline Pritchard, Churchwardens

### **St Peter's Bekesbourne**

Our Songs of Praise service continues to be very popular. It is a lay-led service which takes place on the first Sunday of the month at 10.00. A small team plan the services around a particular theme. In 2022 there has been increased participation from different members of the congregation which makes for a more inclusive and informal service. Refreshments are served after the service and everyone is encouraged to stay and chat.

There were two Holy Communion services, a carol service on Christmas Day and extra lay-led services for Mothering Sunday and Easter Sunday. During 2022 there were four funerals; two weddings; one baptism and an interment.

The bell ringers held their AGM in December. There are eight ringers. The new members, \*\*\*\*\* were all passed as competent ringers and can now become members of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers. The bell ringers provide a valuable service to the Church, by ringing before all

our services, for weddings and on special occasions. They rang for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and then sadly for her funeral.

An inspection of the bell tower was carried out by \*\*\*\*\* . Everything is satisfactory.

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our Christian faith. Charitable donations were made during the year to Friends of Kent Churches, Porchlight , the British Legion and the Children's Society. At our Harvest service all donations were sent to the Canterbury Food Bank.

We are grateful to \*\*\*\*\* and the members of the buildings sub-group of the PCC who organise any necessary work and monitor the condition of the fabric of the church and keep the Terrier and Log Book up to date.

The high winds in February brought down a substantial amount of roof tiles. Repair work was carried out in April. This was paid for by Ecclesiastical Insurers with the excess paid by the Friends.

Our Bevington organ is regularly serviced and is normally played at all services.\*\*\*\*\* , our organist, plays at all our Songs of Praise services and does not take payment; we give him a 'thank you' gift at the end of the year. We would welcome visiting organists to come and play as the organ would benefit from being used more often.

The churchyard is an 'open churchyard' and is maintained by volunteers. It continues to be our policy to maintain the churchyard by balancing ecologically sound management, good accessibility for present and former parishioners to visit their family graves, and a beautiful setting for the church. A number of working parties organised by \*\*\*\*\* tidy the churchyard and cut back trees and shrubs where necessary. Visitors often comment on how well the church and churchyard are maintained. Routine mowing is done by a local contractor. We are again grateful to the Parish Council of Bekesbourne with Patribourne who give a substantial grant towards this work.

The Bekesbourne team wishes to thank all those people who voluntarily give their time and money to serve our village church in many different ways, enabling Bekesbourne to flourish as part of the Bridge Group worshipping community.

Nicky Fry, Churchwarden

### **St Mary's Lower Hardres**

We continued with the new pattern of services set up in the autumn of 2021 where there was an Evensong service held at St Mary's Lower Hardres at 6pm on the first Sunday of the month. This service has had a good regular attendance with an average congregation of 20. The lowest figure, unsurprisingly, was for 2<sup>nd</sup> January when there were 12 people present and the highest was a congregation of 28 people on the first Sunday in May. Coffee and biscuits are provided at the end of each service with an opportunity to stay and chat. We are very grateful for the support of the choir, led by \*\*\*\*\* , at these services.

We had two Group Parish Family Communion services, one on the fifth Sunday of the month in May with a congregation of 42 and the other in August with a congregation of 51. This service was both our patronal festival for St Mary and a celebration to mark the 190<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the consecration of the 'new' church built in Lower Hardres to replace the old Saxon church which had fallen into considerable disrepair. The new church was paid for by a wealthy parishioner, James Tillard, and was consecrated on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1832 by Archbishop William Howley. Wine, soft drinks and nibbles were provided at the end of the service.

On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November, a short Act of Remembrance was held at Lower Hardres Village Memorial, led by our Curate Miriam, where a wreath of poppies was laid, the Roll of Honour read and a bugler played the Last Post and Reveille. It was, as always, a moving occasion and very well supported. We had a Carols and Christingle Service in December with a congregation of 36. Mulled wine, sausage rolls and mince pies were enjoyed afterwards.

There was a wedding at St Mary's in July and a baptism in October. We also had two funerals take place this year.

St Mary's Church is open as usual, all day, every day of the year for visitors and private prayer. I am very grateful to the small team of helpers who keep the church clean and tidy and who help make the church beautiful with flower arrangements throughout the year.

The churchyard is open and is mown regularly by Mr \*\*\*\*\*. We are grateful to the

Parish Council who make a donation towards the upkeep of the churchyard every year which enables us to keep it looking well cared for. Thanks also to the volunteers who help with the general maintenance of the churchyard. Areas of the churchyard are left 'wild' to encourage wildlife and we have been part of the God's Acre Project for many years.

We did not have a service on Mothering Sunday but instead welcomed everyone to join us for tea and cakes from 3- 5pm in the afternoon. Palm Crosses were left in the church on Palm Sunday for anyone to collect and there was an Easter Egg Hunt held in the John Baker-White Hall organised by two local mums instead of the traditional egg hunt in the churchyard. Our vicar, Estella, and some of the church team provided refreshments and some Easter treats for the children taking part.

On 6<sup>th</sup> February this year the Queen celebrated her Platinum Jubilee and this was marked by a four-day national holiday from 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> June. The Friends of Lower Hardres Church joined with the Parish Council to organise a 'big' lunch at the John Baker-White hall for the whole village community with an ice cream van, commemorative mugs and a bouncy castle amongst other things. It was a great success and a lovely way to mark such a momentous occasion.

In April the Quinquennial Report was carried out by the architect \*\*\*\*\*. Her report showed the building to be in a 'Fair' condition with numerous things that need attention, but nothing urgent except some electrical work that had shown up as unsatisfactory in the electrical survey carried out prior to the Quinquennial Report. The most urgent work, which involved the earthing of the porch light and other electrical defects with associated safety and fire risk, was carried out immediately at a cost of £500. A quote of £2,300 for further electrical work to be carried out has been received.

