

2025 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council (Trustees) of St Edmund or St James church, Blunham

This report is for the calendar year 2024.

Aim and purposes

St Edmund or St James Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the Rector, Revd Graham Buckle, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

St Edmund or St James church, Blunham, is part of the Riversmeet Benefice, comprising the four parishes of Blunham, Great Barford, Roxton, and Tempsford with Little Barford.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St Edmund or St James. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Increasing the range of services on offer with Morning Prayer, Messy Church and Café Church, as well as Holy Communion.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the church of St Edmund or St James

Achievements and Performance

Worship and Prayer

Revd Christopher Scott has now completed his training in the Benefice and is able to apply for suitable posts.

Revd Graham has instigated a pattern of worship over all four churches so that each church has two Holy Communion services each month, one at 9.30am and the other at 11am.

Our services are:

1st Sunday – 11am Morning Prayer, led by Mrs Maureen Munro

2nd Sunday – 9.30am Holy Communion

3rd Sunday – 11am Café Church, with a team led by Revd Canon John Parsons

4th Sunday – 11am Holy Communion

5th Sunday – 11am Benefice Holy Communion which moves round the churches

We have established Messy Church, which is aimed at families and consists of activities around a theme, worship and a meal together.

Both Holy Communion services at Blunham are live-streamed and recorded each month, and uploaded to YouTube. The system has been moved to the rear of the church so that it can be monitored from next to the live-streaming equipment.

The congregation has grown during the year, with new members joining, sometimes with Café Church being their first experience of services in the church.

The usual pattern changes for special services.

The 9.30am Holy Communion allows busy people to worship in their local church rather than visiting one of the others in the Benefice. It also means Revd Graham is able to spend time each month with the congregation of each church after their 11am service.

Café Church is an informal service which welcomes people new to worshipping in church. It continues to grow its congregation with a number of people attending just this service. This congregation is continuing to grow.

Messy Church has grown during the year and has attracted a number of families with young children who are new to the church. Some of these families came to the Crib Service, which we held on Christmas Eve for the second time. The number of attendees was maintained.

All are welcome to attend our regular services. There were 52 on the Electoral Roll, six of whom are not resident within the parish. This roll number entitled us to nine Parochial Church Council members. Our thanks to Paul Canty for being our Electoral Roll Officer.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing, and through funeral and thanksgiving services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. The church has performed three baptisms, but no weddings during the year. There have been no confirmations. We have held three funerals in our church in 2024, with Revd Graham conducting one service at the crematorium. There have been no burials of ashes. We were sad to say goodbye to members of our congregation: Gloria Aubrey and Janet Dean. The now-established, discrete Garden of Remembrance has enhanced the churchyard and given a place of reflection with two benches set on paving slabs and golden yew hedging on two sides. Our thanks go to Guy Poltock for volunteering to maintain this area.

Deanery Synod

Two members of the PCC sit on the deanery synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

Pastoral Care

The Blunham Church Support Group sends cards and plants to those in the village who are unwell or who have recently been bereaved. The St Edmund Fellowship meets every month and funds the cards and plants. A full programme for the year was in place.

The church co-ordinates and delivers welcome packs to newcomers to the village. The pack includes information from other village organisations. We received a Mission grant of £200 in 2024 from the Deanery to enable us to have professionally-printed folders for the information.

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

All PCC members have completed the Domestic Violence course on-line as well as two safeguarding training courses. All members have enhanced DBS clearances.

Our thanks to Mrs Rose Pethybridge who is the Benefice-wide safeguarding officer, and to Linda Canty who the Parish Safeguarding Officer for Blunham and Tempsford.

Mission and Evangelism

The PCC supports a number of charities each year. We decided to donate more to fewer charities. The ones we are supporting this year are: The National Churches Trust (this is a requirement of the grant we received); Samaritans, MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Centre in Bedford and Warchild.

We have also sent donations to the British Legion, John Donne C of E Primary School, and our Christmas Extra Guest collection is sent to SMART Prebend Centre in Bedford. This year our community carol singing took place in the churchyard round a 14 ft Christmas tree on two evenings, with refreshments in the church afterwards. This was also in aid of SMART. The collection on Remembrance Sunday was taken on behalf of the Royal British Legion as well as sale of poppies.

