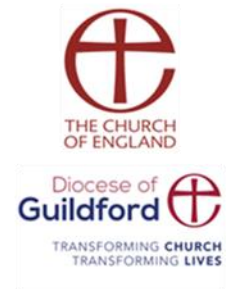


St Mary's Medieval Church, Thorpe



VESTRY MEETING

and reports for the

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 21st April 2024 11:30am

including the

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST. MARY, THORPE

Charity No: 1176929

for the year ending 31 December 2023

St Mary's Vicarage, Church Approach,
Thorpe Village, Surrey TW20 8TQ

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**St Mary's Thorpe VESTRY MEETING and Reports for the
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

Contents

Part 1

- p. 2 What is the Annual Parochial Church Meeting? A brief introduction
- p. 2 Agenda for the Vestry Meeting 21st April 2024
- p. 3 Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 21st April 2024
- p. 3 Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held Sunday 2nd April 2023
- p. 4 Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held Sunday 2nd April 2023
- Reports for 2023
- p. 6 Electoral Roll Report
- p. 6 PCC Secretary's Report
- p. 7 Churchwardens' Annual Report
- p. 9 Fabric and Property Register Report
- p. 10 Financial Report
- p. 11 Safeguarding
- p. 11 Deanery Synod Representatives' Report
- Other Reports in the Life of the Church
- p. 12 Family Service
- p. 13 Noah's Ark
- p. 13 Church Cleaning
- p. 13 Contemplative Prayer Group
- p. 13 Flower Guild
- p. 13 Music Secretary's Report
- p. 14 Social and Fundraising Team
- p. 14 Eco Church
- p. 14 Thorpe Church of England Primary School
- p. 15 Runnymede Foodbank
- P. 15 Tea and Talk

Part 2

- p. 15 PCC Responsibilities, Governance and Vision
- p. 17 Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023
- p. 21 Independent Examiner's Report

Part 3 Appendix Section

- p. 22 Regular Worship and Social Activities at St Mary's

What is the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)? A brief introduction

The APCM is an important meeting for the whole church, an opportunity to elect the people our congregation want to represent them on their Parochial Church Council (PCC). It is an opportunity to ask questions about the finances of the church, the state of the buildings, or about any matter of concern in the life of the parish. The PCC takes account of views expressed at the APCM and matters are taken forward into the subsequent PCC for discussion. Thorpe PCC meets six times a year to conduct the business of the church. Please read these reports thoroughly and come to the meeting with questions, as we meet together as the family of faith in sacramental worship and fellowship – Transforming Church, Transforming Lives. We do this in a Christian spirit of mutual respect and love, as friends and pilgrims. We come prepared to look forward as well as reflect upon the past year. May the Lord of all guide our thoughts, words and actions to his Glory and the building up of the Kingdom in Thorpe.

Agenda for the Vestry Meeting (Meeting of Parishioners)

Sunday 21st April 2024, 11:30am (*following the Eucharist*)

1. The opening of proceedings with Prayers
 2. Apologies for absence
 3. Minutes of 2nd April 2023 and any matters arising
 4. Election of Churchwardens
 5. Nomination for approval of Deputy Wardens (honorary supportive role)
- End of Vestry Meeting

(*At this point those not named on the Church Electoral Roll cannot vote if they remain.*)

Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

Sunday 21st April 2024, 11:30am (*immediately following the Vestry Meeting*)

Apologies for absence

Minutes of the previous APCM held in Church on 2nd April 2023 11:30am.

Matters arising

1. Elections & Appointments

- Annual election of PCC Members
- Election of Deanery Synod Representatives
- Approval of Sides-persons (to assist Wardens with service duties)
- Appointment of Sides-person to assist the Treasurer with banking
- Confirmation of appointment of the Electoral Roll Officer
- *Note that the PCC Secretary, Treasurer and Vice Chair of the PCC will be formally agreed at the next Parochial Church Council meeting (to be held on Monday 22nd May 2024, 7:30pm) as they are Officers of the PCC.*
- Appointment of the Independent Examiner for 2024 Financial Accounts (Mr Paul Whitlock)

2. Reports – see written reports

- (i) Report on Electoral Roll
- (ii) PCC Secretary's Report on the proceedings of the PCC
- (iii) Parish Reports – *printed & distributed*
Summary of reports from the Chair
- (iv) Churchwardens' Report including Fabric/Terrier
- (v) Accounts – Financial Report 2023
Acceptance of Financial Report 2023
- (vi) Deanery Synod Representatives' Report – *printed & distributed*

3. Any other business

- (i) Questions & Answers Session – *questions please at least **24 hours** in advance*
stmaryschurchthorpe@outlook.com
- (ii) Announcements

The meeting concludes in prayer and with the Grace.

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting /Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mary's Church, Thorpe – Sunday 2nd April 2023 in Church.

Vestry Meeting

Present: Allison Kelly (PCC Secretary) – Chair (AK) – Vestry Meeting

Diana Lees (Churchwarden) – Chair (DL) – APCM Meeting

Present in Church:

P. Gruncell, A. West (AW), J. Brittain, H. Brittain, J. deVille, D. deVille, H. Cunningham,
S. Thornton, J. Collinson, J. Bright, J. Brown, G. Brown, J. Gruncell, D. Kidd, M. Herne,
J. Mitchiner, P. Whitlock, M. Roberts, M. Morris, S. Bruce, J. Rook, J. Carter*

*Arrived 11.55 a.m, during Item 2(v).

