



**St Mary's Church, Headington**  
Barton – Sandhills - Barton Park

*“Growing with God, Going with God”*



**Parochial Church Council  
Annual Report**

**and**

**Financial Statements**

For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

**Parish Priest:**

Revd Eric Bosward  
St Mary's Vicarage  
Bayswater Road  
Headington  
OXFORD  
OX3 9EY

**Bank:**

Lloyds Bank  
PO Box 1000  
BX1 1LT

**Independent Examiner:**

Mr Andrew Gower  
28 Millwood End  
Long Hanborough  
WITNEY  
OX29 8BX

This report was presented to the Parochial Church Council on

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024**

and was accepted and approved by the members.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Bossward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E'.

**Revd Eric Bossward  
Vicar and Chairman**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trevor Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

**Trevor Jones  
Vice Chairman**

# St. Mary's Church, Headington

## Annual Report 2023/24

### General Background

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mary's has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Reverend Eric Bossward, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical.

The PCC is a statutory charitable corporate body (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2020) and a charity currently exempted from registration with the Charity Commission.

### Membership

Members of the PCC serve either as ex-officio members or are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Members may also be co-opted by the PCC at a later date. All PCC members are charity trustees who must:

- Comply with legal requirements
- Manage resources responsibly
- Ensure charity is accountable
- Act in the charity's best interests
- Act with reasonable care and skill

All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll. Enrolment is a way of saying "I belong". It is an act of commitment to St. Mary's Church and it opens the way for you to have greater involvement in the life of the church at parish, deanery and diocesan levels.

The PCC meets approximately eight times per year unless otherwise directed.

The Annual Church meetings were held in May 2023. The following were elected to serve as members of the PCC from May 2023.

### Ex-officio members:

<b>Parish Priest:</b>	Revd Eric Bossward
<b>Curate:</b>	Revd Sam Durley (July 2023- )
<b>Churchwardens:</b>	Mrs Anne Gallacher Mr Tim Wraith (Oct 2023- )
<b>Deanery Synod Representatives:</b>	Mr Trevor Jones [Vice Chairman & PCC Treasurer] Mr Alasdair Hedges (Co-opted June 2023- )
<b>Elected Members:</b>	Mrs Joan Andersohn Mr Zak Aylett (Co-opted June 2023-) Mr Bruce Coppen Mrs Bev Field (Co-opted June 2023) Mrs Wendy Jones [PCC & Electoral Roll Secretary] Mr David Stephens Ms Torie Stubbs Mrs Kate Wooding
<b>Standing Committee:</b>	The Vicar – The Curate – The Churchwardens The PCC Treasurer – The PCC Secretary

## **Church Membership**

There were **73** names on the Church Electoral Roll, **41** were resident in the Parish and **32** were non-resident.

## **Services**

On the first Sunday of the month an All Age Family Service is held at 10.00. On the other Sundays a Parish Eucharist takes place at 10.00 and separate groups for children and young people take place during that service.

## **Safeguarding**

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

## **Weekly events**

### ***Coffee and Craft***

On **Mondays** from **10-30-12.30** during term time, the group meets in church to enjoy craft activities, coffee and a chat.

### ***Barton Growers***

The Barton Growers meet on **Tuesdays 10.00 - 12.00** in and around the church.

### ***Acorns***

Our toddler group meets in the church from 10.00-11,30 every Wednesday morning during term time.

### ***Small Groups***

The Headington group is held fortnightly on **Tuesdays** at **19.00**.

The Eatwells group meets in church on **Thursdays** at **9.30-11.00**.

The Sandhills group meets on **Tuesdays** at **19.30 – 21.00**.

If you'd like to join a **Small group** please email [info@stmarysbarton.com](mailto:info@stmarysbarton.com)

### ***Home***

Home is our prayer and worship evening and takes place on the second Wednesday of the month from **19.00-21.00**.

### ***Roots***

Roots is our deep dive into the theology of the Bible and takes place on the last Wednesday of the month.

### ***IT Drop-in***

Takes place on Thursday lunchtimes for those who need help with their phone or laptop.

## Vicar's Report

*'I believe and I am confident, I will see (and have already seen!) the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.'* Psalm 27: 13

As you will see from the comments at the end of this report we continue to be a church that has been blessed and is a blessing to others. Not just at St. Mary's but amongst our wonderful neighbours and friends. That in itself is an essential part of our calling. But in the last year we have been and done so much more.

As we continue, individually and corporately to *'Be with Jesus. Become like Jesus. Do as he did'*, I believe we will also continue to grow 'deep' and 'wide.'

I want to thank **Lynnrae** for her work as our part time administrator. This role, in its current form, has now come to an end. I am grateful to Lynnrae for her work on social media, our website, publicity, weekly emails, Sunday power points and much more. Bless you and all God has in store for you in the future. PCC/Standing Committee is looking at the role of wardens, operations and administration, as a whole and thinking about the best way forward.

Our **PCC Away Day** on 30<sup>th</sup> September was a great encouragement as we recognised just how far we have come in the last few years. Especially in the area of being a diverse church. We considered the possibility of employing a children and family's worker, but there was not enough clarity to take that forward.

Our **parish share** increased by 93% this year. That's not a typo! The PCC voted unanimously to meet it. It indicates a significant increase in our giving in the last 3 -4 years and means our financial circumstances are much better than they were 8 years ago. I am immensely thankful to Trevor, who has the skill and courage to manage a church on a tight budget, as well as encouraging us to be generous, now that we are able to. However, we mustn't be complacent: energy bills have increased and we have a major building project that needs to be completed. The plans will be to ensure the building remains sound, as well as making it fit for its current and future use.

**Our worship**, in the area of music, has developed nicely and I want to thank Angela, Wendy, Felicity, Reg, Ellie, Archie, Dan Hames, Wongani, Lincoln and the choir for all their invaluable contribution. Also those who have supplemented our worship from Aldates.

Zoe Aylett took on the role of **Safeguarding Officer** last year and joined Wendy and I on the SG team. It has been such a blessing to have someone take on the role with such enthusiasm and organisational skills. Bless you Zoe.

Special mention goes to **David Bird**. We have our new kitchen due to David's diligence and his enviable ability to consult, negotiate and plan. Thank you to those who put it in place (Gary) and our anonymous donors.

That leads nicely into our **redevelopment project** for the church building. Firstly, thank you Tim W. and David S. for your work in carrying the vision forward after the disruption of covid. You have been able to pass on a lot of experience and valuable information. Secondly, an apology from me. The original plans for our re-ordering were too ambitious and I take responsibility for being overly optimistic about what might be possible and the funds we could raise. And thirdly, I am very grateful to David Bird who has brought his experience and enthusiasm to take the project forward. In some ways the first step was the new kitchen. But what many of you will not know is that David has been working, with the PCC, to devise a new plan,

involving new architects. Essentially it will mean making the very best of our current building including new toilets etc. as well as a small hall on the site of the old one. It will not be cheap, but it is realistic as long as we commit ourselves to it and pray. We plan to have 2 Gift Day Sundays in June. More details to follow.