A group from the church leads collective worship for John Donne C of E primary school each month. Before the new academic year in 2024 this took place in the school, but since September the school has been able to return each month to the church for this. In December there was a Living Nativity, starting at the school, and then school and parents walked to the church for the nativity scene to be enacted outside in the churchyard.

The church remained open all day throughout the year.

Ecumenical Relationships

The annual World Day of Prayer was organised by a member of Blunham church and the service moves round different churches in the district. Members of local Methodist and Baptist churches are invited. In 2024 the service was held in March at our church. Our thanks to Denise Hurst for arranging the service.

The St Edmund Fellowship meets each month in the village hall. Our thanks to Stella Harding for running the Fellowship.

Financial Review

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £55,128 of which £31,129 was unrestricted voluntary donations. Restricted donations and grants of £36,558 were also received and are detailed in the Financial Statements.

The fund-raising drive has continued over the year to provide funds to continue improving the church building. The fund-raising also enables us to maintain the church as a place of worship.

The usual programme of fund-raising events took place in 2024, including our biggest event, the Book Sale; the Rose Queen went ahead, but with an agreed reduced input from the church.

We hosted one concert during the year, with the Bedford Sinfonia returning in July.

The Book Sale continues, raising more money than ever and bringing people from outside the parish into the church. Our thanks to Sue and Peter Holden, Ros Collins and their ever-expanding team for putting this event on.

The November Christmas Tree Festival was very busy and raised a pleasing amount of money. Our thanks to Jo and Paul McCulloch for organising this event, with Jane Marner and Pat Warlow.

Sylvia Elwes' sales on E-bay £9,194

200 Club £1,053
 Breakfast Café £1,211
 Community Café £728
 Refreshments for walkers £420
 Book Sale £5,183 – which includes sales after the event (total on the day was £4,308)
 D-Day brunch £246 (in aid of Combat Stress)
 Rose Queen £369
 Out and About Concert £201
 Beer, Bells and Bangers £1,896
 Afternoon tea at Gordon House £300
 Bike and Hike £172.50 (each for the church and the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust and sent directly to them)
 Bells Quiz £734
 Pimm's and Platters £729
 Wine and Lasagne Evening at Gordon House £433
 Bishop's Harvest Appeal £250 (to Leprosy Mission)
 Gift Day £4,685
 Sale of poppies. We have not been advised how much this raised (this was sent directly to the British Legion)
 Collection on Remembrance Sunday £207 (this was sent directly to the British Legion)
 Christmas Fayre and Tree Festival -£3,284
 Christmas wreath making £651
 Advent coffee mornings £361
 Carol singing in aid of SMART £124 (this was sent directly to SMART)
 Extra Guest collection in aid of SMART £243 (this was sent directly to SMART)

Grants

Archbishops Council – Part 2 of Grant re clock	£1,000
Biggleswade District Bells Grant	£1,250
Benefact Trust – Grant for parapets	£4,800
Parish Council for live-streaming kit	£1,200
Deanery Mission Grant for Welcome Packs	£200
The Bedfordshire Bike Ride Grant	£172.50

These were applied for and granted in 2024, but will not be received until the work is started/finished and invoices available

A428 Black Cat Social Value fund	£31,200
Anonymous, obtained by National Churches Trust	£7,500
Congregational & General Charitable	£15,000
St Albans Diocese	£10,000
Trust National Churches Trust	£5,000
Wolfson Fabric Repair Grant	£10,000
Wixamtree	£10,000

The Parish Share of £20,480 was paid in full.

Reserves policy

It is the PCC policy to hold a general reserve fund of around £60,000 in unrestricted funds.

We have a small endowment fund invested with the CBF Church of England Deposit and Income Funds. The income from this endowment is for the maintenance of the churchyard and goes annually to the Blunham Parish Council, who took over responsibility for this work some years ago.