Absent: All electoral roll members not listed as Present or having submitted apologies

Meeting commenced: 11.40 a.m

1. Diana Lees opened the meeting with prayer.

2. Apologies for Absence:

C. Cobbold, M. Harnden, M. Lilley, J. McCloud, D. Howard, C. Howard, B. Ives, J. Ives,
B. Germany, K. Stangroom.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes for the Vestry Meeting held 10th April 2022 were accepted and no matters were arising.

4. Election of Church Wardens

Peter Gruncell and Diana Lees confirmed their agreement to stand as Church Wardens.
Unanimously elected.

5. Nominations for approval Deputy Wardens

There were eight Deputy Warden nominations from:

Margaret Harnden, Susi Thornton, Helen Cunningham, Bev Germany, Jill Collinson, Deborah Kidd, Margaret Roberts and Kim Stangroom.
All eight candidates were unanimously accepted.

7. Any Other Business

Peter Gruncell took the opportunity to thank Diana Lees for her work as Church Warden to date, and confirmed that he was looking forward to continue working in partnership to ensure smooth running of the church during interregnum and beyond.

Diana thanked Pete and Joan Gruncell for their hard work during the year when Pete continued as sole churchwarden following the sudden death of Barry Huxley. Diana drew attention to a tribute to Barry, written by Helen Cunningham, displayed at the back of the church.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Minutes from the APCM held 10th April 2022 were accepted with no amendments.

Matters Arising

None.

1. Elections and Appointments

DL enquired if there were any additional nominations for PCC, who had not completed application forms.

John Brittain expressed a desire to be included, but only if meetings could be held during the day, rather than evenings. It was decided that as some members of PCC worked it would not be possible currently to move the meeting times to facilitate, but if at a future date this was reviewed, John would be approached to submit application to join PCC at that time.

There were 7 nominations for PCC:

Andy West, Allison Kelly, Margaret Harnden, Jenny Bright, Susi Thornton, Mary Morris and Grace Brown.

All 7 nominations were unanimously confirmed.

- Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

Mary Morris and Clare Cobbold had indicated their wish to continue serving as Deanery Synod Representatives, with a third addition of Diana Lees.

Unanimously approved.

- Approval of Sides-persons

Nominations for Sides Persons were:

Susi Thornton, Deborah Kidd, Joan Gruncell, Margaret Roberts, Jill Collinson, Terry Leighton, Ann Leighton, Philip Alder, Margaret Harnden, Sue Bruce, Jenny Bright, Bev Germany and Helen Cunningham.

Unanimously approved.

- Appointment of Sides Person to Assist the Treasurer with banking

Nomination from Paul Whitlock.

Unanimously approved.

- Confirmation of appointment of the Electoral Roll Officer

Claire Cobbold confirmed that she was happy to continue as Electoral Roll Officer.

Unanimously approved.

- Appointment of the Independent Examiner for 2023 Financial Accounts

Paul Whitlock was unanimously confirmed.

2. Reports

AW pointed out that the Vicar's address on Page 7 of the 2023 booklet was incorrect. Father Damian had stated that £75,000 per annum was the revised cost for a full-time priest. The correct sum is £91,000 per annum, which had been confirmed by the Archdeacon to the Church Wardens at a recent meeting.

(i) Electoral Roll

DL confirmed that there were currently 117 on the roll,

Broken down there are 97 households and 19 households of 2 people.

(ii) PCC Secretary's Report

DL passed her thanks to Allison Kelly for her work as PCC Secretary and also for that undertaken at Noah's Ark.

(iii) Parish Reports

There were no questions raised.

(iv) Church Wardens Report (including Fabric/Terrier)

Church Wardens wished to pass their thanks to Fr Gerard for his continued background support.

AW confirmed he had applied for a Faculty for a new electronic organ, possible after a generous donation. Research had been undertaken between Lionel Pike, David Howard and himself and final decision had been made on an instrument both organists had played. The Faculty is now with the Consistory Court. Once this has been approved the organ can be formally ordered.

The current pipe organ will be maintained and occasionally used. The new organ will be sited in the North Transept. A complete overhaul of the pipe organ would cost thousands of pounds and is unfeasible. The new organ will be reliable. PG confirmed that the bells had become temperamental with the control box somewhat sensitive. The Bell company will be coming later in April to undertake maintenance.

The TASIS students, who are undertaking Duke of Edinburgh have a planned visit for 22.04.23. PG pointed out that the church is responsible for the Vicarage garden until the house is let.

DL wished to further thank TASIS, who are enormously supportive of all we do and for their help with the car park, gardening etc.

DL confirmed that there is also a hardworking group currently undertaking inventory in and around the church. Volunteers will be sought to assist with the final update when this is undertaken.

(v) Accounts – Financial Report 2022

AW confirmed that the income for 2022 was higher than 2021, due to increased standing order donations and Gift Aid, we have risen to the challenge. Funds have also been boosted by social committee events, for which he thanked those who organise and those who continue to support.

AW confirmed that the parish share had been paid in full for 2022 and due to cost cutting most areas of activity had cost less than 2021. The biggest expenditure had been the AV system and supporting works.

A large refund of a duplicated payment had been made to HMRC, which they had made in error and part of the income to TWRA from the Platinum Jubilee had been made which appeared as large items of expenditure. The bank accounts at end 2022 were:

£23,976 Education Fund.