**'Home'** continues to be an important place of prayer and worship. Can I encourage you, if you can, to make it a priority each month? Prayer is the boiler house/engine room of all that happens and will happen at St. Mary's.

Involvement with our four local **state schools** has increased in this last year with school assemblies, pastoral care and events at church.

Our 3 **small groups** are a very important part of our church life. Thank you to Joan and Bev, Tim and Juliet, and John and Anne who lead them. I think we have scope to create at least 2 more groups, but we are in need of those willing to host and lead.

**Roots** (with Nick and Nev) has been a delight in the last 12 months. We have studied Jonah in depth and we are currently looking at the Kingdom of God. It has often been a small group (6/7) but the conversation, thought provoking Bible study and discussion has been fabulous. Anyone leading services, leading a small group, or preaching at St. Mary's would benefit enormously from coming along.

We have taken on two more **mission partners** with two excellent mission champions for each: **Ugacox** - Emmanuel Kalamera <https://ugacox.org/> and **Julius and Dora Children's Centre** - Joan Andersohn <https://www.janddchildrenscentre.org/> For more information follow the links.

**Lucy Davies**, a C of E Ordinand studying at Wycliffe College, recently completed a 'Sunday placement' at Easter. Lucy, you have been a joy and I know your leading, preaching, Holy Land session at 'Home', as well as your involvement at Eatwells has been a blessing and encouragement to us all. God has given you a very clear gift of leadership and pastoral care. We wish you every blessing as you begin your curacy this year. Please visit us and maybe come back and preach.

Thank you **Will Donaldson** for taking on the role coordinating our newly formed Pastoral Care Team. *See separate report.* Will has been very involved in preaching, leading and presiding as well. Thank you Will and Ruth for your care of Lynn and I.

Thank you St. Aldates for the Christmas Hampers and the donation of £10,000 which we used to continue to fund the Community Development Worker's post.

Both Christmas and Easter were great celebrations at St. Mary's this year. Strong attendance for all the services and outstanding involvement from the choir at Christmas.

I am very grateful to our church warden Anne for her hard work and availability throughout 2023. Tim Wraith become our second warden in the latter half of the year. He has been a Godsend in terms of sharing the load and being a good support to Lynn and I. Anne is hanging up her church warden's wand (yes, they have a wand!) at the APCM and we will be thanking her for her tireless service then. I am also very grateful to John for the support he will have given Anne during her time as warden.

Wendy, our PCC secretary, and Trevor, our Treasurer, are an inspiration to Lynn and I. In the past their persistence during times of testing at St. Mary's epitomises St. Paul's injunction to *'stand firm.'* I know they have often *'sown in tears'* and I pray they will continue to enjoy even more of that *'reaping in joy'* that the psalmist promises (Psalm 126: 5).

Thank you to the PCC. Your honesty, integrity, straight talking, encouragement and care for St. Mary's, is apparent every time we meet.

Fiona continues her work in the community. See separate report. Fiona manages to draw a diverse group of people into the wider life of St. Mary's. I particularly want to mention the Bereavement Course, which, with new material, Fiona has shaped into a key part of our annual calendar. It has also been great to see the way she has shared the leadership of that course with other excellent co-leaders.

Alasdair; I have really appreciated your involvement with the various parties seeking to develop the land north of Bayswater Brook. I too have had many communications with our Archdeacon, Christ Church and Oxford Diocese Board of Education about numerous aspects of the project. At the moment it seems that it will may well see a setback of up to 10 years, before any building begins. Follow the link below.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-68661665>

I could not end this report without mentioning my 60th Birthday party in July last year. Churches should have the best parties. Followers of Jesus have much to celebrate. Thank you so much to all those who made it possible especially Lynn and Angela. It was great to enjoy an oasis of laughter, great food, games and dancing. When's the next one?

Finally, as many of you know it has personally been another challenging year for Lynn and I. However, St. Mary's continues to be a joy to be a part of and to lead. Your love, support and prayers are much appreciated.

Following Jesus is not all joy. But we have experienced a great deal of love, joy and peace as a church throughout this last year and have extended that blessing to many others.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. John 8:12

*Eric*

### **Looking Forward**

Sam will be ordained priest on Sunday 23rd June, 3pm at St Giles Church, Oxford. Put the date in your diaries. It has been such a blessing and delight for Sam, Kirsty, Florence, Rupert and now Ernie to join us at St. Mary's so seamlessly. I hope we continue to be a blessing to you. Sam and Kirsty have thrown themselves into resurrecting Toddler Group which is going very well with a small but excellent team of volunteers – it is a highlight of my week. They have entertained many at their home and Sam has taken on overseeing Children and Youth, organised 'bag drops' around Barton Park, taken school assemblies, funerals, as well as all the things you have seen him do each Sunday. And he has made himself well known and loved in the community. Ali just says 'the usual' when he walks into the Fish and Chip shop! (two battered sausages if you are wondering!) And that's just at St. Mary's! But for me it's the gift they have been as a whole family. It has been such a blessing. Seeing Florence and Rupert so at home at church and Ernie being passed around each week, reminds me of the phrase 'it takes a whole village to raise a child.' Thank you for being generous with your energy and time. There is still a lot to learn but you have made a great start and I count you as a valued colleague and friend.

Mark and Jenny, Dylan and Violet will be returning from Cambodia. I know they have appreciated our support in a variety of ways, and we look forward to welcoming them back in the summer.

We will have, God willing, confirmations and baptisms in July 2025 with the accompanying confirmation/baptism classes!

I have a sabbatical from the beginning of September to the end of November 2024.



**People have said many encouraging things about our precious and welcoming church family. This is just a snap shot:**

*'I am often in tears at St. Mary's, but they are good tears. Sometimes the sense of God's presence is overwhelming.'*

*'I said to my husband If I try St. Mary's, I wonder if even one person would welcome me.....7 people did! I was overwhelmed and smiled through the whole service.'*

Said by a member of the community to someone asking directions to St. Mary's: *'You will be alright there. That church does what it says it will do. It's well thought of in the community.'*

*'I felt nervous coming to church for the first time, but that didn't last long as I realised everyone was just like me.'*

*'Such a friendly and welcoming church, both the congregation and the vicar!'*

*'People at St. Mary's have helped me a lot through a difficult time of bereavement and loss.'*

*'This is my family. It has helped me a lot being prayed for by people at St. Mary's.'*  
*'The choir is such a lot of fun: very diverse and joyful.'*

*'I didn't believe it, but you said we would have a kitchen and we have one!!'*  
(Thank-you to David and Jenny Bird, our builders and the 'anonymous donors.')

