



Annual Parochial Church Meeting

St Francis Ashton Gate

18th April 2025

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Minutes of Previous APCM

Sunday 21st April 2024

Held at St. Francis, Ashton at 10:30

Present: 29

Apologies: None

Minutes of Meeting held on 8th May 2022 were read and accepted. No matters arising. Proposed & Seconded. 14 people voted. Non abstained. Passed unanimously.

Electoral Roll report.

The roll stands at 41 for the parish.

Financial report

See Treasurer's report 'Report – Treasurer 2022'. Also, 'St F Financial Statement 2022'.

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

See Churchwardens Report 'Report – Churchwardens Report 2022'.

Scramblers

See Scramblers Report 'Report – Scramblers 2022'.

Worship

See Worship Report 'Report – Worship 2022' and 'Report – 2nd Sunday Family Service'.

Flowers

See Church Flowers Report 'Report – Flowers 2022'.

Elections to PCC & Deanery Synod

Mary Frost (this will be the 3rd and final year)

Parochial Church Council (Lay)

1	Anita Manning (Treas)
2	
3	Dianne Allen
4	Stephen Smith
5	
6	Shelia Lilliman

Independent Examiner

Matthew Hedges re-elected as independent examiner.

Any other APCM business

Meeting finished at 11:15 with prayer.

Clergy report

What a year we have had with so many good news stories to share; new activities have started, and old ones have been developed.

At the APCM last year, I shared from Ephesians 4, and we talked about how the church might mature and grow. We looked at the 5 different voices the church needs and how we, together, express these voices whether it is apostolic (pioneer), prophetic (creative), evangelist (connector), teacher (guardian and protector) or pastor (nurturer). We have started to see some of these voices grow louder across our church's communities and we are starting to see new people join. As church, we do have the challenge of enfolding these new people into the consistent life of the church, but it has been such a blessing to meet the numbers of new people through this year. One area we have seen a significant increase in the church is the numbers of banns being read across the two churches. In 2024, we read the banns for 14 couples and many of them were new families who had more recently moved into the area.

At the start of this year, we added a new team member, and it was a delight to license Rev Anthony Everett as a self-supporting associate minister across the two parishes. In July, we also welcomed Rev Helena Whitwell as a self-supporting curate to the team, and they have both been a blessing to our worship communities. During this year, we have also had a change of parish administrator with Helen Rumford leaving for a new role and Kat Cumner joining us in November. We are so thankful for all the work that Helen has done for the church.

In our teaching series this year, we have spent some time looking at the story of Jesus through the book of Mark as well as looking at the Eucharist in more depth and the question, 'what is discipleship?' The phrase that has most impacted me through this series was the quote from

John Mark Comer 'discipleship is like an apprentice who is learning to 'be with Jesus, become like Jesus and then do as Jesus did!' As a church, we want to keep learning this important rhythm for our lives.

As churches, we are now beginning to find our patterns of worship for Christmas and Easter and we are starting to grow in confidence as we look to be more open in our invitation of people to these events.

As well as the two sets of banns, one infant baptism at the church and have connected with three families in the community for family funerals.

As a church, we also have an amazing PCC who give so much time and energy to ensure the building and people are safe and financed. Thank you to each and every one of our PCC for their time. We are thankful to all those who work behind the scenes to make sure the church is ready for Sundays – whether it is music practice, flower arranging, set up the church – thank you to each and every one of you.

When a house is being restored, the work on the foundations of the house is so important so that everything else can be built to last. We are in a season where the focus is still on the foundations which means that some of this work is hidden but the benefits to us is that this work, when completed, will ensure that we have strong, vibrant, worshipping communities that, I believe, will see even more than we could ever ask or imagine in the years to come.

Licensed Lay Ministers

Churchwardens

At the beginning of the year, we were extremely pleased to welcome Anthony Everitt as Associate Minister to join us. His traditional style of worship was welcomed by the congregation. It is also exciting that we are also 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 also have Helena, Sophie and Grace on the worship team and are very grateful for their contribution and continue to be grateful for the ministry of Sally and Andrew.

We continue to have all age service with the cheeky pandas once a month and are excited to be exploring the possibility of this service taking place every week at the beginning of 2025. We are grateful for the work put in by Jennifer, Katherine and Grace. It has been lovely to see the younger people taking part in these services. The contemporary evening service takes place every other Sunday and has attracted people from other churches within the Bristol South Deanery. Neil, Jennifer, Grace, Dianne and I attended a day in Birmingham about Worship Together in May. It was very helpful and provided ideas on how we can get all ages worshipping together. I took from this that if we are to grow it is not about children's services

or adult services but about how we can all be integrated working together. It is extremely important that we embrace this.