£44,481 Works Account (includes organ donation),

£23,760 Current Account.

Going forward we will face challenges; we are not immune. Utility bills and increasing parish share are imminent.

AW confirmed we are currently in negotiations with the Diocese to find an affordable way forward.

AW confirmed that 'Parish Buying' does reduce utility costs as this is combined purchasing for all churches who join. The gas bill has been received and for the November, December, January period is £4,000, which is the highest gas bill we have ever received. Heating has been reduced in the Rutherwyke Room.

However, AW had established that VAT on the bill is incorrect at 25%, and neither should the climate charge levy be applicable as we are a registered charity. The VAT rate is 5% and he is awaiting a rebate to be received.

AW asked for any questions on the 2022 accounts – there were none.

DL passed thanks on behalf of us all, the church is deeply grateful for all his hard work.

Peter Gruncell proposed acceptance of the Accounts for 2022.

Jill Collinson seconded.

Accounts unanimously accepted.

(vi) Deanery Synod Report

There were no questions raised. Thanks were passed to Clare Cobbold and Mary Morris for their attendance and reports.

4. Any Other Business

No questions had been submitted before meeting.

DL passed thanks to everyone who stands on a committee or team. Please keep going.

Susi Thornton was concerned that very few had undertaken the Eco Report and asked that everyone please undertake as this helps towards the Gold award. The link is on the news-sheet and does contain helpful hints for us all.

Jane Carter wished to point out that although Fr Gerard had written a Liturgy Group Report, they had only met once in 2022 and had decided not to continue meetings as those who had taken part were no longer involved. It was confirmed that PCC will reassess the Liturgy Group and members, and try to re-establish meetings. It was noted that this group are now re-named Services Team.

DL pointed out that the new Parish Share would be significantly increased and several meetings had been held and suggestions made to reduce cost, i.e a house for duty priest, part-time priest etc. There would be a Vacancy Vision Workshop for PCC on 24.04.23, in order all ideas can be put forward. Feedback questionnaires have been distributed and the deadline for return is 16.04.23 in order to amalgamate replies in time for the meeting.

Marion Herne asked if the form could be put on-line to make completion easier. DL confirmed this would be put on the website and MM will place a reminder via the news-sheet.

DL further advised she had been in contact with Keble College, our patron, and is building a relationship with Fr Max Kramer the Chaplain, who is keen to be involved in the selection of a new priest. We are still awaiting response from the Diocese to St. Mary's asking for further involvement of Keble College. The Parish Profile is still to be completed. DL confirmed we had received an invite to visit Keble College and Mary Morris is investigating numbers to see if a small coach would be viable. Margaret Roberts confirmed she had visited Keble College several times.

Susi Thornton confirmed 4 people had met with Ben Spencer our MP to ask him to attend the 'Save the Parishes' meeting.

Marion Herne asked if there had been any additional income from the installation of the AV screen. AW confirmed there had been none but all was fully operational. Marion asked if this was being advertised as available. AW advised that the screens were initially to be used by the school for children's services and they are the most immediate group to benefit. Marion pointed out that the church is a good space with modern equipment and lettings should be encouraged for income. MM confirmed that if any enquiries were made, she would respond immediately, however, we do not currently have the personnel power to support lettings, with opening, closing and attendance. DL confirmed a policy should be raised by PCC to see how this will run as an option, as any lettings must have the correct support. Peter Gruncell confirmed that 200 children and their teachers had attended on Friday 31.01.23 and the screens had been in full use. They will also be in use for the school planned monthly visits. Marion enquired if there was any charge to the school. It was confirmed that there is no charge as they are a Church of England school.

DL advised that there is currently a problem with the internet. Susi Thornton expressed concern as the coronation event is being advertised. DL confirmed she was aware of the deadline and will revert as soon as possible.

John Rook asked what was the likelihood of having a shared priest. DL confirmed that negotiations are currently underway to gain additional support from the Diocese. John asked what were the implications for the Vicarage. DL confirmed this was likely to be rented out for 6 months, she had not received any information to support this being sold.

Jill Collinson wished to point out that the way everyone has come together is amazing and it is wonderful to be a part of this fellowship. She wanted to say what a great job Clare Cobbold, Susi Thornton, Allison Kelly, Joy Mitchiner and Bev Germany do in keeping the family services and children's work going in the current vacancy and thank them for all their hard work, it is so important. DL concurred that we do have a very strong team.

DL closed with the Grace.

Meeting concluded at 12.25pm.

REPORTS FOR 2023

Vicar's Report 2023

No priest in post 2023. See Churchwardens' Report

Electoral Roll Report – January-December 2023

The Annual Revision of the Electoral Roll has taken place as required by the Church Representation Rules. Notices were posted 10 March 2024 for 21 days and the revised Roll displayed for 14 days at Church, as prepared and approved.

The Electoral Roll for St Mary's Thorpe at the end of December 2023 was 114 and of this figure there are 18 households where there are 2 members.

The figure in December 2022 was 117 so there has been an overall slight decrease of three this year, which has included some additions and some members of our church family passing on or moving away.

In the summer 2022 Fr Damian and I did a review of the electoral roll, when some entries were removed. I believe this is why our electoral roll has been quite stable. Given the fact that St Mary's Thorpe is still in an interregnum, I believe the electoral roll figures to be quite positive.