*'It's a beautiful church.'*

*'We are still overwhelmed by the wonderful service you gave my Dad yesterday. Your kind words of welcome, superb choice of fitting bible readings, your sermon and extracts from my Dad's chosen funeral music were absolutely heart felt and spot on.'*

*'I am very much humbled for the warm welcome, I feel very much at home at St. Mary's church. I feel I have joined a family away from home, Kenya. A very welcoming community. God bless you.'*

*'I very much enjoyed the service which had such a strong community feel. Everyone was so friendly and the Spirit was palpable. I will certainly be coming again if you'll have me!'*

*'As I have been searching for church since moving I just want to say how thankful I am to have come to St. Mary's, each time I left I felt filled with love for Jesus and his people. Eric I don't know if you realise that it is so special and not always the case (sadly) at church, well at least where I've been. I praise God every day for how he shows up in Barton. So I just want to encourage you to keep going, keep pressing into Him, the one who sustains us.'*

*'I have the Barton Growers calendar and so it reminds me of church every day!'*

*'We have really struggled with church over the years and (St. Mary's) is the first time in a long time we have felt at home. Thank you.'*

And from Townsend House, *'I hope your Christmas was a great one, as you made ours on Christmas Day. The carols were the highlight of the day and we thank you with all our hearts. You are very loving, and kind and we appreciate you.'*

*'I just wanted to thank you for coming over on Thursdays for Songs of Praise, what a wonderful time. The residents really engage with it. There was a real calmness in the lounge. If you could come more often, that would be awesome...'*

## Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

St Mary's PCC has met 9 times since the last Annual Church Meetings. The Standing Committee has also met on a few occasions. To help meetings run more smoothly reports are circulated by email before the meeting (where possible) and matters arising from the previous meeting are now raised at the end of the meeting. Our meetings always start with a short prayer or bible reading and conclude with the reporting of Good News stories from around the Parish and a final closing prayer.

The Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCM) were held in May 2023. At these meetings Churchwardens, Deanery Synod representatives and members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) were elected. This year David Stephens one of our churchwardens had decided to stand down after 5 years in office. Anne Gallacher was re-elected but no other nominations for churchwarden were received. Only one nomination for Deanery Synod had been received so we were lacking a churchwarden and a Deanery Synod representative.

The first meeting of the PCC was held in June. At this meeting the Church Officers were elected - Vice Chairman, Treasurer, PCC Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer. The Standing Committee was also appointed. Two church members, Zak Aylett and Bev Field, were co-opted to serve on the PCC from July. They had been nominated for election at the APCM but had not quite served the 6 month qualifying period on the Electoral roll. In addition, Alasdair Hedges had volunteered, and was duly elected, to fill our outstanding vacancy on the Cowley Deanery Synod. Our Welcomers were also elected.

At this first meeting David Bird told us more about plans for installing a temporary kitchen in church. A preferred location had been identified at the back of the church. We learnt from Eric that the Family Mentoring scheme we had hoped to work on with Collinwood URC would not be going ahead. It was agreed that Zoe Aylett would take on the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer working with Eric and Wendy. Our new curate Sam Durley and his family had moved into Barton Park.

In July we heard more about the temporary kitchen plans and the Building to Serve (B2S) project. It was agreed that David Bird would now take the lead with the B2S project. Eric informed us that following the relaxation of pandemic measures we would return to the common cup at communion. Those not wishing to partake could continue to receive communion in one kind. It was unanimously agreed that Fiona Tracey's contract as our Community Development Worker be renewed for a further three years. Following on from this year's Art Weeks exhibition, which Fiona had organized, she asked for feedback about future events. It was felt to be a well-received event but was a lot of work for one person. Storage of materials was one of the biggest problems. Issues relating to general storage space in the church were also raised.

There were no meetings in August so at the September meeting we reviewed our Parish Safeguarding Policy. We heard that Sam was going to relaunch the Acorns Toddler group on Wednesday mornings and that the newly formed Pastoral group was to meet later in the month. Joan Andersohn informed us that the Churches Together in Headington group was also re-starting. Various events would be taking place in September including the Barton and the PCC Away Day. An open meeting of the Cowley Deanery was to be held on October 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss the Cowley Deanery Vision.

At the beginning of October a special APCM was held to elect an additional churchwarden to fill the remaining vacancy. Tim Wraith was duly elected. At the PCC meeting held later that month we reviewed our GDPR policy and practices. We heard more from David Bird about the B2S project. It was becoming evident that with rising costs etc. it would be beyond our capabilities at this time to achieve everything in the original plans. Anne informed us that the Quinquennial inspection had been carried out. The Treasurer informed us that our Parish share for 2024 was likely to rise to £32,561 an increase of 92%.

In November, Wendy reported that a minor GDPR breach had occurred at the end of October. She had followed our breach procedure, including notifying those affected, and actions were taken to mitigate the error. It was reported that the Faculty for the temporary kitchen had been approved. It was also agreed to move away from the Purcell plan for the B2S project and appoint a different architect. The Administrator's post had been advertised and interviews were planned for early December. Eric produced details of the services and events over the Christmas period. Sam outlined his proposals to apply for funding from the Community Insight Profile Grant. The application would be for soft play equipment for the toddler group, an extension to Wi-Fi for the cabin and funding towards a good quality coffee machine.

With a break in December we next met in January. Eric reported that the Christmas services and events had gone very well and been well received by the local community. Engagement with the local schools had been especially good. Zoe, as Safeguarding Officer, had sent out reminders to all volunteers and PCC members about safeguarding training. David Bird provided an update on the temporary kitchen and the B2S project.

The February meeting our Safety Policy and appendices on Lone Working, Working at Height and associated risk assessments were reviewed. Sam reported that his applications for funding had been successful and that some funding would be provided for each of the items he'd submitted. The churchwardens reported that on occasions church users had been unable to park in the church car park as it was full. The signs seem to have little effect. The temporary kitchen had been installed. A replacement photocopier had also been installed. Our Mission partners were reviewed and it was agreed to support UGACOX, Julius & Dora Children's Centre, Christians Against Poverty, Open Doors and Tearfund.

At the last full meeting of the PCC held in March, David Bird gave us an update on the work he was doing for the B2S project. He had had several meetings with the architects (Banks Design Partnership) and had also met with an independent fundraiser, who the PCC agreed to engage to fundraise for us. The Treasurer reported that we would need to register with the Charity Commission as our income now exceeded the permitted level. As we had been unable to appoint a suitable administrator Tim proposed that the job description be expanded to make the role more appealing.

Throughout the year St. Mary's has continued to engage with its members and the wider community through the weekly newsletter and the monthly magazine. Both are available electronically but paper copies of the magazine are available in church.

In addition to our usual weekly events, other events and activities took place throughout the year. In May we celebrated the King's coronation with a Bring &

Share lunch and at the end of May St Mary's was open for Art Weeks and exhibited works by church members, local schools and local artists. In July we celebrated Eric's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday with a Barn Dance and supper. A few church members took part in the OHCT Ride & Stride event in September raising funds for St Mary's and the OHCT. Later in the month St Mary's had a table at the Barton Bash making treasure boxes with the children. At the end of the month PCC members attended an Away Day where we looked at St. Mary's Visions and Values. In October some PCC members attended the Deanery Vision workshop. We also held our Harvest Festival and an auction of fresh produce raised funds for our mission partner Tearfund. We welcomed Advent and Christmas with carol services in church, Christmas Tree lighting, Carol singing at various locations around the parish, a Christingle service and several services for Christmas. At Easter we held a Maundy Thursday service, two services on Good Friday, an all-night Easter Vigil on holy Saturday. A sunrise service on Easter Sunday was followed by breakfast and an all age Holy Communion service at 10.00am.