Neil continues to get on with things and we thank him for his organisational skills and heart for mission and pastoral care and for the fun and enthusiasm he continues to bring to the Parochial Church Council meetings.

We continue to see small signs of growth 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.

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 personalise their boxes by writing a short note and placing a picture in their boxes. The feedback I have also received from the drivers is that they love collecting from St Francis as all our boxes are organized in the corridor making their job easier.

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.

Unfortunately, our dear Phil Neale is now in a home, and we miss him being around the church (his second home). He continues to be in our thoughts and prayers. 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 organising services.

We are thankful for all the things which have happened and are happening and look forward to working together in 2025 to act out Gods plan for us at St Francis in the future.

Joanne Smith & Christopher Allen

Finance

Overall, the state of the church finances is healthy, we are not near to running out of money. However there has been some worrying trends within the year that we need to take note of and act upon.

In 2024 the amount in the church and centre bank accounts fell by just over £7,500, but we still have sufficient savings which increased by around 1.5%, benefitting from the increase in interest rates.

Total (church and hall) income increased by nearly 4%, but this was solely due to 2 kindly donated legacies that stopped the actual total being less than last year. Total expenditure also increased by 11.5%.

Income year highlights:

- 2 x Legacies received totalling £5,500.
- Total church giving increased by just over £1,000.
- Scramblers income has plateaued with a marginal increase of £241.
- Rents for the Centre and Church hire have increased by 11.5%.
- Parish Share increased by £150 per month to an annual total of £21,600.

Expenditure year highlights:

- Salaries have increased by over a third. This is mainly due to the hiring of an employed administrator and also the government putting up the national minimum wage and us having to proportionally increasing our salary bands to match.
- Office administration costs increased by 40% to just under £4,500.

Having seen the first real dip in our finances for a few years and also the unknown cost of the work on the roof (the scaffolding alone cost around £6,000) the PCC have started this year with some in depth analysis of our income and costs with the goal to increase and decrease the amounts respectively. This will hopefully be done by promotion of our renting opportunities and rationalising costs.

From Anita Manning, Treasurer

[also see audited accounts as an additional document]

Scramblers

Scramblers Report for APSM for Jan-Dec 2024

I would like to start by thanking Louise, my wonderful colleague, Malcolm, Grace and all our amazing volunteers for ensuring another outstanding year of providing this vital, supportive, community group at St.Francis.

Our volunteers this year have been stable with Jude, Mary, Elaine, Martha and Zoe. Martha returned home to Ecuador in the spring and Elaine stepped in to replace her on Wednesdays. We were blessed with Grace joining the team this year initially on Mondays, but she has been regularly supporting us on other days as well. Grace has involved families in many memorable craft sessions and has supported families by always being a friendly welcoming helper. Helena has also been supporting us once a week and initiated a weekly guided prayer session online.

We continue to offer a safe, warm and welcoming space for all parents, carers and their little ones. The number of families attending this year has been stable with an average of 35-40 per session. We have seen an increase in grandparents and dads attending the group.

Some of the extra events we organised in 2024 included two visits from Noah's Ark Zoo farm who bring a selection of creatures for an interactive "meet & greet" session with the families. Also, Chris Brown performed twice with his very popular puppet show. Janie from the Art company "Creation Station" organised very professional crafting keepsakes for families for Valentines, Mother's Day & Easter.

In 2024 we trialled offering toddler lunches straight after the scrambler's session. Our first was an organic tomato pasta with fresh vegetables. We were very grateful for extra help from Dot, Elaine and volunteers from the "cuppa & chat" group. The first lunch was very successful with families thoroughly enjoying sharing a communal meal together. We followed this with another lunch of pizza and a third sausage meal.

We held a cake sale in June with proceeds to 'Mothers for Mothers' charity. Daisy Picking from the fair rent charity "Shelter" came along to talk to families experiencing problems with rentals, and Chris (Helena's husband) came to a few sessions to talk about the charity he works for called "safe families" who support those struggling in our community.

Louise and I have experimented with reading stories at circle time with dressing up / acting with "We're going on a bear hunt" and "Where's Spot".

The summer term weather in 2024 was dire and we hardly used the garden as we usually do with the bouncy castle and water play. However, we involved the children in nature trails with the families hunting for various things in the garden including our statue of St. Francis.

Scramblers parents as usual contributed generously to the shoebox appeal and we packed a record number. Similarly, the trolley for the harvest appeal for the foodbank was generously filled.

We closed for the summer break and provided a fellowship buffet lunch in Church for all the volunteers as well as Sam and the crew from St. Mikes Scramblers on the Hill.

Our autumn term was busy as usual. We held a light party at All Hallows and invited our special guest "Elsa from Frozen" from a costume character company. This event is extremely popular with the families, so much so we rebooked Elsa for another appearance that term.