This is my 2nd year serving as an electoral officer. I am grateful for the encouragement I have received during this year.

Electoral Roll Officer, Clare Cobbold

PCC Secretary's Report 2023 on the work of the Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council met six times over 2023 for regular meetings, excluding the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday 2nd April 2023. There were an additional 5 extraordinary meetings, concerned with decisions required for the vacancy.

Following a great deal of work and investigation by Andy West, David Howard and Lionel Pike, PCC approved purchase

of the new electronic organ, funded by a generous donation. Much discussion over the year has been regarding the vacancy, starting with the Parish Profile, the document used to advertise the position of priest for St. Mary's, selection of Parish Representatives to undertake short listing and interviews for any applicants and advertising of the position. Andy West has kept us up to date with income and expenditure over the year and how we will progress with payment of the Parish Share and decisions were made with regard to monthly payments to meet St. Mary's commitment. It has been a busy year and PCC have stepped up to undertake roles not previously required and to caretake for St. Mary's during the vacancy. Diana Lees and Peter Gruncell require heartfelt thanks for all the work they undertake in the background to maintain the mammoth task of necessary administration, the church building and grounds, in order we can continue to worship at St. Mary's.

PCC Secretary, Allison Kelly

Church Wardens' Annual Report 2023

2023 has been a very successful, perhaps even a triumphant year! Yes, we are still in Vacancy and looking for a new Interim Minister, but just look at everything the congregations and Administration Team have achieved in 2023. We're still here providing all our weekly services, holding services for all the major festivals, hosting a wide range of entertainment and social events, and fulfilling responsibilities to the diocese and local community. Well done St Mary's!

In the absence of a vicar, the churchwardens will provide an overview of the church operations during 2023 and its general state as we embark on 2024's voyage.

First of all, we are thoroughly indebted to all of the many priests who have come to take services for us. They have come from far and wide, with cheerful willingness and enthusiasm, and we have enjoyed and appreciated their visits. Thank you to each and every one of you! Because of your support we have been able to maintain our full level of services and festival celebrations with very few exceptions. We are so grateful and all we can say is thank you and God bless you all. There are too many priests to mention each by name but some who have come week after week deserve a special mention. Especial thanks go to Revd Janet Franck, Fr Roland Olliff, and Fr Orion Edgar for their unwavering commitment to St Mary's Church.

And where would we be without Fr Gerard Mee who has shouldered the workload of services, funerals, baptisms and weddings with so much goodwill and cheerfulness? We are deep in your debt Fr Gerard. Thank you so much for everything you have done for us this year. We could not have managed without your support.

At this point we must also recognise the efforts of our Parish Administrator, Mary Morris, who is the lynch pin holding St Mary's together. Without Mary, we would not have had so much support from so many different clergy. It is entirely due to her contacts and persuasiveness that we have been so well looked after. We are also very appreciative of all the hard work Mary puts in to managing the administration behind the scenes, keeping us on the straight and narrow, and ensuring we do all our training courses as required by the diocese. Furthermore, in spite of her increased workload Mary has sustained us all with her irrepressible sense of humour. Thank you, Mary, for everything you do for St Mary's.

Vacancy Update

After significant efforts to obtain feedback from the congregations at St Mary's, the PCC and Standing Committee did sterling work ascertaining the requirements for the new priest, putting together the Parish Profile (our "marketing brochure"), and electing the Parish Representatives to be involved in the interview process. All of which was in addition to their normal duties overseeing church activities, ensuring policies and procedures are in place and dealing with numerous enquiries. Thank you to all members of the PCC and Standing Committee for their unwavering support to Pete and Diana as churchwardens. Your assistance and willingness have been greatly appreciated. Extra thanks to Allison, our PCC Secretary, for keeping us up to date, overseeing our diocesan responsibilities, and making coherent Minutes of our meetings.

The Parish Profile, specifying the priorities for a new priest and the personal qualities we are looking for, was agreed in July and the first round of advertising took place in September. Unfortunately, the candidates were not deemed suitable and a second round took place in December and January 2024. We planned to interview one candidate but the application was withdrawn shortly before the interview date. We are now planning another round of adverts for March 2024 and we ask for your fervent prayers for the right candidate to come forward.

Services

As in many churches, congregation numbers attending services have still not returned to their pre-Covid levels but despite an initial fall following Fr Damian's departure, our numbers have remained stable and as the year neared its close, we saw a slight rise in the week-on-week attendance.

The reflective 8am service is holding its own and is actually growing despite the early hour! The sung 10am Eucharist is starting to grow as well and this is certainly partly due to the efforts of our Musical Director, Jill Collinson, and our organists, David Howard and Lionel Pike, who put so much time and hard work into the services playing the psalms, anthems and hymns enjoyed by all who attend. Thank you, David and Lionel, for your knowledge, expertise and willingness to turn out for services day or night. Further thanks to Jill for the myriad hours spent selecting the music for every service and

preparing the folders for the organists and choir; those tireless efforts which ensure the smooth running of our weekly services and festivals and keep our musical traditions standing strong.

During the year we held a number of festivals and special services including Holy Week and Easter, our Patronal Service which we shared with All Saints Woodham, Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas. Whilst the numbers attending were a little lower than in previous years they were still well attended and enjoyed by all who came. The Contemplative Prayer Group has seen a slight increase in numbers and has installed a Bookcase Library in the Link corridor which is available for everyone to use.