On 8<sup>th</sup> September we heard the terribly sad news that the Queen had died. The following day the church bell was tolled for an hour at noon along with all the other church bells in the country as a mark of respect and sorrow. There were candles provided to light for prayers and a book of condolence was also available in the church.

For the third year running, an Advent Calendar was organised in the village with different households choosing numbers to decorate their houses in the countdown to Christmas Day.

Community Carol singing in the John Baker-White Hall was again organised by members of the church, the Friends and the village social committee. As before, the singing was led by Estella, our vicar, with everyone enthusiastically joining in and with \*\*\*\*\* accompanying on the electric organ. Mulled wine, hot chocolate, sausage rolls and mince pies were enjoyed afterwards.

We have lost several of our friends and supporters this year either because they have moved away or have sadly died. Our working church team has also got significantly smaller over the past couple of years for various reasons and so we are actively encouraging other people to join us from our wider Friends group or the community at large.

Thanks to all the Friends of St Mary's Lower Hardres and the members of our church team for their invaluable support over the past year. It is greatly appreciated.

Carol Day, Churchwarden

## **St Mary's Nackington**

The service pattern remains unchanged with the 8am Holy Communion on the first Sunday and Morning Prayer on the third Sunday. The numbers in the congregation are down from pre Covid but loyal attendance continues for special services and occasions. We thank John Meardon and Katherine Rutherford for their ongoing work towards the church improvements. The first part is to upgrade the electrical power supply. A new cable from the pole outside of the churchyard in Nackington Farmhouse will be run into the vestry. A new fuse board at the now regulation lower level will be installed. This work will commence this summer and we are waiting to hear the date from the electrical contractor now.

We thank \*\*\*\*\* for his tireless work at maintaining this area around the War Memorial so well over so many years; he has now handed this role over to \*\*\*\*\*.

The area has been cleared and a granite hard standing surround has been laid around the memorial. This was necessary because the ground had become unstable and unsafe due to the mole hills. This work has been done with help from the parish council and after consultation with the War Memorial Trust, Historic England and the CCC. The site looks hugely improved.

We thank \*\*\*\*\* for their help with the boiler, the safe, the flowers & the Friends. We thank \*\*\*\*\* for the music and advertising of services.

Daphne Reece and Scilla Wright, Churchwardens

## **Friends Organisations**

### **Friends of St Peter's Bridge (FOSP)**

The Friends aim to increase our outreach into the local community. In December 2016 FOSP experimented with holding a Coffee & Cake Concert: it was an enjoyable success, and a regular variety of musical events has followed.

The Coffee & Cake Concerts format continues to be successful and the concerts in 2022 were:

- 'To be a Pilgrim' in February (£342.35 for FOSM);
- '\*\*\*\*\* & the Lion' in April (£295.00 for FOSM)
- 'Prelude for the Platinum Jubilee' in May (£232.00 for Eco Church)
- Rev Miriam's favourite things' in September (£74.25 for Harvest Appeals & £194.25 for NSPKU (the National Society for Phenylketonuria)
- \*\*\*\*\*'s Birds, Bees & other friends' in October (£269.00 for Eco Church)
- the Annual Carol Concert in December (£200.00 for Canterbury Food Bank and £125.50 Bridge Church heating fund)

More Coffee & Cake Concerts will take place in 2023.

Alan Barber

### **Friends of St Mary's Patrixbourne (FOSM)**

A number of factors combined to make this another slow year. There was an understandable reluctance on the part of our 'regulars' to gather in enclosed spaces early in the year and a planned series of concerts by students at Canterbury Christchurch University fell victim to the serious illness of the CCCU organiser. (I am pleased to report that he seems to have made a good recovery and we hope the concerts will now go ahead in 2023.) Our one 'in church' event of the year was an evening of poetry and music as part of the Dover Festival of Pilgrimage in September. This was performed at churches along the Via Francigena on successive evenings but we were able to turn it into a fundraiser by adding refreshments.

The major fundraising event of the year was the online auction run for us by \*\*\*\*\* at the start of the year. Parishioners bid for goods and services offered by others and raised over £2000 for our funds. We would like to reiterate our thanks to \*\*\*\*\* for all her hard work on this. We could never have managed it without her expertise.

A separate 'fundraiser', though not strictly under the auspices of FOSM, occurred when two trees in the churchyard suffered serious damage during Storm Eunice. As we did not have the money readily available to pay the tree surgeons' bill, we leafleted all the houses in the village, describing our predicament, and raised more than the sum required in very short order. We are very grateful for the generosity of our villagers and their obvious affection for our lovely building.

Pauline Pritchard

### **The Friends of Bekesbourne Church**

The Friends' support the church by organising fundraising events. It is made up of people from the village, who are not necessarily regular church-goers. The function of The Friends' is to raise money for St. Peter's and, in particular, for "the maintenance and enhancement of the church building and churchyard". Funds raised by the Friends are used to pay for the annual insurance premium on the church building and various items of essential maintenance and repairs. The Friends' paid the excess of £250 on the Ecclesiastical insurance for the roof repair in May. Plans to renovate the lych gate were put on hold until we are sure we have sufficient funds and that materials are readily available.

Our post Covid fundraising started with an organ recital in the church. In May the Friends held a Wine and Wisdom in the village hall in Littlebourne. At the end of September the newly refurbished village hall reopened. This was the venue for the Wine and Wisdom in October and the Christmas Bazaar in December. Money raised at these two events went to the church account. Steve Thomas organizes the 100 Club for the benefit of the Friends.