Volunteers

Everyone who works for and in the church, apart from our rector and contractors, is a volunteer. We thank Roy Tipping for leading the music in the church; Trish Sheath, Jane Marner and Pat Warlow for the flower arranging; Ros Collins for her work in organising the distribution of the Benefice magazine and arranging very successful advertising for events; Sue and Peter Holden for organising the Book Sale; Sylvia Elwes for her amazing work using eBay to raise money for the church general fund; Jo and Paul McCulloch for organising the Christmas Tree festival, helped by Jane Marner and Pat Warlow; Paul and Linda Canty for updating the Inventory; Sarah Harvey-Wade for taking over the running of the 200 Club; Phil Rose for being our funding manager and applying for as many grants as he can find, for trying valiantly to keep the clock accurate, for repairing various pew platforms and, with John McAteer, for moving the sound system cabinet from beside the organ to the back of the church; Lee Harrison for co-ordinating Messy Church; Stella Harding for running the St Edmund Fellowship; Davina Buckle for organising ringers; and everyone on the rota for the day-to-day running of services.

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Edmund or St James the membership of the PCC consists of the rector, curate, reader, churchwardens, Deanery Synod representatives and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC met six times during the year.

Administrative information

St Edmund or St James church is situated in Park Lane, Blunham. It is part of the Diocese of St Albans within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Old Rectory, Park Lane, Blunham, Bedford. MK44 3NJ. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered as the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Edmund or St James, Blunham with the Charity Commissioners, charity number 1208324.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

- Rector: The Reverend Graham Buckle (Chair)
- Curate: The Reverend Christopher Scott
- Reader: Mrs Maureen Munro
- Warden: Mrs Shelagh Ashley
- Warden: Mrs Sue Dodson (Vice chair)
- Deanery Synod representative: Mr Lee Harrison
- Deanery Synod representative: Mr Paul Canty

Elected members:

- Mrs Sylvia Elwes
- Mrs Emma Forbes-Laird (Secretary)
- Mrs Amanda Harvey-Wade (Treasurer)
- Mr Paul McCulloch (from APCM 2024)
- Mr Phil Rose
- Mrs Kath Tipping
- Dr Roy Tipping
- Mrs Pat Warlow (from APCM 2024)

(Approved by the PCC on 6th March 2025)

BLUNHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST EDMUND OR ST JAMES

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is our responsibility to:

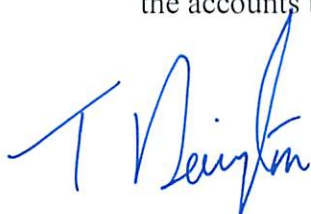
- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to our attention.

Our examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

In connection with our examination, no material matters have come to our attention which gives us cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