Outreach to Children and Youth

We have sustained our efforts to provide outreach to the youngest members of our church family during 2023. Our family service is doing very well (1st and 3rd Sundays, come and join in!) and has a number of regular attendees. Thank you to Susi, Claire and Margaret for your efforts planning and running the services.

Noah's Ark, our pre-school and toddler play group, is growing steadily and is very popular. The fun, joy and noise are an experience to savour, as are the refreshments. Thank you to Allison and Joy for all the hard work every week during term time.

Sadly, we were unable to keep our Lego Club running but we still have all the Lego and hope to revive it sometime in the not-too-distant future. We would also like to find a way to reach out to the young people in our community but at present the workload on our small team is hindering this. We look forward to being able to do this when we have our new minister.

Online Outreach

In this increasingly digital world, we are endeavouring to interact with the more technologically minded of our supporters and visitors. Thank you to Claire Cobbold for taking on the role of managing our Facebook page which, due to technical difficulties, had to be restarted from scratch in February. The number of those viewing and following the page is growing steadily. Well done, Claire for all the photos and updates posted during the year.

We have been learning how to manage our new audio-visual system. It is a pleasure to report that we are using the drop-down screen and sound system increasingly for school and family services, and particularly at funerals where we can play photo PowerPoint presentations and music of choice for the families involved. One very successful event was the live streaming of the King's Coronation which was well attended and much enhanced by excellent refreshments!

Our website will be reviewed and redesigned in January 2024 as we change our hosting arrangements to achieve significant cost savings over the next three years.

Community Engagement

We have been delighted to host the children from Thorpe Church of England Primary School at a number of services in the church during the year. These are always delightful and the very high standard of presentation by the pupils is a testament to the leadership from headteacher, Helen Southgate, and her teaching team. We look forward to continuing to build on our excellent relationship with the school in 2024 and thank all involved for their support for our church.

We are pleased to have been able to continue our close relationship with TASIS this year and are very grateful for their support. In particular we enjoyed the company of all the students who volunteered to help with sundry gardening tasks, paper shredding, window cleaning and craft activities several times during the year. Thank you to Carolyn Norris for her enthusiasm and co-ordination of the student visits. We would particularly like to thank headteacher, Bryan Nixon, for his support in allowing us access to the South Carpark, leading the students on our churchyard cleanup days and his participation in our church services.

We also thank Pete and Joan who have taken charge of the churchyard, overseeing the TASIS students and working weekends to keep it looking tidy and well cared for. It is vital work but not always pleasant given the wet and windy year we have had.

St Mary's Church is a regular contributor to Thorpe Together using it to promote our services and social events and to engage with the Thorpe community. We would like to thank Margaret for her extraordinary commitment to garnering content and the essential advertising to keep the magazine running.

Administration Activities

Over the course of the year, we carried out a review of all computer data and paperwork files to remove obsolete files and ensure GDPR compliance. Mary and Diana invested a considerable amount of time and effort into restructuring the church computer files which has greatly simplified and sped up the process of finding information held on file. Reorganising the storeroom has freed up some much-needed storage space. Along the way we made some significant cost savings by changing suppliers for a number of services including; broadband and telephone, website hosting, Antivirus software, and Fire Alarm maintenance.

Volunteers

St Mary's Church relies on volunteers to help with all the tasks and services, and this is even more so during a time of vacancy. There are so many individuals and groups involved whom we wish to recognise and thank. Without your efforts

we could not function and we really do appreciate your time and effort turning up day and night, week after week. You are the treasure at the heart of St Mary's Church and we thank each and every one of you for everything you do. In addition to those we have already mentioned we would like to include:

Our Deputy Wardens, servers, readers, and welcomers for managing our services; our coffee and breakfast helpers who provide the welcome to our visiting priests and church family; the Flower Arrangers who provide the glorious and inspiring flowers for our services and festive occasions; the Tea and Talk Team hosting our very popular monthly community get together; Clare, our excellent cleaner who is assisted by Jill and Hannah; Kim who looks after our service linen and Bev who manages our Gift Aid donations ensuring the confidentiality and accuracy of our records.

Finally, we would like to give two special thank you messages:

Firstly, to Susi Thornton and the Social Committee members. Susi inspires and leads our amazing Committee which puts on our outstanding range of events, for both outreach and fundraising purposes. Thank you for your energy, drive, enthusiasm and leadership Susi. Thank you to all the team for your support efforts! You are all astounding! Everyone at St Mary's is very appreciative of the efforts you make and grateful for everything you achieve.

And secondly to Andrew West, our Treasurer, Sacristan and one of the Parish Representatives for the vacancy interview panel. Your knowledge and experience in these roles have been indispensable and we are extremely grateful for everything you have contributed. Some may be surprised to learn that this work has also included cleaning the tower, putting up bunting, decorations and Christmas lights, scaling ladders repeatedly to check out broadband connections and imparting your knowledge of St Mary's and its treasures to the review of the Church Inventory. Thank you so much for your invaluable support and hard work Andy.

As the "newbie" churchwarden at St Mary's in 2023 Diana would like to thank her fellow churchwarden, Pete, for his steadfast support and friendship during the year. Thanks, Pete, for all your efforts attending meetings, engaging in decision-making, maintaining the fabric of the church, looking after the churchyard, supervising our volunteers and welcoming those who use our church for baptisms, funerals and weddings. It has been a real pleasure to work with you and Joan. Together we make an excellent and balanced team, and share the workload.