*Wendy Jones*  
*PCC Secretary*

## Financial Report

2023 was another challenging year for St Mary's. One great achievement was once again paying our allocated parish share of £17,000 in full which is much less than it costs the Diocese to provide us with a parish priest.

Details of funds received and spent can be seen in the "Receipts and Payments" account. In summary, at the end of 2023, we had available funds totalling £295,010 with £146,020 being restricted for specific purposes and £148,990 for general expenditure. Our income from envelopes and loose collections showed a marked reduction over the previous year, but regular giving by standing order increased which in turn meant a larger reclaim for gift aid from HMRC was possible. Our regular outgoings for electric, insurance, broadband, copier, etc. also increased. We managed to offer support for USPG, Christian Aid, Tearfund and Open Doors as our committed mission giving from St Mary's. Fiona continued as our community worker. This was made possible by a grant to secure this placement and allow us to extend her appointment. Donations came in for "Building to Serve" with expenditure needed for architect and surveying services.

This year, 2024, will be equally as challenging! There is a parish share of £32,561 to be found. A massive £15,561 or 92% increase, but this will also provide support for other parishes within the Deanery that are struggling to meet their allocated share. There are the regular bills as mentioned above to be paid and generous support for our charitable mission giving during the year to be considered. Fundraising for Building to Serve will figure prominently and will also need our support. We anticipate that this activity will help to demonstrate our commitment to the project, the parish and the wider community as we will be starting to seek major funding for the project from external donors. There will also likely be other, so far unknown, issues that will surely arise.

Our church cannot survive without strong Christian Stewardship. Financial support is vital in order that St Mary's can thrive rather just survive. We must **all** give to the best of our ability. Giving is a part of our faith. It is an outward expression of putting God first in our lives. We should give proportionately, cheerfully, regularly, and most importantly, sacrificially. No one is asked to give more than they can afford, but regular giving is essential, and everyone should carefully consider what they can give. **We should all give what is right and not what is left.**

We should all review our level of giving regularly. So, **please** carefully consider your current giving to St Mary's. If anyone wishes to discuss stewardship, Gift Aid or any other aspect for giving then have a word with me, I will be only too pleased to help.

Our Bible offers instances of guidance for giving. For example, the quotation on our giving envelopes from 1 Corinthians 16:2 "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him". So, let us all consider our giving and give freely with thankfulness from what God has provided.

Finally, I would like to record sincere thanks to Andrew Gower, our newly appointed independent examiner, for verifying the 2023 accounts.

*Trevor Jones*  
*Hon. Treasurer*

St Mary Headington

Receipts and Payments 2023

<u>Balances at 1 January</u>		<u>2022</u>		<u>2023</u>	
CCLA	Deposit Account	33141		200905	
Lloyds Bank	General Fund	15121		28098	
	General Fund	198297		40100	
			<u>246559</u>		<u>269103</u>
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<i>Barton Growers</i>	0		336	
<b>Included above</b>	<i>Barton Park Bags</i>	1328		1328	
	<i>Building to Serve</i>	51060		60693	
	<i>Community Worker</i>	32996		19544	
	<i>Development Fund</i>	18587		13027	
	<i>The Cabin</i>	5669		5669	
	<i>Flower Fund</i>	50		50	
	<i>Pastoral Fund</i>	1441		2141	
	<i>Special Collections</i>	0		0	
	<i>Crafts and Acorns</i>	1579		1579	
<b>Receipts</b>					
Stewardship	Planned - Bank	43446		50790	
	Planned - Envelopes	1865		1435	
	Reclaimed Tax	10778		12145	
			56089		64370
Collections	Church	800		884	
			800		884
Fees			1694		3286
Donations			0		1155
Magazine			147		225
Development Fund:	Barton Growers	950		450	
	Barton Park Bags	0		0	
	Building to Serve	17064		24316	
	B2S Gift Aid	2158		4726	
	Community Worker	5000		10000	
	Development Fund	0		2306	
	The Cabin	0		0	
			25172		41798
Flower Fund:			0		0
Special Collections	Christian Aid	500		600	
	USPG	900		250	
	Tear Fund	1100		1250	
	Open Doors	350		400	
			2850		2500
Pastoral Fund		700		0	
Crafts, Acorns		0		0	
Interest		2608		6439	
Miscellaneous		389		1380	
			<u>90449</u>		<u>122036</u>

St Mary Headington

Receipts and Payments 2023

<u>Payments</u>		<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Clergy Expenses		86	963
Church:			
	Electricity	5933	9470
	Insurance	1303	1433
	Rates	152	213
	Grounds	664	1170
	Broadband/Copier	1584	2020
	Maintenance	636	1338
		<u>10272</u>	<u>15644</u>
Parish Share		14850	16830
Mission Support		3500	5310
Altar & Books		368	255
Fees		1089	2103
Magazine		0	0
Stationery		87	203
Telephone		360	586
Music:			
	Organ Tuning	0	0
	Fees	110	751
		<u>110</u>	<u>751</u>
Development Fund:			
	Barton Growers	818	449
	Barton Park Bags	0	228
	Building to Serve	9588	15978
	Community Worker	18452	18717
	Development Fund	1507	5400
	Salaries	3848	8528
	Youth Work	0	8
		<u>34213</u>	<u>49307</u>
Flower Fund:		0	0
Special Collections		2850	2500
Pastoral Fund		0	750
Crafts, Acorns		0	88
Miscellaneous		120	837
		<u>67905</u>	<u>96129</u>
<b>Balances at 31 December</b>			
CCLA	Deposit Account	200905	237344
Lloyds Bank	General Fund	28098	29427
	General Fund	40100	28239
		<u>269103</u>	<u>295010</u>
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<i>Barton Growers</i>	336	338
<b>Included above</b>	<i>Barton Park Bags</i>	1328	1100
	<i>Building to Serve</i>	60693	123757
	<i>Community Worker</i>	19544	827
	<i>Development Fund</i>	13027	11405
	<i>Youth Work</i>	5669	5661
	<i>Flower Fund</i>	50	50
	<i>Pastoral Fund</i>	2141	1391
	<i>Special Collections</i>	0	0
	<i>Crafts and Acorns</i>	1579	1491

T Jones (Hon Treasurer)  
31 December 2023

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
**TO THE P.C.C. OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, HEADINGTON, OXFORD**

1. This report on the accounts of the P.C.C. for year ended 31 December 2023 is in respect of an examination carried out under Regulation 3 (3) of the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 and Section 144 (2) of the 2011 Charities Act.
  
2. My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 144 (2) of the Act and to be found in the guidance from the Central Board of Finance. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the P.C.C. and a comparison of the accounts with these records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts 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 accounts.
  