We reinstated our yellow collection bin for the charity "Babybank" which collects donations of toiletries, clothes and equipment for those in need. We have continued to build on our relationship with Mothers for Mothers, the charity group that meet in Church on Thursdays

to support women with perinatal mental health. We continue to offer members of this group free entry to scramblers.

This year was exceptionally successful with our Christmas Parties. We held a party every day for 50 families in the last week of term. Tickets were sold in advance and all sold out. We were overwhelmed with the generosity of help and support from all our St. Francis family.

The “cuppa & a chat” ladies wrapped over 300 book gifts for the children and we are ever thankful to Chris Allen, Walter Hennessy & Malcolm for dressing up as Father Christmas and delighting our families. Chris also was a life saver by stepping in last minute when one of our Father Christmas’ couldn’t make it. Anita, Dot & Lynne also gave up time to help.

Neil gave an amazing telling of the Nativity with knitted characters and had the children transfixed. Jonathan Etheridge played festive tunes on the piano and the Baby choir serenaded us. Chris Brown the puppet man volunteered his time with entertainment one party as well.

This year we returned to providing a festive buffet rather than the food bags which we had offered since Covid times.

We continue to encourage scramblers families to join our Church family. This year a group of parents came to the Nativity service for the first time and we are delighted that Elaine our volunteer has become a regular in our congregation.

We closed 2024 with a celebration Christmas lunch for staff and volunteers from scramblers and scramblers on the Hill.

We praise The Lord that he continues to bless us, our volunteers, the families we serve and everyone involved.

Please continue to pray for us.

Annie Tyas (Scramblers)

Safeguarding

The Parish of St Francis is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

The PSO for St Francis is: Dianne Allen

Policies

The noticeboard situated just inside the main church door contains photos and contact details of the PSO and current policies.

Reporting to the PCC

The PCC was updated about Safeguarding matters in all the PCC meetings this year. During the year there were no safeguarding matters arising within the Church, and no issues which needed to be reported on to the Diocesan Safeguarding team.

Action Plan

All safeguarding policies are in date and to be reviewed.

All DBS Checks and Safeguarding Training is in date.

Flowers

Thank you to everyone who has given donations during 2024.

Opening Balance (Jan 2024)	£36.82
Income	
Donations	£115.00
Anita (Treasurer)	£350.00
Expenditure	£400.00
Closing Balance	£101.82

Church & Centre Bookings

The Church has 6 regular bookings on a weekly basis,

- Riff Raff Choir
- Ladies Group
- Mothers for Mothers
- Afterschool Choir
- Handfuls of Harmony
- Music Makers

as well as the Afternoon Social. The Church has also been used on several occasions for music concerts / workshops,

- Band Rehearsal
- Music for Miniatures (x3 occasions)

The Centre has 14 regular bookings on a weekly basis,

- Over 50's Keep Fit

- Adult Ballet (x3 a week)
- Creative Dance
- 48th Bristol Brownies
- 48th Bristol Guides
- Adventure Babies
- Bring Your Own Baby Choir
- 104th St. Francis Brownies
- Flow Pilates (x3 a week)
- Wet Clinic
- Dog Training
- Pilates
- Les Petits Zouzous
- Jive Fusion

As well as bookings for a short period of time,

- Soccortots (Jan - March)
- Dance Workshop (end of Jan - Mar)
- Rock Out Baby (Jan - July)

The Centre has also seen several 'one-off' bookings, some from the same organisation and birthday parties,

- Swing Dance Festival (x4 occasions)
- Explorer Dome (x6 occasions)
- Birthday Parties (x47 occasions)
- Polling Day (x2 occasions)
- Tobacco Factory Arts Trust (x2 occasions)
- Bristol School of Acting (x2 occasions)
- One-off bookings (x4 occasions)

The Church continues to support Community Initiatives with local advertising as well as reminding the community we are here.

Action Plan

1. Register the Centre for an address
2. Sorting out rubbish & recycling bins for the Church & Centre
3. Review our Bookings Terms & Conditions for the Church & Centre
4. Review birthday party bookings – maximise booking slots

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 2024.