Pete and Diana would like to thank everyone at St Mary's, and all who have come to the church during the year for the support, assistance and encouragement you have given to us in a challenging year.

Churchwardens: Peter Gruncell & Diana Lees

Fabric and Property Register Report (Formerly Terrier and Inventory) 2023

This year a comprehensive review of the Inventory has been carried out which has resulted in significant updating. Considerable time has been spent recording church plate, metalwork, woodwork, stonework, textiles and books etc with many items being photographed. A large number of items previously not recorded have been added and a few items identified which we were unable to locate. A printed version is held in the Parish Office and a digital version on the church computer.

The Church Log Book has also been updated for the years 2018 to 2023.

Church Bells

At the beginning of the year two bells were found to have worked loose and these were reset and tested along with the other bells. Further visits by Cumbrian Bell Co. have been needed during the year to reset the controls on the electric console. In November it was ascertained that one of the bells was not being struck. Investigation led to a recommendation for a new electromagnetic hammer and relay to be supplied, fitted and tested. This was done in time to ensure that we were able to ring the bells at our Christmas services. This expensive repair was very kindly funded by donations. Thank you to those concerned.

Clock

The clock continues to run well with timely adjustments made by Andrew West. It is serviced annually.

Organ

In January the air blower on the pipe organ was removed due to asbestos content and a replacement box fitted. Pete Gruncell also strengthened the seat to make it easier and safer for the organists.

In August our new Viscount 3 manual Envoy 350 deluxe electronic organ was installed in the North Aisle. This was very generously donated by a family in our congregation and we are extremely grateful. Six speakers were attached to the rear roof beam and face the back wall so that the sound is reflected into the church as though coming from the old organ, and the acoustics are wonderful.

We would like to thank Andrew West for his extensive work as Project Leader researching the instrument, obtaining the Faculty, and overseeing the arrangements for its installation. Special thanks are due for his efforts cleaning the very grubby ground floor of the Tower prior to the installation of several organ speakers. We hope to make the instrument available for practice for organ students and to hold some concerts for the community.

The pipe organ, made by Lewis & Co Ltd, Brixton, will remain in situ and will be maintained and played periodically to keep it in functioning order for the foreseeable future.

Church Break-in

In April an unsuccessful attempt was made to break into the Rutherwyke Room and as we were taking steps to increase the security, a second attempt was made. Access was gained into the church and through the Link to the Rutherwyke Room. The Wallace Room and Choir Vestry were broken into and several cupboard doors and drawers were forced open. Nothing of value was taken, nor any valuable items damaged. The intent seems to have been to find any loose cash so the only monies lost were from votive candle donations and the large loose cash bottle in the church. A replacement fire door was fitted, a door lock replaced and new keys issued where needed. An additional door bolt has been fitted in the Rutherwyke Room. We are trying to maintain a heightened awareness of security.

Health & Safety

All required safety checks for the electrics and appliances, gas, fire alarm system and fire extinguishers have been carried out and certificates received. Several fire extinguishers have been replaced.

The hinges for one of the blue entry doors in the porch worked loose and has been repaired.

The shingle outside the Wallace Room west wall was topped up to bring it level with the stone slabs, and a safety cord has been fitted to secure the stacked tables in the storeroom. Work is in hand to fix the lighting along the path from the vicarage carpark to the Rutherwyke Room.

Churchyard

Pete and Joan Gruncell have worked very hard to keep the churchyard looking tidy and have marshalled the efforts of church volunteers and TASIS students to great effect. The churchyard cleanup day in March was a great success with some 27 bags of garden rubbish being removed and all garden bins being filled. We are extremely grateful to the TASIS volunteers who came in October and worked to clear and weed the Leigh Bennett Enclosure, to remove the ivy from several gravestones and sweep and weed the churchyard.

The Vicarage

During this time of vacancy, the PCC is responsible for the upkeep of the Vicarage. We are carrying out monthly meter readings, and have liaised with the Diocese concerning several electrical and plumbing repairs. The Diocese has confirmed they will remove the moss from the roof and cut the ivy along the front of the property. The property has had two professional cleans done during the year including a full clean of the carpets. A gardener was hired to do a major tidy up of the garden and carpark in June prior to a short-term lease of the building by TASIS. Further work on the carpark was done in the summer by our wonderful church volunteers. Thank you.

Churchwardens: Peter Gruncell & Diana Lees

Financial Report 2023

PCC accounts can be found at pages 17-20.

Receipts

Regular Giving

Income from regular giving saw a considerable decrease throughout the 2023. Planned giving decreased by £3,197 from the previous year (minus 10.5%), Gift Aided donations dropped by just over £4,000 (-33%) and non-Gift Aid donations by £2,172 (-17.3%) in real terms (taking into account the organ donations in 2022 and 2023). When this is taken into consideration Regular Giving for 2023 was £45,867 compared with £55,256 in 2022, a drop of £9,389 compared to last year (-17%).

Other Voluntary Receipts

Income from general donations in 2023 i.e. *In Memoriam*, Charities and wall-boxes/candle etc dropped by £2,372 compared to the previous year (-93.9%).