3. In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention
  - a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
    - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Charities Act
    - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the requirements of the Act, as also contained in the Church Accounting Regulations 1997have not been met, or
  - b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

A.S. Gower 19/3/2024

**Andrew Gower**

Independent Examiner



## Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

The church building as a whole is slowly deteriorating, mainly due to dampness. Repairs to both the main roof and the flat roof to resolve leaks will be addressed as part of the redevelopment project (Building to Serve). The Quinquennial Inspection took place in October 2023, its recommendations are included in the re-development plans.

A temporary kitchen / servery was installed in February 2024 which has hugely improved the serving of hot drinks and made washing up easier. A generous financial donation was given for this.

The toilet flush mechanism has caused problems in recent weeks and despite repairs has resulted in a plumber replacing the cistern and correcting the position of the toilet.

The Furniture in the church is in a good state of repair.

The Organ is back in use as two musicians are learning to play it and practise most Sundays after the service.

The Communion Silverware is cleaned on a regular basis and is in a good state of repair and kept locked in the safe.

### The Brassware

The Altar candlesticks are used and after each service they are locked in the vestry for safe keeping. They are cleaned on a regular basis and are in a good state of repair.

The Altar Linen is stored in the vestry and cleaned as required.

### Church Cleaning

Pat continues to clean the church and Portacabin 4 hours a week.

### The Church Grounds

The lawns and flower beds continue to be maintained by Mr Tony Trafford and we are grateful for his hard work over the past year. The Barton Growers Group successfully managed the vegetable plots under the leadership of Fiona Tracey, the church Community Development Worker.

The uneven path alongside the vicarage has had temporary repairs to minimise the trip hazard.

The car park and the site of the old church hall remain enclosed by boarding. The parking spaces are regularly taken by non-church users which causes problems for people attending the mid-week groups. The situation is under review.

We would also like to thank the various members of the PCC and congregation for helping to keep the church grounds free of litter.

*Anne Gallacher & Tim Wraith*  
Churchwardens

## Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod met four times over the year. Trevor Jones and Alasdhair Hedges represented St Mary's in 2023/4. Trevor also served on the Standing Committee and as Deanery Treasurer.

The first meeting of the year was held in June and hosted by St James, Beauchamp Lane. The meeting was updated on the financial position for 2023 and the prospect for 2024, together with a brief report on Living in Love and Faith. A paper was then presented titled *Cowley Deanery: Ministry, Resources and the Future* which included the proposal "This synod believes we should invest time and energy to consider restructuring the deanery, so that we are better placed, within the constraints of resources, to continue to build the Kingdom of God." The proposal was formally accepted by synod.

The second meeting on the 1st October was an open meeting at St Mary and St Nicholas, Littlemore to discuss *Cowley Deanery: A Way Forward*. Towards the end of the meeting five proposals were tabled around parish co-operation and working together across benefice boundaries and the feedback comments are to assist future decisions. There is an expectation that there will be some reductions in the stipendiary commitment, probably across multiple parishes. There is also a hope to increase work across parish boundaries, potentially in a more formalised manner.

This was followed by a meeting in November, again at St Mary and St Nicholas, Littlemore. After Standing Committee elections, the meeting was taken up with the revised calculations for the parish share, and the state of negotiations with the parishes as to the amounts they are prepared to pay. Achieving the Diocese's budget is critical to obtaining the agreed rebate, and at the time of the meeting there was a shortfall in the total offered which would fail to trigger the rebate monies.

The final meeting of the year was held in March at St Nicholas, Marston. The first item was consideration of a proposal presented by the Diocesan Director of Mission titled *Disciples Together*, a Diocesan Strategy for putting children, young people and families at the centre of a more Christ like Church. This initiative is fully supported by Bishop Steven, and all churches within the Diocese are expected to submit an initial plan by September, identifying what is already happening as well as what happens next. Parishes are encouraged to work together and share good practice as well as potentially combining resources. The meeting was then updated on finance, negotiations having been successful in retaining the Deanery rebate, as well as *The Way Forward*.

*Alasdhair Hedges*

## Safeguarding Report

I am very happy to be writing this report as the Parish Safeguarding Officer, as looking back on the 2022 report there was a great need for this role to be filled.

The role does come with a lot of admin which is slowly coming together and being updated and organised.

I am very grateful to Wendy and Eric for their support while I've slowly tried to understand what is involved in this role.

Thank you to all of those who have completed their Safeguarding training! Those who haven't, I'll be in touch!

I am happy to report that we continue to be a safe church and any safeguarding concerns that have been highlighted have been sensitively and confidentially navigated.

Huge thanks and recognition to Eric for his wisdom and experience in this area and for being most people's first point of contact when they have concerns. We continue to encourage those in the church to inform either Eric, Wendy or myself of any safeguarding concerns you may have.

Looking ahead, I aim to assist those who can't easily access the online training to complete their training. I also aim to continue updating records and be available to assist with safeguarding concerns and situations.

Please pray for continued safety in our church and also churches worldwide. Pray for church leaders, social workers, health visitors, teachers, health professionals, police and others who are in a position to highlight concerns and put a stop to mistreatment.

### **Statement**

**'St Mary's Church Headington continues to work at fulfilling its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishop's Guidance on Safeguarding.'**

*Zoe Aylett  
Parish Safeguarding Officer*

## Community Development Worker Annual Report

*God is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.  
Psalm 34 v 18*

My work this year has been consolidating activities and relationships already formed so that people have supportive groups/ micro communities helping to bring people together. Some creative voices within the community were showcased in the Artweeks exhibition in May 2023.

### **Barton Growers 2023**

In its **third year** a cohesive group has now formed and welcomed some new members this year. This group in effect has mainly been self-sustaining due to funding gained. In 2023 we have had 27 people who visited the group and have around **10 regulars** - both St Mary's and local residents. We are pleased that two residents from Townsend House come along to the group on a regular basis.

**Funding** was gained from the Connecting Communities Grant (June 2023 £450) and a **tutor** (Wig) for the winter art project. The Growers were very proud to exhibit their work in Art Weeks 2023 and annual calendars are proving to be a success!

Jackie, Activity Coordinator from Townsend House, says:

*'What I have seen from being here is the fellowship and the friendships and the food that you have given to the community seems like it has been very rewarding.'*

### **Bereavement Group**

The Bereavement Support Group has continued to meet intermittently throughout the year. We are running a **new group in 2024** and have been training 2 volunteers (R.D. and P.H.) to help run it with new materials.

### **Art Weeks**

In terms of aims and output it has been a successful project. Its particular strengths were in the **diversity of projects** and people/children reached within the community.

### **IT/ group**

The computer drop-in has now been running for a year and a half. We have had over **10** people using it throughout 2023. As it runs at the same time as the coffee group (see below) we have had a small crossover for folk who have come for coffee but need help with their phone or tablet. Thanks to Hilary and Russell who volunteer.

