



Annual Parochial Church Meeting

St Francis Ashton Gate

21st April 2024

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Clergy report

As I write this report for my first full year with you, I am so thankful for all that we have seen and done together. Our Sunday services have developed and we have started a new evening worship space. We have welcomed new people to the church and we have welcomed back others that have returned. We have also welcomed guests to the church as we have baptised a number of children in our morning services. We have prayed together as we develop our weekly rhythm of prayer on a Tuesday and Thursday morning. We have tried some new ventures and we have re-established some old traditions.

During Lent, we reflected together on the parable of the Prodigal Son, looking at each of the main characters and the specifics of the gifts that were given to the son on his return. During Easter, alongside the already established routines of Holy Week, we gathered for Holy week reflections, a Passover meal, a cross walk from St Michaels, a Good Friday service on the lawn outside church and a sunrise service on the Northern Slopes.

In the Autumn term, we welcomed new team members to the church with Grace Wilson (CYM student) joining us on placement working with children, youth and families and Sophie Brown (Trinity student) joined us for the final

two years of the vicar training. On our Vision Sunday, we returned to one of our key passages and the values we are beginning to inhabit around discipleship, community and services. The emphasis of the vision talk, though, reminded us that these values flow out of our relationship with God and our response to 'Jesus is the Christ.' In our teaching series, we looked at how we connect with God, to grow and develop our relationship with him through prayer. We also had evenings looking at big questions like; who is God? and what is the bible?

During Advent, facilitated by Andrew, we reflected on daily passages as we prepared for Christmas. As part of our Christmas celebration, we invited Ashton Gate Primary School across for the Christmas Experience and welcomed new team members alongside the existing team. We also joined the RE lessons at Ashton Vale School to look at the Christmas Story and the Christingle. We have gathered harvest produce for the local foodbank, collected Christmas Shoeboxes for the Christmas appeal and welcomed the local community into the building for discussion around housing, health and employment.

In the book of Zechariah, God calls the people to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem and in Chapter 4 he says to them that 'they are not to despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin..' God has so much more for us over the coming years but I am so thankful for all that we have seen in this last year.

Licensed Lay Ministers

The LLM's Sally and Andrew have continued to have the honour and privilege to serve both St Francis and St Michael and All Angels churches in the last year. We are grateful for the continued support and encouragement that we receive from both churches.

The past year has seen us both expanding our ministry horizons as we have got to grips with the new technology needed to produce services for the screen, and in Andrew's case the learning of and taking on a funeral ministry. We have been involved in reflections for special services, and hope that has been a welcome addition for you. We both also undertook a learning opportunity with the LLM conference which gave us new understandings of discipleship, we hope that all of this will help us to serve you better in the future.

As always our ministry with you involves prayer, and we are always willing to either pray for the church families for issues we are aware of, or on a one to one basis at any time, do please speak with us if you have any concerns that you want prayer for.

Our hope is to continue to connect closely with all of you, to help you through our preaching and teaching ministries, and to enjoy more times of fellowship with you through the various events held in the churches.

God bless all of you.

Sally and Andrew

Churchwardens

There were no major changes to the fabric of the church and hall in 2023.

We had the carpet and chairs professionally cleaned during the holidays when Scramblers weren't meeting.

We began the year still in interregnum and just got on with things as we usually do. We are very thankful to the leadership team, PCC, Phil Neale for the excellent preparation for services, for Pam for the rotas and music and all who helped keep the church ticking over.

We were very excited to be given a date at the end of January 2023 for Rev Neil Shepherd's Licensing as Priest in Charge of St Francis and St Michaels. It was a lovely service and we worked together with the congregation of St Michaels to help organize the service and refreshments. We are very grateful for the relationship we have with them and very much look forward to working alongside them in the future.

Neil just got on with things from the start without needing much help and advice, obviously using his teaching organizational skills to keep us in check. It is good to note that he sees pastoral care and mission as a priority and brings fun and enthusiasm to the Parochial Church Council.

We have seen some growth at St Francis during this year with new people attending, some on a regular basis. We have always ensured they receive a warm welcome and they are given a welcome card to complete to enable us to keep in touch with them.