Fund-generating activities

Receipts from fund-raising events in 2023 were £7,277. Compared with 2022 this was a reduction of £12,494 (-63%) but it is worth remembering that the Platinum Jubilee was held that year and accounted for an additional £9,110 so the year-on-year comparison is not exactly like-for-like. Receipts from hire were down by 33% at £2,010. Total income from this category was £9,287, a drop of £13,496 (-59%) on the previous year.

Income from Church activities

Income from fees (Banns, weddings & funerals) was £8,600 which was £2,914 less than last year. Of this, Wedding income was £2,318 and Funeral fees £6,200. Overall income was down by £3,425 (-24%) compared to 2022.

Receipts from Investments & Other Income

The dividend from our CBF shares rose very slightly by 0.6% year on year providing an annual return of £508 compared to £505 in 2022. Inter-account transfers (shown as income from the Works a/c) were to pay suppliers for the new organ and for a replacement blower case for the pipe organ. The Tax reclaim (Gift Aid) from HMRC for 2022 (received in 2023) was £12,795.

Total receipts for 2023 were £134,100 compared to £202,340 in 2022.

Payments

Church Activities

The Parish Share for 2023 was £63,007 of which £53,000 was paid in-year (£225 being outstanding from 2022). The outstanding £10k for 2023 will be paid to the Diocese when our Gift Aid claim has been received. Parish running costs such as travel, telephone and related expenses were £137 more than 2022 whilst fees for organists and supplies for services were lower than 2022 by £1,580 and £1,555 respectively. Overall, the cost of church activities fell by 12.8% equivalent to £8,390 compared to the previous year.

Maintenance

Maintenance costs were slightly lower (£651) than last year. As well as weekly cleaning, the main areas of expenditure were the regular servicing contracts for the fire and alarm systems. The renewal of the organ blower case also fell into this category although it was funded from the Works deposit a/c.

Church Running Expenses

The cost of insurance rose by £255 (9.6%) compared with last year and Utility costs by 29% (£1,512). A large Gas bill for £4,000 covering Dec 2022, Jan & Feb 2023 partly accounted for the increase in costs on the previous year, as well as prices rises. However, since being rated for zero VAT and CCL and by keeping a close eye on building temperatures and timings throughout the year it is expected that utility costs will be fairly static during 2024.

Administration

Costs across administration, computer and office supplies were £622 (6%) higher than 2022. Office operating supplies such as photocopier charges, paper, phone line and annual subscriptions are also included here. As part of our continued cost-reduction efforts the telephone, website and internet providers have been changed to ones that will be more cost-effective and offer better value for money in future.

Other Costs

Total expenditure in this sector fell by £13,177 (-21%) compared to last year. However, when comparing year to year it must be noted that a) Parish Fees were not payable in 2023 due to the vacancy, b) fundraising costs in 2022 were much higher due to the Platinum Jubilee, c) there was no tax overpayment/repayment in 2023. Fixed asset costs in 2022 were for the AV System and the Organ in 2023. Vicarage costs were for utilities (Gas/Elec) with the exception of £600 for electrical work undertaken in December 2022 but not billed until Jan 2023.

Fund Transfers

A total of £10,000 which was received for the new organ was transferred from the Current account to the Works deposit account in 2023. As usual all donations specifically identified as project specific were recorded as income when received into the Current account (see Other Voluntary Receipts and Receipts from Fund-generating Activities) and then as expenditure upon transfer to the Works Account (Deposit). These transfers impact both Income and Expenditure totals and so should be taken into consideration for any comparison of the two.

Total payments in 2023 were £145,561 compared to £201,741 in 2022.

Like so many other churches nation-wide St. Mary's continues to face difficult circumstances as a result of falling attendance and economic circumstances resulting in a sharp decrease in income from regular giving and other income streams, which has been exacerbated by the current interregnum. Nevertheless, the outstanding generosity, hard work and resilience of our faithful parishioners, the PCC and the church's leadership must be recognised as we work and pray for a new priest to lead us into the future.

Treasurer, Andy West

Safeguarding Officer's Report 2023

During a parish vacancy, any personal safeguarding issues would first be dealt with by the Archdeacon. I am pleased to confirm that no safeguarding incidents have been reported during the vacancy year 2023-2024.

The Wardens and Safeguarding Officer now confirm that the requisite safeguarding records have been completed for the year 2023-2024 and the Diocesan 'Parish Dashboard' is up to date for St Mary's Church.

All DBS and Safeguarding records are stored securely and confidentiality is maintained at all times.

Parish Safeguarding Officer, Mary Morris

Deanery Synod Representatives' Report 2023

Three Deanery Synod meetings were held in 2023 at Holy Trinity Lyne & Longcross (Spring), Christ Church Ottershaw (Summer) and St John Egham (Autumn). Each meeting had a "Parish Focus" on the church life and community involvement of the hosting parish followed by prayer requests for that church, and updates from the previous Synod meeting.

All three meetings were open to the public and detailed Minutes are available via the Deanery Administrator at runnymededeanery@gmail.com and on the Deanery website.

The spring meeting included an interesting discussion on the rising charges imposed by some banks prompted by the HSBC decision to charge £5 month to manage accounts. Some churches are changing to the Co-op and NatWest banks. Clem Jones gave an update on the 2030 Road Map for Eco Church during which it was highlighted that St Mary's Church had achieved its Silver Award.

At the beginning of the June meeting the attendees toured the churchyard at Christ Church which is managed in line with Eco Church principles then Emma Coy (Mission Enabler Guildford Diocese) gave a very informative presentation on "Families in the 2020s". This was followed by a very enthusiastic discussion exploring the reasons why it is proving difficult post-Covid to attract and involve families with children in churches, not just in Runnymede but across the country.