\*\*\*\*\*

Chair of the Friends of Bekesbourne Church.

## **Friends of St Mary's Lower Hardres**

For various reasons the Friends of St Mary's did not hold any fund-raising events this past year. Their efforts were instead concentrated on forming and strengthening the links between the church and the village community as a whole with several social events organised jointly with the village Parish Council and the village social committee. The main event this year was the 'Big' lunch which was organised to join in with the nationwide celebrations held to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in June.

Earlier in the year refreshments were provided for Mothering Sunday, the Easter Egg Hunt and again at the end of the year for the Community Carols.

The 100 Club, which had been set up in the summer last year, finished its first year in July and enabled us to pay for the insurance for the church this year with the profits made which was a great achievement. Sadly, however, we were not able to renew memberships for a second year because of difficulties with accessing information from our bank account. A refund has been offered to those members who paid for a second year automatically by Standing Order and renewal letters are ready to go out to restart the 100 Club later in 2023.

The Friends group will be organising some fund raising activities in the year ahead and are meeting together to plan these. They will also continue to work with the social committee and Parish Council to organise the celebrations planned for the Coronation of King Charles III in May.

Carol Day

## **Friends of Nackington Church**

The Friends organised three events in 2022, a travel talk by \*\*\*\*\*, an evening of local wine tasting with Heppington Vineyard, and Carol Singing in December with the Salvation Army Band. All three events were well attended and ticket sales amounted to £1,466 in total. A retiring collection of £581 was presented to the Salvation Army following the Carol Singing evening. Donations and Christmas Card sales amounted to £272.50. We hope to upgrade the electricity supply shortly, the first step of our reordering project.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Christian Aid report for APCM 2023**

Like all charities Christian Aid is finding it hard to maintain the level of fund-raising of earlier years. Delivering and collecting envelopes door-to-door during the annual Christian Aid Week in May is becoming a less viable option, partly because many supporters are ageing and unable to carry, but also because fewer people keep ready cash at home. At Bridge we have opted to use deliver-only envelopes in the last two years with local houses and businesses identified for returning them.

Christian Aid campaigns for social justice and particularly on the issue of climate change, a major cause of world poverty. Climate justice was the theme of Christian Aid Week 2022, with a focus on how women farmers in Zimbabwe cope with drought. In our Parish 16 volunteers delivered

envelopes in Bridge, Patrixbourne, Bekesbourne and Lower Hardres and two soup lunches were held during the week. The total raised was £1,270.70 which, although a good result, was considerably less than the previous year. The envelopes also included the Canterbury CA Group's Just Giving page address, so people may have given online but we were unable to record this. A few individual donations were also received during the year, including one from the Caring and Sharing Group.

We are uncertain as to the most effective way to raise money in our Parish during Christian Aid Week 2023. A single fund-raising event, a limited deliver-only envelopes scheme, envelopes in the pews in all our churches and/or the opportunity to donate online using a special e-envelope are all possible options.

The Canterbury CA Group, which consists of representatives from 12 churches, had fewer fund-raising events in 2022 but more are planned for this year. A produce sale at St Peter's Anglican Church held in May was successful and a few of our people kindly donated plants and other goods. It will be repeated this year and it is hoped that it will be well-supported by our parishioners.

The annual Christian Aid Week service at St Stephen's Church was poorly attended. This has been the general trend over the past few years, so it has now been discontinued and individual churches are being asked to hold their own themed services at the start or end of Christian Aid Week.

As always, many thanks to all our loyal envelope-deliverers and to everyone who supports Christian Aid in any way.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Parish Eco-Church Team report for APCM 2023**

The eco- team have been busy over the past 12 months trying to maintain and advance our eco-church credentials. We made the decision to reassess our eco-church award (achieved in 2019) to ensure that we have kept up with our responsibilities as eco-churches and to plan for future developments. We are pleased to report that, even through the restrictions posed by Covid-19 over the past few years, we have been able to maintain our silver status across all five churches. Our eco-church status has also benefitted the finances of the parish as this was a contributing factor in our receipt of the diocese winter heating grant.

This year we have welcomed the addition of some new members. As well as the 12 eco-church team members we now have seven regular volunteers manning the recycling station within Bridge Church. The recycling station is well used and the team assess which products are most frequently recycled and update the station accordingly. We would welcome anyone from the local community who may be interested in joining or supporting the team.

We continue to support the environmentally friendly management of our church yards and are encouraging more wildlife by ensuring a variety of plants and flowers and by implementing sustainable mowing. Thanks to a link with a local bee keeper we have also installed bee hives at Patrixbourne. We are just awaiting our first swarm of bees to make it their home!

Highlights from the past year have been the launch of our eco-newsletter and our trip to Forest school. Our second newsletter was published in March 2023 and included lots of practical tips on being more environmentally aware and even included a recipe for animal safe weed killer which we are using in our churchyards. The trip to Forest School at Bridge and Patrixbourne CEP allowed some of our members to get a taste of what the younger generation are learning about in school and we hope to be able to continue to support this excellent project in the coming years.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Choir and music report for APCM 2023**

There is little change from last year's Choir report. There are eight regular members (plus the Vicar) who sing at two Parish Communion services at Bridge each month and one Evensong at Lower Hardres. At Bridge the choir sings a hymn or anthem, usually *a cappella*, during the act of Communion and the Evensong service is fully choral, with the choir singing responses, psalm, canticles and anthem.

We are fortunate to be able to call on one soprano and three basses to help cover occasional absences and several additional singers joined us as usual for the Christmas Carol Service, including past choir member Bettina Walker who was visiting from Somerset.