### **Coffee Group and tea dances**

In partnership with Hedena Health this was set up to provide a space for folk to make new connections. We attached this activity to the computer drop-in (as above) and meet every 2 weeks. On average we around **5-7 people** on a biweekly basis but over 15 different people have attended this group. We have also experimented with introducing dancing (thank you to our curate Sam!). It has also been a space where other professionals are able to meet local residents. One of the most encouraging things that has happened is that group members have made new connections with each other.

### **Christmas Bags**

50 Christmas bags were distributed throughout the community. This was done in partnership with the surgery to ensure where possible that those who might benefit most were reached.

A big THANK YOU to all volunteers without whom none of the above would be possible!

*Fiona Tracey  
Community Development Worker*

## Building to Serve

Over the last few years a combination of the pandemic, the people involved in *Building to serve* becoming busy and the complex nature of the plans, have meant that there has been no progress beyond the ideas on paper. In the autumn of 2024, working with the PCC, I took on the role of progressing the project. It had become clear that the scheme which had been on the table was too expensive for us as a church (estimated total cost of £6million+). We have reviewed the situation and assessed what we felt we could achieve. It is good to be able to report some progress over the last seven months.

Firstly, we have appointed BW architects to look at the project and to make plans. As I write, we have had a number of meetings and begun to put together a plan. As you will know, the church has a number of issues which need tackling but I was keen to ensure that whatever we did followed the values outlined below which are important in a church like ours.

1. **Doing the basic things** – We need to deal with the repairs and maintenance at a very basic level, especially those things identified by the Quinquennial inspection which took place in October 2023. This means that we need to replace the nave roof covering, to sort out the rainwater gutters and downpipes, to review the side aisle pitches, to repoint brickwork where needed, to re-decorate the interior of the church.
2. **Community** – Community is at the heart of the church and we want to be able to both build the church community but also be accessible to the wider community. We have already seen that having a temporary servery has made a difference and we hope that if we are able to build a new hall, we might be able to cater for the community, much more easily, and broaden our reach.
3. **Accessibility** – when the church was built in 1958, there was little thought about accessibility, and we want the church to be accessible for all. This means ramps to the entrances, toilet facilities that can be used by anyone, working on the heating of the Church so that it is comfortable and practical for everyone; we also hope to review the sound and vision systems.
4. **Lowering a carbon footprint** – we hope that any work, we do will considerably lower our carbon footprint by adding insulation to the nave and side aisles roofs and to the walls. In addition we hope to add secondary glazing and look at entrances. If as planned we build a new hall we would hope that it would be carbon neutral.
5. **Storage** – Storage is boring, but every church needs storage and what we have at the moment is in need of expanding and making more appropriate to the activities and needs of today.
6. **Realistic cost** – we need to recognize that we are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, and it is not as easy as it once was to raise large sums of money. However, we believe that if we work together, if we engage with local partners and national grant giving bodies, we will be able to raise the £1 million that we will need in order to do this work.

We anticipate that the total cost for this work would be somewhere in the region of £1-1.2 million and whilst we recognize that this is a massive challenge but we also believe that this plan is achievable if we all commit to:

**Pray consistently - Give sacrificially - Expect faithfully**

**Pray consistently** as through prayer God works to achieve His plan and purpose for us - maybe take time every day to pray for the vision of the plans, for God's provision and for the outcome to serve this community in which God has placed us.

**Give sacrificially** as we all have a part to play, remembering that it is as much about how we give as about what we give - we will have an opportunity to give and so why not pray that we all may bless each other in giving what God lays on our hearts to give.

**Expect faithfully** as this is God's work and God's vision that we are sharing we can trust and expect that God will provide what we need - let's all lean into God's faithfulness and trust that He will provide.

*David Bird*

## **Children and Young People Report 2023 to April 2024**

As Assistant Curate, I have taken responsibility for the oversight of Children's and Young People's Ministry at St Mary's. This year has seen two successful (re)launches of ministry in this area, a stabilisation and reimagining of Sunday provision, and a plan to grow and strengthen this ministry in the future. We also maintain excellent links with all four of the schools in the parish. As always, Safeguarding is a key priority in this ministry to create a safe and protective environment for all.

### **Safeguarding**

Zoe Aylett has become our Parish Safeguarding Officer and we have been working together to ensure that anyone working with children and young people have undergone the necessary checks and training. As we go forward, we need to ensure that each role has a suitable 'Volunteer Role Description' to ensure we are following the 'Safer Recruitment' guidance. This work is ongoing and will be completed before the summer.

### **Sunday Worship (and other festivals)**

It is encouraging to note a fairly regular number of young people (under 18s) in our Sunday worship. This number often exceeds 10% of the congregation. We saw a good number of young people at the Advent, Christmas, and Easter events, particularly when two of the local primary schools sang at the Christmas Lights event in Advent. These events have been a great way to engage young people and families with the work of the church.

### **Sunday Provision**

Due to the current cohort of children and young people that regularly attend St Mary's on a Sunday, it was decided that Sunday Children's church would be split (roughly) between primary and secondary school children. This seems to have worked and reduces the number of volunteers required each week. We have also thought about how to incorporate children into the main body of worship on a regular basis. Each Sunday, the children bring the elements during the Offertory hymn, the first Sunday of the month is All Age Worship, and on the fourth Sunday of the month there is a concerted effort to incorporate youth (secondary school children) into the service.

### **Mid-week Children and Young People Work**

**Toddler Group** – this has been relaunched and runs in term time on Wednesday mornings from 10am to 11.30am. This began in September and the numbers of attendees has grown consistently to a good regular group of at least 5 children, but regularly exceeding 10 children plus accompanying adults. We successfully bid for some funding to purchase some soft play equipment, which has been a great success.

**Youth Group** – we have launched a mid-week youth group that meets once a month on a Wednesday evening. This includes food, games, and the Youth Alpha course. This has only been running for two months, but we have seen growth and a very encouraging amount of interest from all of our youth, and youth that are not regularly associated with church. We hope this area of ministry will continue to grow.

### **Engagement with local schools**

Sam and Eric take assemblies at least once a term in all three of the local primary schools (Sandhills, Bayards Hill and Barton Park). Sam has become a member of the

Local Advisory Board (equivalent to governor) at Endeavour Academy. The choir sang at the Endeavour Academy Christmas event, and Sam attended the Easter event in March. We have excellent relationships with all the head teachers and feel warmly welcomed whenever we visit these schools.

## **Parish Plan**

In early March, Bishop Steven shared this Diocesan Synod initiative with all clergy, churchwardens and PCC Secretaries:

*“That this Synod endorses the need to significantly increase our engagement with children, young people, families and schools, building on Disciples Together and to share the good news of Jesus Christ, and calls on every deanery and benefice in 2024 to develop plans and partnerships for growth.”*

I believe that we already have an extremely firm foundation our ministry with young people in our church and parish. However, we should still look to develop our plans and seek partnerships in how we can grow this ministry. As such, between now and September a plan will be drafted and presented to PCC to build on areas of strength and address areas of weakness in this ministry.

