

**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 Bokesbourne 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 Bokesbourne with Patricbourne 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 Montpelier 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 Bokesbourne 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 Bokesbourne, which was paid from the PCC of Bokesbourne 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)  
 Zane 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**

**CONTENTS**

	<u>Page</u>
Independent Examiner's Report	1
Receipts and Payments Account	2
Statement of Assets and Liabilities	3
Notes to the Accounts	4 - 5

## **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.

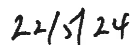
#### **Independent Examiner's Statement**

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 UNRESTRICTED	Actual RESTRICTED	Actual ALL FUNDS	Actual UNRESTRICTED	Actual RESTRICTED	Actual 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>
<b>Church Activities Payments</b>	<b>10,659</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,659</b>	<b>6,943</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,943</b>
<b>Church Running Payments</b>	<b>48,493</b>	<b>11,210</b>	<b>59,703</b>	<b>35,668</b>	<b>21,026</b>	<b>56,695</b>
<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 Patricbourne 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>	136,685	138,753
<u>St. Peter Bridge</u>		
Fabric Fund	14,926	13,374
Choir Fund	248	127
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	15,174	13,500
<u>St. Mary Patrixbourne</u>		
Fabric Fund	10,337	9,578
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	10,337	9,578
<u>St. Peter Bekesbourne</u>		
Friends of Bekesbourne Church	16,162	12,387
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	16,162	12,387
<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>	6,927	5,180
<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>	44,527	30,699
<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.

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</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>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<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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