The choir was pleased to sing at the Sung Communion service at Patrixbourne in June when the church was beautifully decorated by the flower arrangers. Other important services were the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II and later the Memorial Service for her death, the Tenebrae service on Maundy Thursday introduced by Revd Miriam and the Patronal Festival and 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service at Lower Hardres.

Two of the Saturday Coffee and Cake concerts, one for the Platinum Jubilee and the other pre-Christmas, provided an enjoyable opportunity to sing music not usually heard in church, when we formed a Community Choir with other singers from the Parish and villages.

We are indebted to the other organists and pianists who play regularly for services in the Parish: \*\*\*\*\* (who also willingly accompanies at the C&C concerts), \*\*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*\*. \*\*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*\* tand in occasionally when our organists are unavailable.

Mander Organ Builders continue to tune and maintain the organs annually. Patrixbourne and Bridge churches are affiliated to the RSCM and an annual fee is paid.

Jean Barber

## **Bridge CEP School**

Bridge and Patrixbourne School had finally almost returned to "normal" following the disruption of Covid and enjoyed another productive year under the careful leadership of \*\*\*\*\*, the Senior Leadership team and the Governing Body.

The school remains oversubscribed with a full role of nearly 420 pupils and 70 staff members. Estella is on the Board of Governors and PTA committee and the ministry team lead collective worship in school weekly. The PCC nominates two Foundation Governors (Graham Duplock and \*\*\*\*\*).

The year started in the shadow of the previous year's Covid restrictions and high numbers of pupil and staff absences. Through the Spring Messy Church, weekly parents' prayer meetings, interschool sports events and school trips were restarted. Careful discussions were had with pupils explaining the situation with the war in Ukraine and events supporting the people of Ukraine were held. During terms 5 and 6 school life further returned to normal with outdoor music performances and the year 6 production of "Matilda the Musical" taking place. The joint School/Church Bridge Fete took place successfully for the first time since 2019 and end of year church services were held again.

An unfortunate fire in the Reception area at the start of the Summer holiday caused extensive smoke damage and meant starting the new school year with Reception classes in the year 6 classrooms and utilising the School Hall for year 6. Everyone pulled together to minimise successfully the effect on the children's education.

With school back to normal year 5 and year 6 (rescheduled from the last year) Residentials took place. Church visits for Commemoration of our Queen, welcoming reception children and parents and Harvest Festival took place. Plans for resumption of Messy Church with a new team in January were formulated. The first PTA Firework Display since 2019 took place. Our usual preparations for the Christmas Festival; Church Christmas Card design competition, Salvation Army concert, children's Nativities, senior citizens' party, Carols in the village and Advent church services all took place. Finally, Reception doors and canopy were replaced to complete repair of the fire damage.

Estella continued to lead sessions for both teaching staff and governors on implementation of the SIAMS Framework within the school community. In the autumn a new SIAMS inspection framework was announced for introduction from September 2023. Our Christian vision and strands are now being re-examined to match the new framework.

The foundation governors would like to thank the staff, parents and PTA for their continued support for the school throughout the year. Despite the above the school community has continued to provide a Christian foundation for its children and the community.

Graham Duplock, Foundation Governor

## **Parish Magazines**

**The Lower Hardres and Nackington Village News** has been in existence for approximately 30 years. It is run by a group of Volunteers

and is an independent publication. It accepts content from numerous sources including the church. 150 households currently receive the 'Village News' and it is sold in the local farm shop.

**On the Nail** is the Parish magazine for the villages along the Nailbourne (Bridge, Patrixbourne & Bekesbourne). In 2022 there were 11 monthly editions from February to December. 490 copies are produced each month. There are 295 regular subscribers in Bridge, 43 in Patrixbourne and 115 in Bekesbourne. Copies are available in each of our five churches. Complimentary copies are available at The Pig for guests and are also available in commercial premises in Bridge. Copies are posted to former residents who have moved away, and Estella and Miriam have copies to hand out as they choose.

The annual subscription remains at £5.00, unchanged for several years. Subscription income from Bridge and Patrixbourne along with all advertising income during the year amounted to £4550.00; Bekesbourne currently retains their subscription income. Our printing costs rose to £3370.00 in 2022.

Megan Shirley, our Parish Administrator, is responsible for editing and typesetting before printing and \*\*\*\*\* (Bekesbourne) co-ordinates the advertising on behalf of the Parish. A few advertisers chose not to renew in October 2022, so there are a few blank spaces currently.

Our thanks go to \*\*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*\* and all the volunteer distributors who deliver the magazines across our 3 villages.

## **Digital Church**

During the first half of 2022 we continued to film and upload services to YouTube and to send a link with a regular weekly communication to an extensive email list of parishioners. The PCC (and especially Pauline Pritchard and Laurence Dunderdale) spend a not inconsiderable amount of time working to try to achieve the installation of Broadband at St Peter's Bridge. We were thwarted in these endeavours by the inflexibility of BT and the challenge of working with Grade I listed ancient fabric.

Rev'd Estella continues to film and upload services on an ad hoc basis, for example when special services take place, when the service location is difference from usual and when her time and capacity allows. Little feedback is received in relation our online services although numbers of views on YouTube are usually between 15 and 30.

## **Single Parish Electoral Roll**

The total on the Electoral Roll for the parish was **162**, two fewer than the previous year.

The figures for the previous two years are given for comparison:

	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
Bridge/Patrixbourne	66	66	63

Bekesbourne	61	59	59
Nackington/Lower Hardres	39	39	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>162</b>

Forms have been placed in each church for new applicants and there will be notices about the new Roll in pew sheets and On the Nail. Applications should be returned by April 10<sup>th</sup> so that the new Roll can be displayed for two weeks before the APCM.