It is exciting that we are open to trying new things whilst still maintaining our traditional worship. This makes us unique, and we are very proud of the way we adapt. We still have two traditional communion services per month, a lay led service taken by Andrew Josham or Sally Tooze and of course the all age service with the Cheeky Pandas on the second Sunday of the month, We are really appreciative of the work Sally, Andrew and Jennifer Richards puts in to make these services possible. It has been lovely to see the younger people taking part in these services. Neil has also introduced a more contemporary service every other Sunday and this has attracted people from other churches within the Bristol South Deanery.

On Maundy Thursday Neil and Natalie organized a Passover Meal at St Francis and this was extremely well received and the feedback very positive, so we are hoping to make this an annual event. On Good Friday we had a walk of witness carrying the cross through Bedminster from St Michaels to St Francis ending with a very moving service on the lawn where we were invited to place flowers on the cross. This was very moving and some passersby joined in too.

We have held several social events in the year. We opened the church to show the Coronation of King Charles in May and one gentleman came along because he doesn't have a television at home. It was good we were open and welcoming. The following day we had a party with a quiz and games which was fun, and we are grateful to all who helped organize these.

We continued our role as a collection Centre for Operation Christmas Child and are very grateful to all who packed shoeboxes and got involved and engaged with this Missional Opportunity. We thank the Scramblers team Annie and Louise who were on hand every morning during collection week to receive the shoeboxes from Scramblers as well as the local community and oversee the collection of the shoeboxes on the next part of their journey. The conversations we had with people were amazing and the packing party proved a great success as we encouraged people, particularly the young ones, to personalize their boxes by writing a short note and placing a picture in their boxes.

Christmas through the Keyhole happened again in early December, and we are extremely grateful to Mary who took the lead on this with her organizational skills. The year 2 children and their teachers from Ashton Gate School were really engaging. We were unable to source a new baby for the Nativity Scene this year so began with a dolly although a much more grown-up baby Jesus did

take part later (Thank you Maddie) We had fun and fellowship dressing as characters from the Nativity and also opened the church on the Saturday morning for members of the public.

Unfortunately, our dear Phil Neale has not been well so has been unable to get to church. We are so grateful to him for all he has done for the church, and I personally am grateful to Chris who has stepped up to take on some of the tasks such as organizing services.

We have been blessed with having Trinity student Sophie and youth worker Grace come to join us and are excited that Anthony Everitt will be joining us early 2024 as Associate Priest.

We are thankful for all the things which have happened and look forward to working out Gods plan for St Francis in the future.

Joanne Smith

Christopher Allen

Churchwardens

Finance

The total church giving increased slightly from 2022, as did the overall church income which includes rentals. Unfortunately expenditure has also increased and this is mainly down to our utility bills which rose by over 50%.

Scramblers continues to go from strength to strength with their income increasing by over £3,000.

We have once again increased our parish share contribution this year by 32% and our loan to St Michael's and All Angels has been repaid.

Hall rental has reduced due to the loss of some of our regular renters. Also one of our major contributors for many years gave notice of stopping at the start of 2024. However we are hopeful to see an upturn in hall usage following the appointment of Helen the church administrator who, as part of her remit, will be actively marketing the hall. Like the church the hall's expenditure has also increased with utility costs being the main factor.

Overall at the end of 2022 we had a total of £84,000 in all accounts and at the end of 2023 we had £82,000 which is a £2,000 drop. So while the church

finances are currently in a good state, we need to be careful with expenditure increasing and hall income reducing, also the quinquennial inspection is due in 2024 with whatever that brings. With this in mind we are trying to plan and understand expenses on a more ongoing basis by setting budgets for the various aspects of church spend, especially as in previous years the hall has helped to prop up the church finances, but this is now no longer the case.

From Anita Manning, Treasurer

[also see audited accounts as an additional document]

Scramblers

I would like to start by thanking Louise, Malcolm & our amazing volunteers for ensuring another outstanding year of providing this vital supportive community group.

Our volunteers this year have been stable with Mary, Jude, Martha, Elaine & Zoe. Sarah Brady, a scramblers mum, was our volunteer on Fridays but stepped down. We were delighted that Zoe Ireland offered to replace her. Martha returned to her home country, Ecuador, as usual for 6 months and Elaine, our reserve helper has stepped into her place until she returns. Mo, our volunteer with educational needs from 'Your Way' Charity, retired after 10 years' service.