We are actively seeking opportunities to enable Youth Ministry training next year, to engage more deeply and regularly with our schools, to run a half-term holiday club, and continue to grow our midweek groups. We rely on a brilliant but small cohort of volunteers who lead our Sunday Provision, and this is an area where we should look to grow. With all the of the above taken into consideration, we hope that St Mary’s would be an exemplar of Children’s and Young People’s in the deanery, if not the diocese.

*Rev. Sam Durley*  
*Associate Curate, St Mary’s Church*

## **Choir and music**

Christmas preparations started early for the choir in 2023 with our first choir practice held at the end of June. We had a long list of potential carols and songs to choose from so the earlier we started the better. Practices continued throughout the summer and then in October we all became recording artistes! Angela had arranged with her nephew Seb to record each section of the choir in his recording studio. It was a wonderful opportunity and a great experience which everyone enjoyed, but it felt a little surreal to be singing in a garden shed at the bottom of Seb’s garden!

The choir sang at the Advent Carol service, the annual Carols & Candles service and also at the Christingle service. The Christmas carol service was amazing especially when the congregation joined us in singing Handel’s *Hallelujah chorus*. We had some splendid soloists (some of whom had never sung alone in public before) and Lincoln’s rap in *Joyful, Joyful* was truly epic.

Our thanks go to Angela Turton for teaching and leading the choir, and for her amazing ability to get the best out of us. Thanks also to Lincoln Kwong for his amazing piano accompaniment and to Felicity Leeson (saxophone) and Lynn Bossward (flute) and all those musicians who assisted at the Advent and Christmas services.



The choir reconvened in early March to go through a few items to be sung at services for Easter. We sang at the Maundy Thursday service, Good Friday communion and on Easter Sunday. Thanks again to Lincoln and Felicity for accompanying us.

We are all extremely grateful to all those musicians from the congregation and elsewhere who regularly lead our worship on a Sunday morning.

The choir is open to anyone who would like to join. There are no auditions or any requirement to be able to read music. Everyone is welcome.

*Wendy Jones*

## **Churches Together in Headington**

Churches Together in Headington (CTiH) consists of fifteen Churches. After a three-year gap, we had our first meeting in November 2023, followed by a second one in January 2024.

There was a renewed desire to deepen ecumenical relationships despite our differences. This could be achieved through worship and working together on structured events.

The majority of the church representatives were unsure of the previous purpose of the CTiH. Thus a new project was proposed "ECO". This project would unite us, in showing a common Christian witness in our communities as well as a clear way of protecting God's creation.

Here are a few of the projects proposed by some of the CTiH members:

1. A Rocha scheme.
2. Joining a small group of volunteers at Lye Valley, in protecting nature and increasing regeneration.
3. Protecting habitat on our doorstep.
4. Expanding recyclable materials.

The next CTiH meeting will be held on 24<sup>th</sup> April at St. Andrew's Church. We will be required to make decisions on two issues as follows:

1. Do we wish to leave the group? If so, how do we wish to dispense our funds?
2. Secondly, if we wish to remain, would we like a formal structure, as before, with elected officers?

I would like to take back to the group any feedback please.

*Joan Andersohn*

## **Coffee and Craft**

The group continues to meet in the church on Monday mornings (10.30 – 12.30) to enjoy trying new craft activities and chatting over coffee. For most it is an important part of their week for their wellbeing and sense of belonging. One highlight was producing the beach display for the Art Week exhibition in May 2023. A small group enjoyed visiting the Handmade in Britain event in Waterperry Gardens in June 2023.

*Anne Gallacher & Amanda Stephens*

## **Church Magazine**

St Mary's magazine was produced twelve times during 2023. Some issues have been generously sponsored by individuals. During 2023, electronic distribution of the magazine has continued to be the main method, although some printed copies are being distributed and available in church. We continue to provide this service as an extremely important aspect of our outreach to the parish and the local community.

We thank the distributors of printed copies and those who have contributed articles for inclusion in the magazine.

If you would like to receive a regular copy each month or know someone who would like to receive a copy, then please do let us know. If you would like to sponsor an issue for just £15, perhaps to celebrate a special occasion or remember loved ones, then please get in touch with Wendy or Trevor Jones.

*Trevor Jones*  
*Magazine Distribution*

## **Mission giving**

We continued to be dedicated supporters of mission work. In 2023 we raised and allocated funds for the listed organisations as follows:

£5310 for Cambodia Action to support Mark and Jenny Rye  
£1250 for Tear-fund  
£600 for Christian Aid  
£400 for Open doors  
£250 for USPG

*Trevor Jones*

## **Pastoral Team**

The Pastoral Team has been set up at the request of the Vicar, and he has asked me to lead it (in my capacity as a retired clergyman with the Bishop's 'Permission to Officiate'). We consider ourselves an informal sub-committee of the PCC and, as such, operate under their authority and with their approval.

The members were invited by me (with Eric's permission) to join because of their known pastoral interests and gifting. They are Lynn, Ellie, Nancy, Sam, Trevor, Fiona, Anthea and myself. Eric is ex-officio and attended our first meeting to help us set out our parameters.

Our brief is to meet 4-5 times a year to monitor the pastoral needs of the church and wider community. We talk about a range of issues such as: who needs Home Communion, how the midweek ministries are developing, support in funeral visits, safeguarding and confidentiality, prayer ministry during and after services, the Bereavement course and visits to Townsend House and other EPDs.

Our vision to help St Mary's become a community of pastoral excellence that demonstrates the love and grace of Christ himself.

*Will Donaldson*

## **Planned Giving / Stewardship report**

Regular financial giving to the church is extremely important and can be either by standing order (bank transfer) or the weekly envelope scheme. There are twenty-six members giving by monthly standing order and five who use weekly envelopes.

We are grateful to those who give in this way, and if donors are taxpayers, then we can claim a Gift Aid refund on your offering from HMRC. This increases your gift at no extra cost to you. For 2022-2023 we received a tax refund of £10,891 to general funds and £4726 to Building to Serve. This demonstrates the real importance of Gift Aid with your giving.

Additionally, we can claim from the HMRC in respect of cash collections and contactless giving in church (up to a value of £8,000) and this brought a further refund of £1254.

If you would like to join the giving scheme or make a donation by bank transfer, then please contact Trevor Jones.

*Trevor Jones*  
*Stewardship Secretary*

## **Small Groups**

### **Eatwells Small Group**

Eatwells continues to meet in the church on Thursdays from 10.00am to 11.30am, but not in the school holidays. It is led by Joan Andersohn, Bev Field and Eric. We focus on studying the Bible, praying for each other and sharing what our faith means in the storms of life. In the last year Eatwells ran some sessions from the Alpha course and had a larger group during that time, which was brilliant.

In the Autumn, the group led a church service, which took a lot of preparation but was a special time to share about God. We have been studying Mark's gospel since then, and seeing how people around Jesus had a slow but growing realisation of who He is, and how he showed himself through each miracle and times of compassion with everyone he met. Sometimes we sing some worship songs, use pictures to think about the deeper meaning, or we go to the Portuguese cafe for great coffee and cakes. It is a wonderful, warm group and everyone is welcome to come to Eatwells.