## **Safeguarding**

I am pleased to report that there have been no Safeguarding issues during 2022. We have worked to meet all the requirements, displaying our Policy for Safeguarding on the website as well as in the churches, reviewing that policy annually and completing DBS checks for all whose roles in the churches require this.

PCC members have completed online training in safeguarding provided by the Diocese and this should continue to be updated every three years. Enhanced DBS checks for all lay people who assist in the parish are up to date. The Diocese requires that these should now be renewed every 3 years instead of the previous 5-year period.

As Safeguarding Officer, I receive regular updates from the Diocese and will act on these as necessary so that the Parish continues to fulfil Safeguarding requirements.

Rosemary Whatley

## **Deanery Synod**

Deanery Synod met three times in 2022. At the March meeting the Rev Estella Last explored the need for the Deanery to prepare a Deanery Plan in which we addressed the need to create a shared vision of the future of the Deanery, in terms of growth in our churches. A presentation on encouraging Lay Ministry in our parishes was given at the July meeting and a member of our eco-church group also spoke to those present about eco-churches. Our Parish is the only Parish where all our churches have eco-churches credentials.

Officers from the Diocese attended the September meeting of the Deanery Synod to explain current Diocesan finances, which have been pared down as much as possible, and how this impacts Parish Share for the coming year. During the early part of the year the opportunity to participate in an on-line 'Living in Love and Faith' course was offered to members of the Deanery. The course was facilitated by the Area Dean, the Rev Stefan Thomas.

In the Deanery the Littlebourne Benefice remains in interregnum, and Rev \*\*\*\*\* of the Canonry Benefice retired at the end of the year, leaving another vacancy.

Andrea Nicholson, Amanda Barker, and Daphne Reece- Deanery Synod Representatives.

## **Parish Giving Scheme**

In early 2022 we successfully launched the Parish Giving Scheme; this is a simpler and easier way to donate to our churches in The Bridge Group Parish.

Gift Aid donations have previously been processed through Diocesan House but to reduce Parish Share costs this facility will cease in May 2023.

The majority of our regular donors have, over the past 12 months, signed up to the PGS. The process to join is straightforward; it necessitates setting up a direct debit (which cannot be changed without consultation). Monthly, quarterly, annual or one-off donations are acceptable and donors are able to opt in or out of an annual increase in their giving. The PGS team are extremely helpful and easily reached by email or phone. The scheme enables our parish to monitor cash flow and to also manage our finances and time more efficiently.

Evelyn Andrews, Gift Aid Secretary

## **Financial Review for the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

Since the amalgamation of parishes in 2019 the financial figures represent a consolidated view of the accounts of the three former PCCs plus the Benefice Group. The results of the Friends of Bekesbourne Church (FoBC), which had been reported separately in 2020, were integrated into the Parish accounts for the first time in 2021 and continue to be included in a comparable manner for 2022.

Each PCC is required to pay its allocated "Parish Share" to the Diocese of Canterbury, which goes towards the overall Diocesan budget for selection, training, stipends, housing and pensions of the clergy, and administration of the Diocese. Effectively it is the cost of providing ministry to the Parish.

The 2022 parish share quota was decreased by approximately 8% compared to 2021 to £68,919. As a group we successfully paid the full amount for 2022 (noting that the final Bekesbourne payment for 2022 was made in the first week of January 2023).

This successful, *full* payment of our Parish Share was a step improvement from 2021 when we paid £64,554 (86% of the annual quota) and 2020, when we paid £59,884 (83% of the annual quota). This success, combined with the fact that we ended the year with cash reserves in our current accounts is felt to be a wonderful achievement and something our whole community should be proud of. From an accounting perspective, 5 months of Parish Share for Lower Hardres and Nackington was paid from the Patrixbourne with Bridge funds, but this was due to the amount of giving now coming through from the Planned Giving Scheme into the

Patricxbourne with Bridge account, and partly in recognition that LH&N had fewer services.

The Statement of Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year is attached. As required by the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and the Charities Act 2011, this Statement has been subject to an independent examination\*.

We have had our challenges during 2022, in particular with the energy price increases. Our heating costs have increased considerably, but from some hard work of our volunteers, we successfully applied for and received grants towards our energy costs for each church. In total for our 5 churches we received £6,100 in energy grants in December 2022. Noting that this is to help towards our energy costs for the whole winter, not just for the winter months of 2022.

In Unrestricted Funds, both total receipts and payments were higher than previous years, due to increased activity within the Church community. The positive outcome is that our total receipts were higher than our total payments so we finished the year having met all of our financial commitments, and held more funds within our Unrestricted accounts than we started the year. This was in comparison to 2021 when we had a deficit of £12,030 (and a deficit of £7,241 in 2020).

There were a number of legacy gifts received throughout the year, mostly designated for Restricted Funds.

As in prior years, our churches received varying levels of Parish Council grants for churchyard maintenance (£1,900 in total for 2022); these grants only partially offset the actual cost of churchyard maintenance.

The Restricted Funds showed a net deficit of £1,487 although there were some notable works during the year. For example, £6,736 was spent on boiler works at St Peter's Bridge and towards the end of the year, £5,000 was spent on St Mary's Patricxbourne (lighting and electrical works).

Church building insurance premiums were reimbursed from Restricted Funds similar to previous years, but the following is to be noted: Bekesbournes Friends contributed to the full costs of the building insurance whereas for the other 4 churches, half of the annual premium was paid by the respective Friends accounts.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the support of all those who have generously contributed to the life of the Parish over the past year, especially in the areas of planned giving, collections and donations. In addition, we are grateful for the ongoing support of our Parish Councils who again, kindly provided maintenance grants.