We have come across no matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



**T J Darrington F.C.C.A.
71 High Street
Gt Barford
BEDFORD
MK44 3LF**

Dated: 15th April 2025

BLUNHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST EDMUND OR ST JAMES

Year ended 31st December 2024

Analysis of income and expenditure

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This Year	Last Year
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
Incoming resources from donors						
Planned Regular Giving	13,835				13,835	12,500
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid					0	5,317
Loose plate Collections	4,783		1,940		6,724	5,880
Regular gift days	4,685				4,685	3,215
Total	23,303	0	1,940	0	25,244	26,913
Other voluntary incoming resources						
One-off Gift Aid gifts			25,000		25,000	1,760
One off Grants			8,623		8,623	7,250
Legacies	3,000				3,000	159,534
Donations, appeals other gifts	3,925		2,947		6,873	15,867
Total	6,925	0	36,570	0	43,495	184,412
Activities in furtherance of the councils objects						
Fundraising Events	6,587	1,775	8,189		16,552	3,386
Other funds generated	12,657				12,657	20,581
Fees for weddings & funerals	880		906		1,786	4,544
VAT Refund	9,109				9,109	
Total	29,234	1,775	9,095	0	40,104	28,512
Income from investments						
Dividends				107	107	92
Bank & building soc interest	5,388				5,388	1,272
Total	5,388	0	0	107	5,495	1,364
INCOME TOTAL	64,850	1,775	47,605	107	114,338	241,202
EXPENDITURE						
Costs of generating funds						
200 Club Prizes		1,200			1,200	500
Cost of events	1,789	1809	1351.67		4,950	3,898
Total	1,789	3,009	1,352	0	6,150	4,398
Grants						
Giving to charities & mission organisations	1,900		2,345		4,245	557
Total	1900	0	2,345	0	4,245	557
Activities relating to the work of the Church						
Parish Share	20,480				20,480	19,935
Ministry	2,373				2,373	1,353
Working expenses of clergy	1,592				1,592	825
Church running exp – Gas	3,171				3,171	5,516
Church running exp - Electricity	1,063				1,063	1,131
Church running exp - Water	315				315	271
Church running exp - Insurance	3,530				3,530	3,375
Church running exp - Internet	548				548	
Church maintenance	2,994				2,994	28,218
Organ/piano tuning	100				100	285
Services Administration	3,170				3,170	2,418
Upkeep of churchyard				92	92	44
Magazine and bookstall expense					0	360
Major repairs installations	10,199	34,691	12,398		57,288	6,115
Fixtures & Fittings	1,962				1,962	
Total	51,498	34,691	12,398	92	98,679	69,851
Church management and administration						
Administration	1,274				1,274	1,987
Total	1,274	0	0	0		1,987
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	56,461	37,700	16,094	92	110,347	76,795
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	8,389	-35,925	31,511	15	3,991	164,407

BLUNHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST EDMUND OR ST JAMES**Year ended 31st December 2024****Statement of Financial Activities**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds	Prior Year Total Funds
Income and endowments from:					
Incoming resources from donors	23,303	1,940		25,244	26,913
Other voluntary incoming resources	6,925	36,570		43,495	184,412
Activities in furtherance of the councils objects	31,009	9,095		40,104	28,513
Income from investments	5,388		107	5,495	1,364
Total income	66,626	47,605	107	114,338	241,202
Expenditure on:					
Costs of generating funds	4,798	1,352		6,150	4,398
Grants	1,900	2,345		4,245	558
Activities relating to the work of the Church	86,189	12,398	92	98,679	69,852
Church management and administration	1,274			1,274	1,987
Total expenditure	94,161	16,094	92	110,347	76,795
Net income / (expenditure)	-27,535	31,511	15	3,991	164,407

BLUNHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST EDMUND OR ST JAMES

As at 31st December 2024

Balance sheet

Description	This Year	Last year
Current assets		
Bank current account	15,679	48,750
Bank deposit account	22,879	57,463
32-Day deposit account	225,743	150,771
Cash in hand	180	300
Flower Fund Float	515	472
Total Current assets	264,996	257,757
Liabilities		
Agency donations prior year	-1,050	—
Accounts Payable	5,567	—
Un-cleared receipts	-1,269	—
Total Liabilities	3,248	0
Net Asset surplus (deficit)	261,748	257,757
Reserves		
Surplus/ (deficit) to date	3,991	164,407
Starting balances	257,757	93,350
Total Reserves	261,748	257,757

Represented by funds

Fund	Fund Type	Opening Balance - 1 January 2024	Receipts/ Transfers In	Payments/ Transfers Out	Movement in 2024	Closing Balance
Bells Appeal	Designated	£ 3,781	£ 17,840	£ 7,157	£ 10,683	£ 14,464
Clock Appeal	Designated	£ 3,129	£ 4,399	£ 10,199	-£ 5,800	£ 2,671
DBF Quarterly Return	Restricted	£ 1,686		£ 1,686	-£ 1,686	£ -
Fabric Fund	Restricted	£ 18,233	£ 15,486	£ 40,889	-£ 25,403	£ 7,170
Flower Fund Float	Designated	£ 472	£ 1,500	£ 1,456.64	£ 43	£ 515
Garden of Remembrance	Designated	-£ 2,954	£ 2,954		£ 2,954	£ -
Holiday Club	Designated	£ 63	£ -	£ 63	-£ 63	£ -
200 Club	Designated	£ 5,826	£ 2,273	£ 7,700	-£ 5,427	£ 399
Choir Robes	Designated	£ 3,540		£ 605	-£ 605	£ 2,935
Charity Appeals	Restricted	£ 819	£ 1,940	£ 2,345	-£ 405	£ 414
Christmas Tree Fund	Restricted	£ -	£ 1,905	£ 1,203	£ 702	£ 702
Roof Phase 1 - Parapets	Restricted/Desi	£ -	£ 134,800		£ 134,800	£ 134,800
Roof Phase 2	Restricted/Desi	£ -	£ 25,000		£ 25,000	£ 25,000
General Fund	Unrestricted	£ 223,010	£ 13,622	£ 144,439	-£ 130,817	£ 92,193
Judd Bequest	Endowment	£ 152	£ 107	£ 92	£ 15	£ 167
		£ 257,757	£ 221,827	£ 217,836	£ 3,991	£ 261,748