*Bev Field*

### **Headington Small Group**

We have had a great year meeting fortnightly for food and friendship. Sitting down and eating together is a big part of what we do and its a bit like a supper club! We have recently focused on biblical characters that are important to us and we always have a prayer time. We continue to support each other throughout the week, its a lovely group.

*Tim Wraith*

### **Sandhills Small Group**

The group meets on alternate Tuesdays (7.30 – 9.00pm) in the Gallachers' home in Sandhills. A meeting usually involves a song or meditation, studying a Bible passage with discussion and prayer, followed by refreshments. Occasionally we meet socially to share food and fellowship. In December we held 'open air carol singing' in Sandhills, which was appreciated by the local residents who joined in.

*Anne Gallacher*

## St Mary's Church, Headington

**Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners held on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 at 12.00 noon.** The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the PCC, Revd Eric Bossward.

Present:

Zac Aylett	Anne Gallacher	William Roberts
Zoe Aylett	Alasdhair Hedges	Amanda Stephens
Val Bermingham	Lorraine Hedges	David Stephens
David Bird	Anthea Jones	Nancy Thuko
Jenny Bird	Neville Jones	Fiona Tracey
Eric Bossward	Trevor Jones	Angela Turton
Phillip Bull	Wendy Jones	Dana Wilson
Hellen Chama	Felicity Leeson	Kate Wooding
Bruce Coppen	Val Malone	Nick Wooding
Modupe Fadero	Mavis Marnell	Juliet Wraith
Bev Field	Eleanor Roberts	Tim Wraith

The meeting opened with a reading from Jeremiah 6:16 and was followed by prayers of forgiveness.

- 1. Apologies for absence were received from:** Florence & Samuel Adekeye, Joan Andersohn, Lynn Bossward, Joan Brady, Kathy Davies. John Gallacher, Elina Screen and Irene Smith.

- 2. To elect two Churchwardens:**

Only one nomination had been received:

Mrs Anne Gallacher – proposed by Jennifer Bird, seconded by Wendy Jones.

There being no other nominations Mrs Anne Gallacher was elected as Churchwarden until the Annual Meeting of Parishioners in 2024.

Eric thanked Anne for her continuing service as churchwarden. He also thanked Mr David Stephens, who was standing down this year, for his 5 years' service as Churchwarden and presented him with a card and gift.

As there was still a vacancy for a churchwarden, Eric asked everyone to prayerfully consider whether they could take on the role.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 12.10 pm.

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**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 starting at 12.10 pm.**

- 1. Apologies for absence**

As for the Annual Meeting of Parishioners.

- 2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the last APCM held on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were agreed as a correct record. Proposed by Nick Wooding, seconded by David Stephens and agreed by all.

**3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**4. Revision of the Electoral Roll**

Wendy Jones reported that the Electoral Roll had been revised in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Eight new names had been added this year and three names had been removed. The total number of names on the Roll was now 73. There are 41 members (56%) living in the parish and 32 members (44%) outside the parish.

**5. Presentation of Annual Report**

Eric commended the annual report and encouraged anyone who had not yet done so to read it. It gives an excellent insight into what goes on at St Mary's and who we are. From his Vicar's report Eric noted that unfortunately the Mentoring Scheme would not be happening in the near future but maybe something we could revisit at a later date. He paid tribute to the Small groups and encouraged people to join one.

With regard to Safeguarding Eric was pleased to announce that Zoe Aylett had agreed to take on some of the work. He told us that a Gift Day will be held in either late June or early July.

Following up on this the Treasurer encouraged everyone to prayerfully consider their giving to St Mary's. Although our cash collections were down over the last year, giving by standing order had increased. Compared to other local churches, who may have relied on income from halls etc. St Mary's seemed to be bucking the trend. We had paid our Parish Share in full and been able to offer a little more to support other parishes.

**6. Appointment of 2 Deanery Synod representatives**

Only one nomination had been received:

Mr Trevor Jones – proposed by Phillip Bull, seconded by Bruce Coppen.

The Deanery Synod term of office is 3 years. Trevor will serve as our Deanery Representative until 2026.

As there is still one vacancy Eric again encouraged us all to consider whether this is a role we would be willing to take on. It is a role that gives insight into the workings of the Deanery and enables us to influence decisions taken at Deanery level.

**7. Election of up to 8 members to the Parochial Church Council**

The following nominations had been received to serve for the coming year:

Mrs Joan Andersohn, Mr Bruce Coppen, Mrs Wendy Jones, Mr David Stephens, Ms Victoria Stubbs and Mrs Kate Wooding.

These 6 nominations were accepted by all and duly elected. Two other nominations had been received from Mr Zachary Aylett and Mrs Bev Field. However, as they had not yet fulfilled the qualifying period on the Electoral Roll (6 months) it was agreed that as they were willing to serve, the PCC would co-opt them to join the PCC in July, when they will have satisfied the time requirement.

Ex-officio members of the PCC are: The Vicar, the Curate, the Churchwarden (Anne Gallacher) and the Deanery Synod Representative (Trevor Jones).

**8. Appointment of Independent examiner**

Mrs Maureen Thomas who had served as our Independent Examiner has indicated that she is unable to do so next year. We therefore need to find another person who can act in this capacity.

**9. AOB**

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm.

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**St Mary's Church, Headington**

**Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners held on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 at**

**10.40.** The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the PCC, Revd Eric Bossward.

Present:

Florence Adekeye	Modupe Fadero	Val Malone
Jordelle Akinola	Anne Gallacher	Mavis Marnell
Joan Andersohn	John Gallacher	Setareh Moghadam
Zac Aylett	Peter Hart	Chama Musonda
Zoe Aylett	Pam Horwood	Jabu Nala-Hartley
Eric Bossward	June Huckin	Mae Purcell
Lynn Bossward	Hilary Johnson	Eleanor Roberts
Joan Brady	Paul Johnson	William Roberts
Phillip Bull	Anthea Jones	Amanda Stephens
Hellen Chama	Neville Jones	David Stephens
Bruce Coppen	Trevor Jones	Torie Stubbs
Ben Croucher	Wendy Jones	Fiona Tracey
Kathy Davies	Benita Kalemera	Angela Turton
Ruth Donaldson	Charlie Kerr	Dana Wilson
Will Donaldson	Viola Kerr	Kate Wooding
Kirsty Durley	Cynthia Kwong	Nick Wooding
Sam Durley	Kenneth Kwong	Tim Wraith
Penny Ebsworth	Felicity Leeson	

The PCC secretary explained that this Special Meeting of Parishioners had been called to elect one further churchwarden as we had only been able to appoint one at our meeting in May.

**1. To elect one Churchwarden:**

Only one nomination had been received:

Mr Tim Wraith – proposed by David Stephens, seconded by Bruce Coppen.

There being no other nominations Mr Tim Wraith was elected as Churchwarden until the Annual Meeting of Parishioners in 2024. His election was welcomed with resounding applause.

The meeting closed at 10.45.