We continue to offer a safe, warm and welcoming space for all parents/carers and their little ones. The number of families attending has been gradually increasing since covid and this year we were back to our usual pre covid numbers of an average of 40 families per session. We have seen an increase in grandparents and dads attending.

Some of the extra events we organised in 2023 included: Mr. Brown's Puppet show, Noah's Ark Zoo animals meet & greet, Pancake Day party, Creation Station craft sessions with Janey Noble & Katrina Forster, professional sleep mentor offering free consultations. Louise and I also tried storytelling for the first time with 'The very hungry caterpillar' during circle time. This worked very well, the children loved Louise dressed as a caterpillar. We are planning further storytelling.

We had a fabulous party in October to celebrate 30 years of scramblers and were very grateful to Jo for giving a talk and explaining how her pioneering

mum, Margaret, started scramblers all those years ago. Scramblers parents, as usual, contributed generously to the shoebox appeal and we packed a record number this year. Similarly, the trolley for the Harvest appeal for the foodbank was generously filled.

This year for All Hallows we held a 'light party' with a buffet and invited a special guest 'Elsa from Frozen' from a costumed character company. This was exceptionally well attended and enjoyed very much by the families.

We supported Evita, a Bristol University student with research and Hamid, an NHS Child development student with observations. We continue our relationship with Mother's for mothers (perinatal mental health support group who meet in Church on Thursday afternoons) and this year allowed free entry to any of their group attending Scramblers.

At the end of the summer term our crew met with the scramblers on the hill crew for a fellowship lunch.

Our huge new toy store was completed by Stephen, which has made a big difference for ease of storage, especially as the number of toys has increased. Louise showcased her artistic talents by painting the mural. As well as the carpet and chairs being cleaned this year, we held toy cleaning sessions to which we invited volunteers & families to make a big chore much easier. We also had new posters printed for the A-boards.

This year we initiated 'blessing week' and invited families to receive a blessing from Neil. Even though our Facebook page now has over 3K members, where we post events, we also provided a paper copy of scheduled events for each term which was very well received. This ensures families without social media are kept informed and we will continue to produce an events sheet termly.

Christmas was a great success. Parties were held every day in the final week of term and were sold out way in advance. We were overwhelmed with help from everyone; from 'cuppa and a chat group' wrapping gifts to our amazing volunteer Father Christmas's: Chris, Wally, Pam's son-in-law, Mike and Malcolm. The bring your own baby choir also kindly volunteered to serenade us with festive songs.

Our year finished with the volunteers Christmas party at the Malago to which we invited Sam & volunteers from Scramblers on the Hill. A small reward for the invaluable help they selflessly give to scramblers all year.

We praise God that He continues to bless us, the families and everyone involved.

Please continue to pray for us

Annie Tyas , Scramblers .

Safeguarding

There are no safeguarding concerns or incidents to report.

Safeguarding is an important part of making the church a safe place for all. Without the team of Dianne Allen (Parish Safeguarding Officer) and Helen Rumford (Parish Administrator/ DBS Administrator) we would not be able to achieve this. This team has been working to ensure that all those requiring checks and training have been, or are in the process of, getting trained appropriately. On the noticeboards around church, you will find the requirements with you are concerned about a safeguarding situation, please ensure you are aware of what you will need to do.

Independent Examiner's Report
to the Parochial Church Council of St Francis Church, Ashton Gate, Bristol

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and contents of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed



Date

7/4/24

Matthew Hedges
29 Irby Road
Ashton
Bristol

PARISH OF BEDMINSTER
FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2023

ST FRANCIS DCC

St Francis Receipts and Payments Accounts

	2023					2022
	£	£	£	£	£	
	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Fund	Endowment Fund	2023	
Receipts:						
Voluntary Receipts						
Planned Giving	£14,161.60				£14,161.60	£13,551.40
Collections and other giving	£1,898.52				£1,898.52	£1,778.22
Income Tax recovered	£5,801.29				£5,801.29	£0.00
	£21,861.41	£0.00			£21,861.41	£15,329.62
Other voluntary incoming resources						
Sundry Donations & Legacy	£893.44				£893.44	£1,066.58
Fund Raising events	£0.00				£0.00	£435.97
Leaving Collections						
	£893.44	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£893.44	£1,502.55
Income from investments						
Bank interest (Deposit Account)	£309.26				£309.26	£54.03
	£309.26	£0.00			£309.26	£54.03
Income from charitable and ancillary trading						
Rents	£6,290.00				£6,290.00	£4,987.50
Fees	£1,644.00				£1,644.00	£816.00
Scramblers	£29,384.38				£29,384.38	£25,933.70
Lunchtime Live	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00
	£37,318.38	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£37,318.38	£31,737.20
Non-Recurring income						
Misc	£1,003.05				£1,003.05	£488.74
Insurance Claim	£0.00				£0.00	£11,696.95
Heating Grant	£0.00				£0.00	£3,834.00
SMAA Loan Repayment	£4,000.00				£4,000.00	£3,000.00
	£5,003.05	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£5,003.05	£19,019.69
Total Receipts	£65,385.54	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£65,385.54	£67,643.09
Payments						
Grants						
Home & Overseas mission and relief agencies	£184.05				£184.05	£129.70
	£184.05	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£184.05	£129.70
Activities directly relating to the work of the church						
Diocesan Quota	£19,800.00				£19,800.00	£15,000.00
Church running expenses	£23,535.98				£23,535.98	£14,181.74
Cost of services	£2,392.97				£2,392.97	£3,303.27
Building upkeep	£403.18				£403.18	£1,577.98
Building Maintenance	£4,531.20				£4,531.20	£13,903.95
Fees	£1,593.00				£1,593.00	£224.00
Sunday School/Scramblers	£540.91				£540.91	£610.00
	£52,797.24	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£52,797.24	£48,800.94
Church management and administration						
Administration	£2,668.09				£2,668.09	£2,679.14
Other	£2,123.30				£2,123.30	£1,827.40
	£4,791.39	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£4,791.39	£4,506.54
Loan to SMAA						
Total Payments	£57,772.68	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£57,772.68	£53,437.18
Excess/Deficit of receipts over payments	£7,612.86	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7,612.86	£14,205.91
Transfer to (from) Hall Account						-£12,000.00
Deposit Account Transfer to (from) Hall Account					£0.00	£0.00
Bank current and deposit accounts at 1st January 2023					£66,749.54	£64,543.63
Prior year adjustment						
Bank current and deposit accounts at 31st December 2023					£74,362.40	£66,749.54

PARISH OF BEDMINSTER

ST FRANCIS DCC

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Parish Hall Account		
Income	£43,171.16	£46,396.15
Expenditure	£48,826.48	£45,646.38
Surplus	-£5,655.32	£749.77
Transfer to (from) church general accounts	£0.00	£12,000.00
Bank current account at 1st January	£13,528.04	£778.27
Bank current account at 31st December	<u>£7,872.72</u>	<u>£13,528.04</u>
Loan Account - SMAA		
Advanced/ B/F balance	£4,000.00	£7,000.00
Repaid	£4,000.00	£3,000.00
Balance outstanding	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£4,000.00</u>

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31st December 2023

	General Fund	Hall Fund	SMAA Loan	Total 2023	Total 2022	Movement in Funds held
Assets						
Bank current account	£25,793.68			£25,793.68	£18,490.08	£7,303.60
Bank deposit account	£23,981.26			£23,981.26	£23,694.86	£286.40
National Savings Investment account	£24,587.46			£24,587.46	£24,564.60	£22.86
Hall Fund		£7,872.72		£7,872.72	£13,528.04	-£5,655.32
SMAA Loan Balance			£0.00	£0.00	£4,000.00	-£4,000.00
	<u>£74,362.40</u>	<u>£7,872.72</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£82,235.12</u>	<u>£84,277.58</u>	
				£0.00	£0.00	
				£0.00	£0.00	
	<u>£74,362.40</u>	<u>£7,872.72</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£82,235.12</u>	<u>£84,277.58</u>	<u>-£2,042.46</u>

Independent Examiner's Report
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PARISH OF BEDMINSTER

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