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BLUNHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST EDMUND OR ST JAMES

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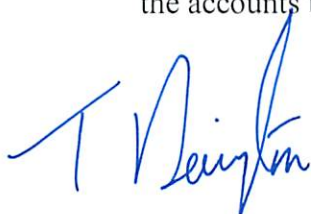
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Dated: 15th April 2025

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Dividends				107	107	92
Bank & building soc interest	5,388				5,388	1,272
Total	5,388	0	0	107	5,495	1,364
INCOME TOTAL	64,850	1,775	47,605	107	114,338	241,202
EXPENDITURE						
Costs of generating funds						
200 Club Prizes		1,200			1,200	500
Cost of events	1,789	1809	1351.67		4,950	3,898
Total	1,789	3,009	1,352	0	6,150	4,398
Grants						
Giving to charities & mission organisations	1,900		2,345		4,245	557
Total	1900	0	2,345	0	4,245	557
Activities relating to the work of the Church						
Parish Share	20,480				20,480	19,935
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Flower Fund Float	515	472
Total Current assets	264,996	257,757
Liabilities		
Agency donations prior year	-1,050	—
Accounts Payable	5,567	—
Un-cleared receipts	-1,269	—
Total Liabilities	3,248	0
Net Asset surplus (deficit)	261,748	257,757
Reserves		
Surplus/ (deficit) to date	3,991	164,407
Starting balances	257,757	93,350
Total Reserves	261,748	257,757

Represented by funds

Fund	Fund Type	Opening Balance - 1 January 2024	Receipts/ Transfers In	Payments/ Transfers Out	Movement in 2024	Closing Balance
Bells Appeal	Designated	£ 3,781	£ 17,840	£ 7,157	£ 10,683	£ 14,464
Clock Appeal	Designated	£ 3,129	£ 4,399	£ 10,199	-£ 5,800	£ 2,671
DBF Quarterly Return	Restricted	£ 1,686		£ 1,686	-£ 1,686	£ -
Fabric Fund	Restricted	£ 18,233	£ 15,486	£ 40,889	-£ 25,403	£ 7,170
Flower Fund Float	Designated	£ 472	£ 1,500	£ 1,456.64	£ 43	£ 515
Garden of Remembrance	Designated	-£ 2,954	£ 2,954		£ 2,954	£ -
Holiday Club	Designated	£ 63	£ -	£ 63	-£ 63	£ -
200 Club	Designated	£ 5,826	£ 2,273	£ 7,700	-£ 5,427	£ 399
Choir Robes	Designated	£ 3,540		£ 605	-£ 605	£ 2,935
Charity Appeals	Restricted	£ 819	£ 1,940	£ 2,345	-£ 405	£ 414
Christmas Tree Fund	Restricted	£ -	£ 1,905	£ 1,203	£ 702	£ 702
Roof Phase 1 - Parapets	Restricted/Desi	£ -	£ 134,800		£ 134,800	£ 134,800
Roof Phase 2	Restricted/Desi	£ -	£ 25,000		£ 25,000	£ 25,000
General Fund	Unrestricted	£ 223,010	£ 13,622	£ 144,439	-£ 130,817	£ 92,193
Judd Bequest	Endowment	£ 152	£ 107	£ 92	£ 15	£ 167
		£ 257,757	£ 221,827	£ 217,836	£ 3,991	£ 261,748

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