Peter Turrell, PCC Treasurer

## **Administrative information**

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006). Under these rules, the PCC must meet four times during the year and conduct an Annual Parish Meeting. The

administrative load has increased since the formation of the single parish, and we have increased our number of meetings so that we meet every other month.

Since the formation of the Parish of the Bridge Group on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020, the annual turnover of the PCC has exceeded the threshold for registration with the Charity Commission. Registration was successfully completed on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022; the PCC's Registered Charity number is 1197483.

## **PCC Membership**

PCC members who have served during 2022 are:

### **Ex Officio members:**

Incumbent:	Rev'd Estella Last	
Curate:	Rev'd Miriam Bier Hinksman	
Lay Chaplain:	Miriam Westendarp	
Lay reader:	Margaret Clarke	
Wardens:	Laurence Dunderdale	Nicola Fry
	Evelyn Andrews	Scilla Wright
	Andrea Nicholson	Daphne Reece
	Pauline Pritchard	Carol Day
Deanery Synod Members:	Amanda Barker	
	Andrea Nicholson	
	Daphne Reece	
Hon. Treasurer	Peter Turrell	
Safeguarding and Electoral Roll Officer:	Rosemary Whatley (Co-opted member)	
Secretary:	Rory Wetherell (also elected rep Patrixbourne)	

### **Elected Members:**

Rosy Atkinson (elected rep Bridge)  
Alan Barber (elected rep Bridge)  
Bob Thomas (elected rep Nackington)  
John Meardon (elected rep Nackington)  
Amanda Barker (elected rep Bekesbourne)  
Graham Duplock (elected rep Bekesbourne)  
Sue Isard (elected rep Lower Hardres, resigned

Feb 2022)

### **Finance Committee** – appointed by the PCC as a sub-committee

	Rev'd Estella Last (Incumbent)
	Peter Turrell (Treasurer)
	Evelyn Andrews
Patrixbourne,	(Gift Aid Secretary/Assistant Treasurer, Bridge, Lower Hardres & Nackington)
	Zan Clifford
Bekesbourne)	(Gift Aid Secretary/Assistant Treasurer,
	Laurence Dunderdale
	Bob Thomas

This Annual Report has been approved by the Parochial Church Council by correspondence (email) on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and signed on their behalf by

**Rev'd Estella Last, PCC Chair**

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

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## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**

### **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

This report on the financial statements the PCC for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

#### **Respective Responsibilities of the PCC and the Examiner**

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations section 44(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

#### **Basis of this Report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) of the Act and to be found in the Church Guidance 2006 edition, issued by the finance division of the Archbishops' Council. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the financial statements with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements 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 financial statements.

#### **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:
  - a. Keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Act; and
  - b. To prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and 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 financial statements to be reached.



23-4-2023

---

David Muggridge FCCA MAE  
Ackland Webb

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Date

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

	2022			2021		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS
	Full Year 2022	Full Year 2022	Full Year 2022	Full Year 2021	Full Year 2021	Full Year 2021
<b>RECEIPTS</b>						
<b>VOLUNTARY</b>						
Planned Giving	48,088	0	48,088	37,904	1,620	39,524
Collections	12,884	0	12,884	6,758	0	6,758
Gift Aid Recovery	12,331	0	12,331	10,127	1,000	11,127
<b>Voluntary Subtotal</b>	<b>73,303</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73,303</b>	<b>54,789</b>	<b>2,620</b>	<b>57,409</b>
<b>OTHER</b>						
Parish Contributions to Benefice	7,343	0	7,343	4,029	0	4,029
Other Voluntary Receipts	31,758	9,248	41,006	11,579	11,454	23,033
Fund Generation Activities	26,540	7,315	33,855	7,661	3,339	11,000
Church Activities Receipts	0	0	0	6,031	0	6,031
Other Receipts	1,900	0	1,900	3,911	141,930	145,841
Investment Income	423	2,977	3,400	387	479	866
<b>Other Receipts Subtotal</b>	<b>67,964</b>	<b>19,540</b>	<b>87,504</b>	<b>33,598</b>	<b>157,202</b>	<b>190,800</b>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>141,267</b>	<b>19,540</b>	<b>160,807</b>	<b>88,387</b>	<b>159,822</b>	<b>248,209</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>						
<b>Church Costs</b>						
Diocesan Share	67,940	0	67,940	64,554	0	64,554
<b>Benefice Contribution</b>	<b>7,343</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,343</b>	<b>4,029</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,029</b>
<b>Church Activities Payments</b>	<b>6,943</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,943</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>638</b>
<b>Church Running Payments</b>	<b>35,668</b>	<b>21,026</b>	<b>56,695</b>	<b>24,848</b>	<b>16,809</b>	<b>41,657</b>
<b>Benefice Administration Payments</b>	<b>7,211</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,211</b>	<b>6,348</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,348</b>
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>125,105</b>	<b>21,026</b>	<b>146,131</b>	<b>100,417</b>	<b>16,809</b>	<b>117,226</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>16,162</b>	<b>-1,486</b>	<b>14,676</b>	<b>-12,030</b>	<b>143,013</b>	<b>130,983</b>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 1.1.22 (RESTATED)</b>	<b>10,434</b>	<b>213,059</b>	<b>223,493</b>			
<b>FUND TRANSFERS</b>	<b>(13,271)</b>	<b>13,271</b>	<b>-</b>			
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 31.12.22</b>	<b>13,325</b>	<b>224,844</b>	<b>238,169</b>			

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

	2022			2021
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	ALL FUNDS
<b>CASH BALANCES</b>				
Bank Account (see notes 1 & 2)	13,325	15,252	28,577	31,915
CBF Deposits (see note 7)		209,592	209,592	199,247
Cash in Hand	-	-	-	31
<b>Cash at Bank and in Hand: End of Period</b>	<b>13,325</b>	<b>224,844</b>	<b>238,169</b>	<b>231,193</b>
<b>OTHER MONETARY ASSETS</b>				
Investments (see note 10)	9,650	16,209	25,859	29,567
<b>OTHER ASSETS</b>				
(See note 3)	-	-	-	-
<b>OTHER LIABILITIES</b>				
	-	-	-	-

1 £500 is held within the PCC Lower Hardres and Nackington Lloyds Account which is restricted for the use of the Lower Hardres 100 Club.