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

Matthew Hedges

Date

27th March 2025

Matthew Hedges
29 Irby Road
Ashton
Bristol

PARISH OF BEDMINSTER
FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2024

ST FRANCIS DCC

St Francis Receipts and Payments Accounts

Receipts:

	2024					2023	Diff 2024 v 2023
	£	£	£	£	£		
	Unrestricted Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Fund	Endowment Fund	Total 2024		
Voluntary Receipts							
Planned Giving	£15,256.10				£15,256.10	£14,161.60	£1,094.50
Collections and other giving	£1,941.78				£1,941.78	£1,898.52	£43.26
Income Tax recovered	£3,119.69				£3,119.69	£5,801.29	-£2,681.60
	£20,317.57	£0.00			£20,317.57	£21,861.41	-£1,543.84
Other voluntary incoming resources							
Sundry Donations & Legacy	£6,498.94				£6,498.94	£893.44	£5,605.50
Fund Raising events	£50.00				£50.00	£0.00	£50.00
	£6,548.94	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6,548.94	£893.44	£5,655.50
Income from investments							
Bank interest (Deposit Account)	£786.58				£786.58	£309.26	£477.32
	£786.58	£0.00			£786.58	£309.26	£477.32
Income from charitable and ancillary trading							
Rents	£6,740.00				£6,740.00	£6,290.00	£450.00
Fees	£655.00				£655.00	£1,644.00	-£989.00
Scramblers	£29,625.98				£29,625.98	£29,384.38	£241.60
Lunchtime Live	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	£37,020.98	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£37,020.98	£37,318.38	-£297.40
Non-Recurring income							
Misc	£346.00				£346.00	£1,003.05	-£657.05
Insurance Claim	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Heating Grant	£0.00				£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
** SMAA Salary Cross Charge(Previous yr loan payment)	£9,147.60				£9,147.60	£4,000.00	£5,147.60
	£9,493.60	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£9,493.60	£5,003.05	£4,490.55
Total Receipts	£74,167.67	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£74,167.67	£65,385.54	£8,782.13
Payments							
Grants							
Home & Overseas mission and relief agencies	£211.49				£211.49	£184.05	-£27.44
	£211.49	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£211.49	£184.05	-£27.44
Activities directly relating to the work of the church							
Diocesan Quota	£21,600.00				£21,600.00	£19,800.00	-£1,800.00
Church running expenses	£23,593.36				£23,593.36	£23,535.98	-£57.38
Cost of services	£2,056.51				£2,056.51	£2,392.97	£336.46
Building upkeep	£2,711.99				£2,711.99	£403.18	-£2,308.81
Building Maintenance - Large Items	£0.00				£0.00	£4,531.20	£4,531.20
Fees	£392.00				£392.00	£1,593.00	£1,201.00
Sunday School/Scramblers	£677.46				£677.46	£540.91	-£136.55
	£51,031.32	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£51,031.32	£52,797.24	£1,765.92
Church management and administration							
Administration	£4,496.60				£4,496.60	£2,668.09	-£1,828.51
Salaries ** SMAA Contribution above	£50,047.35				£50,047.35	£0.00	-£50,047.35
Other	£54.56				£54.56	£2,123.30	£2,068.74
	£54,598.51	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£54,598.51	£4,791.39	-£49,807.12
Total Payments	£105,841.32	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£105,841.32	£57,772.68	-£48,068.64
Excess/Defecit of receipts over payments	-£31,673.65	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	-£31,673.65	£7,612.86	£39,286.51
Transfer to/from Hall Account					£10,000.00		
Deposit Account Transfer to/from Hall Account					£0.00	£0.00	
Bank current and deposit accounts at 1st January 2024					£74,362.40	£66,749.54	£7,612.86
Prior year adjustment							
Bank current and deposit accounts at 31st December 2024					£52,688.75	£74,362.40	-£21,673.65

ST FRANCIS DCC

	2024	2023
Parish Hall Account	£	£
Income	£39,455.63	£43,171.16
Expenditure	£14,634.53	£48,826.48
Surplus	£24,821.10	-£5,655.32
Transfer to/from Church general accounts	-£10,000.00	£0.00
Bank current account at 1st January	£7,872.72	£13,528.04
Bank current account at 31st December	£22,693.82	£7,872.72
<i>Loan Account - SMAA</i>		
<i>Advanced/ B/F balance</i>	£0.00	£4,000.00
<i>Repaid</i>	£0.00	£4,000.00
<i>Balance outstanding</i>	£0.00	£0.00

	General Fund	Hall Fund	Total 2024	Total 2023	Movement in Funds held	Prior yr
Assets						
Bank current account	£3,333.45		£3,333.45	£25,793.68	-£22,460.23	£7,303.60
Bank deposit account	£24,329.15		£24,329.15	£23,981.26	£347.89	£286.40
National Savings Investment account	£25,026.15		£25,026.15	£24,587.46	£438.69	£22.86
Hall Fund		£22,693.82	£22,693.82	£7,872.72	£14,821.10	-£5,655.32
<i>SMAA Loan Balance</i>			£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	-£4,000.00
	£52,688.75	£22,693.82	£75,382.57	£82,235.12	-£6,852.55	-£2,042.46
			£0.00	£0.00		
			£0.00	£0.00		
	£52,688.75	£22,693.82	£75,382.57	£82,235.12	-£6,852.55	-£2,042.46
	0.00					