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

2 Bank balances as at 31st December (non CCLA/Investment Accounts):

	2022			2021
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	ALL FUNDS
Bridge Group Parish PCC	10	N/A	10	-
The Bridge Group of Parishes	315	N/A	315	176
PCC of Bekesbourne Current Account	3,285	N/A	3,285	2,746
PCC Bekesbourne Reserve Account	N/A	14,752	14,752	14,720
PCC St Marys Lower Hardres	488	N/A	488	-
PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington	152	500	652	1,588
PCC St Marys Nackington	500	N/A	500	-
PCC Patribourne with Bridge	8,575	N/A	8,575	354
	<b>13,325</b>	<b>15,252</b>	<b>28,577</b>	<b>19,583</b>

3 As at the 31st December 2022 £550 of gift aid is recoverable from gifts received during 2022.

## PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP

### NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022

- 4 The Financial Statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, using the Receipts and Payments basis.
- 5 Other Assets - The Movable Church Furnishings are listed in the inventory (held by the Church Wardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal).
- 6 Reserves Policy - it is our policy to invest funds' balances with the CBF (Church of England Deposit Fund).
- 7 The Restricted Funds comprise the following accounts and values at year-end:

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
<u>St. Peter Bridge &amp; St Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Sale of Vicarage Land (General) Fund	138,752	141,888
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>138,752</b>	<b>141,888</b>
<u>St. Peter Bridge</u>		
Fabric Fund	13,373	19,369
Choir Fund	126	100
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>13,499</b>	<b>19,469</b>
<u>St. Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Fabric Fund	9,578	3,366
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>9,578</b>	<b>3,366</b>
<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>		
Friends of Bekesbourne Church	12,387	12,331
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>12,387</b>	<b>12,331</b>
<u>St. Mary Lower Hardres</u>		
Fabric Fund	966	1,410
Daisy Law Churchyard Fund	3,618	3,572
Friends of Lower Hardres Church	544	1,090
Lower Hardres General Fund	50	50
Lower Hardres 100 Club	500	1,670
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>5,178</b>	<b>7,792</b>
<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>		
Fabric Fund	5,863	5,082
Friends of Nackington Church	20,370	18,390
Nackington General Fund	2,684	3,284
Chancel Income Fund	1,780	1,646
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>30,697</b>	<b>28,402</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210,092</b>	<b>213,248</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

8 Voluntary Parish Share contributions for 2020 and 2021 were not paid in full due to reduced income as a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

9 Due to a slightly late payment for the December 2022 Parish Share we underpaid by £979. This was swiftly rectified in early 2023 when it was paid in January 2023.

	2022	2021
Parish Share Covid arrears:	-	10,378
Parish Share arrears:	979	-

10 The Investment Assets comprise the following accounts and valuations at year-end:

	Units	2022	2021
<u>St. Mary Lower Hardres</u>			
<u>RECTORY LAND FUND (Unrestricted)</u>			
CBF Investment*	208.5	4,307	4,883
CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378	518	597

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund

	Units	2022	2021
<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>			
<u>RECTORY LAND FUND (Unrestricted)</u>			
CBF Investment*	208.5	4,307	4,883
CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378	518	597

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund

<b>TOTAL UNRESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>		<b>9,650</b>	<b>10,960</b>
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<u>NACKINGTON CHANCEL FUND (Endowment)</u>			
CBF Investment**	182	3,758	4,262

\*\*Dividends are credited to the Chancel Deposit Fund

<u>MISS DORIS RYE BEQUEST (Restricted)</u>			
CBF Fixed Interest Securities***	6515	8,900	10,317

\*\*\* The income from this bequest is restricted to the church's Fabric Fund and dividends are credited to the St. Mary Nackington Fabric Fund.

<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>			
<u>WARDELL BEQUEST (Endowment)</u>			
CBF Investment****	172	3,551	4,028

\*\*\*\* The income from this bequest is credited to the St. Peter Bekesbourne current account.

<b>TOTAL RESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>		<b>16,209</b>	<b>18,607</b>
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**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

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## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**

### **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

This report on the financial statements the PCC for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

#### **Respective Responsibilities of the PCC and the Examiner**

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations section 44(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

#### **Basis of this Report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) of the Act and to be found in the Church Guidance 2006 edition, issued by the finance division of the Archbishops' Council. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the financial statements with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements 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 financial statements.

#### **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:
  - a. Keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Act; and
  - b. To prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and 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 financial statements to be reached.



23-4-2023

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David Muggridge FCCA MAE  
Ackland Webb

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Date

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

	2022			2021		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS
	Full Year 2022	Full Year 2022	Full Year 2022	Full Year 2021	Full Year 2021	Full Year 2021
<b>RECEIPTS</b>						
<b>VOLUNTARY</b>						
Planned Giving	48,088	0	48,088	37,904	1,620	39,524
Collections	12,884	0	12,884	6,758	0	6,758
Gift Aid Recovery	12,331	0	12,331	10,127	1,000	11,127
<b>Voluntary Subtotal</b>	<b>73,303</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73,303</b>	<b>54,789</b>	<b>2,620</b>	<b>57,409</b>
<b>OTHER</b>						
Parish Contributions to Benefice	7,343	0	7,343	4,029	0	4,029
Other Voluntary Receipts	31,758	9,248	41,006	11,579	11,454	23,033
Fund Generation Activities	26,540	7,315	33,855	7,661	3,339	11,000
Church Activities Receipts	0	0	0	6,031	0	6,031
Other Receipts	1,900	0	1,900	3,911	141,930	145,841
Investment Income	423	2,977	3,400	387	479	866
<b>Other Receipts Subtotal</b>	<b>67,964</b>	<b>19,540</b>	<b>87,504</b>	<b>33,598</b>	<b>157,202</b>	<b>190,800</b>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>141,267</b>	<b>19,540</b>	<b>160,807</b>	<b>88,387</b>	<b>159,822</b>	<b>248,209</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>						
<b>Church Costs</b>						
Diocesan Share	67,940	0	67,940	64,554	0	64,554
<b>Benefice Contribution</b>	<b>7,343</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,343</b>	<b>4,029</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,029</b>
<b>Church Activities Payments</b>	<b>6,943</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,943</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>638</b>
<b>Church Running Payments</b>	<b>35,668</b>	<b>21,026</b>	<b>56,695</b>	<b>24,848</b>	<b>16,809</b>	<b>41,657</b>
<b>Benefice Administration Payments</b>	<b>7,211</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,211</b>	<b>6,348</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,348</b>
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>125,105</b>	<b>21,026</b>	<b>146,131</b>	<b>100,417</b>	<b>16,809</b>	<b>117,226</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>16,162</b>	<b>-1,486</b>	<b>14,676</b>	<b>-12,030</b>	<b>143,013</b>	<b>130,983</b>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 1.1.22 (RESTATED)</b>	<b>10,434</b>	<b>213,059</b>	<b>223,493</b>			
<b>FUND TRANSFERS</b>	<b>(13,271)</b>	<b>13,271</b>	<b>-</b>			
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AT 31.12.22</b>	<b>13,325</b>	<b>224,844</b>	<b>238,169</b>			

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

	2022			2021
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	ALL FUNDS
<b>CASH BALANCES</b>				
Bank Account (see notes 1 & 2)	13,325	15,252	28,577	31,915
CBF Deposits (see note 7)		209,592	209,592	199,247
Cash in Hand	-	-	-	31
<b>Cash at Bank and in Hand: End of Period</b>	<b>13,325</b>	<b>224,844</b>	<b>238,169</b>	<b>231,193</b>
<b>OTHER MONETARY ASSETS</b>				
Investments (see note 10)	9,650	16,209	25,859	29,567
<b>OTHER ASSETS</b>				
(See note 3)	-	-	-	-
<b>OTHER LIABILITIES</b>				
	-	-	-	-

1 £500 is held within the PCC Lower Hardres and Nackington Lloyds Account which is restricted for the use of the Lower Hardres 100 Club.

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

2 Bank balances as at 31st December (non CCLA/Investment Accounts):

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	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	ALL FUNDS	ALL FUNDS
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PCC St Marys Lower Hardres	488	N/A	488	-
PCC Lower Hardres & Nackington	152	500	652	1,588
PCC St Marys Nackington	500	N/A	500	-
PCC Patribourne with Bridge	8,575	N/A	8,575	354
	<b>13,325</b>	<b>15,252</b>	<b>28,577</b>	<b>19,583</b>

3 As at the 31st December 2022 £550 of gift aid is recoverable from gifts received during 2022.

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

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<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>13,499</b>	<b>19,469</b>
<u>St. Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Fabric Fund	9,578	3,366
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>9,578</b>	<b>3,366</b>
<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>		
Friends of Bekesbourne Church	12,387	12,331
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>12,387</b>	<b>12,331</b>
<u>St. Mary Lower Hardres</u>		
Fabric Fund	966	1,410
Daisy Law Churchyard Fund	3,618	3,572
Friends of Lower Hardres Church	544	1,090
Lower Hardres General Fund	50	50
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<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>5,178</b>	<b>7,792</b>
<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>		
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Friends of Nackington Church	20,370	18,390
Nackington General Fund	2,684	3,284
Chancel Income Fund	1,780	1,646
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>30,697</b>	<b>28,402</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210,092</b>	<b>213,248</b>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE BRIDGE GROUP**

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

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Parish Share arrears:	979	-

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CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378	518	597

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund

	Units	2022	2021
<u>St. Mary Nackington</u>			
<u>RECTORY LAND FUND (Unrestricted)</u>			
CBF Investment*	208.5	4,307	4,883
CBF Fixed Interest Securities	378	518	597

\* Dividends are credited quarterly to the church's general fund

<b>TOTAL UNRESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>		<b>9,650</b>	<b>10,960</b>
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<u>NACKINGTON CHANCEL FUND (Endowment)</u>			
CBF Investment**	182	3,758	4,262

\*\*Dividends are credited to the Chancel Deposit Fund

<u>MISS DORIS RYE BEQUEST (Restricted)</u>			
CBF Fixed Interest Securities***	6515	8,900	10,317

\*\*\* The income from this bequest is restricted to the church's Fabric Fund and dividends are credited to the St. Mary Nackington Fabric Fund.

<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>			
<u>WARDELL BEQUEST (Endowment)</u>			
CBF Investment****	172	3,551	4,028

\*\*\*\* The income from this bequest is credited to the St. Peter Bekesbourne current account.

<b>TOTAL RESTRICTED INVESTMENT ASSETS</b>		<b>16,209</b>	<b>18,607</b>
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