The conclusions can be summed up as:

ASK – LISTEN – RESHAPE

Ask what families want, listen to the answers, try to meet the need where and when it is needed.

This will mean greater flexibility of day and/or time, and perhaps different locations to what was previously offered.

October Synod examined the challenge of "Deanery – What's the Point?" and began with an overview of its purpose which is to:

- Listen to, understand and meet through common action the needs of member parishes
- Help parishes fulfil their local mission as part of God's work worldwide
- Be a network for the sharing of resources and expertise in different areas of ministry
- Be a channel of communication and representation with the Diocese, other churches, Runnymede Council and our whole borough/deanery community

The representatives joined several small groups to discuss priorities for development and exchange ideas. It was hoped some of these topics could be taken forward in 2024 including Youth and Children, Outreach, Discipleship and Schools. Funding options were mentioned including the Deanery Fund which provides seed grants to support new initiatives, and the Runnymede and Surrey Council which does make funds available to help church community initiatives.

Deanery Leadership Team (DLT)

The Team, consisting of the Area Dean, Lay Chair and incumbents of the parishes met twice in 2023 to discuss deanery structure and events, vacancy support and partnership opportunities, the Deanery Mission Plan and Deanery Growth Fund, networking and general deanery business. Churchwardens, Pete Gruncell and Diana Lees, attended the October meeting, held at St Mary's Church, in lieu of an incumbent.

Kebbi Link

Bishop Andrew of Guildford was once again invited by Archbishop Henry of Nigeria to speak at a plenary session of the Nigerian National Conference in November 2023, upholding the longstanding link with our diocese. Nigeria is the largest member of the Anglican Communion with over 20 million people.

Finance

Runnymede Deanery accounts continue to be sound and Parish Contributions were confirmed to remain at the same level as in recent years (individual parish amounts are determined by three-year rolling average of Sunday attendance, combined with Relative Prosperity Index), plus an invitation for 30% additional donations towards the Deanery Growth Fund. A £250 Deanery Growth Fund grant was awarded to Egham Hythe in support of their new Godly Play activity.

*St Mary's Representatives on Runnymede Deanery Synod
Clare Cobbold, Mary Morris & Diana Lees*

OTHER REPORTS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Family Service Report 2023

Clare, Margaret and Susi rotate to lead our Family Services. Currently approximately 6 family groups attend, but unfortunately, they rarely attend at the same time. Diana has created a very useful Service card which is always used, and a creative activity is undertaken, relating to the Gospel reading. Thanks go to Lionel and David for playing at each service. Some of our wonderful adult regulars attend and fully participate in the fun of the service. Birthday cards have recently been introduced to mark the children's birthdays, which appear to be much appreciated.

Susi Thornton

Noah's Ark Report 2023

Noah's Ark, the toddler group, continues with lively meetings every Thursday from 9am to 11.30am. Children have a range of toys and activities they can undertake and we finish with a singing session and bubbles. Having lost a large number of older children to school in September, we have a generally younger age group of around 2 years currently. Average attendance is approximately 16 children with their parents/carers each week. The group is noisy and active and much loved by those who attend. We have several 'Mums' who are now bringing their 3rd child every week and we love to see them growing up within the group.

Joy Mitchiner and Allison Kelly

Church Cleaning Report 2023

The regular cleaning is undertaken weekly by Clare which includes hoovering and dusting all the rooms and general cleaning in the kitchen etc. She also washes the Church floor and does general dusting. Jill and Hannah meet monthly to supplement this where required.

A small group of the congregation continue to contribute £30 on an ad hoc basis to the cleaning of the church and if anyone is able to contribute at any time, please put the contribution in a Gift Aid envelope marked CLEANING.

A Team from Tasis cleaned windows and various other areas on a recent visit and are happy to do so again.

Many thanks to all who have assisted in the upkeep of our church.

Jill Collinson

Contemplative Prayer Group Report 2023

We continue learning to still our thoughts and listen to the silence in which the presence of God can move among us and within us.

It is a precious and beautiful time which we share each week on a Monday or Tuesday afternoon in Susi's welcoming home. After the silence we move to a time of intercession for the World, the parish and for individuals in need, or who we wish to name.

If you feel that God is prompting you to join us, we would be delighted to welcome you. The group was founded by Fr. Peter Amor, when he was Vicar of Thorpe and has continued in various forms ever since.

Do speak to Susi, Margaret or Jane if you would like to know more. We usually end with tea, cake and conversation.

For further information contact the Parish Office.

Jane Carter, Margaret Harnden, Marie Jedla, Susi Thornton

Flower Guild Report 2023

Our small band of three regular flower arrangers at St Mary's, Elaine, Helen and myself, were joined this year by Grace who has been a great asset to the team. Jane and Margaret continue to join us when in the area and Jenni very kindly produced the beautiful posies given to mothers and carers on Mothering Sunday. Thank you so much Jenni – they were beautiful!

We love decorating the church for special festivals – Christmas, Easter, the Patronal Festival etc and have over the past year also provided flower arrangements for weddings and funerals when requested.

For some festivals we encourage all church members, and others in the community, to 'have a go' at producing a simple arrangement and in the past that has resulted in more people joining the Guild so if you would like to do that, do speak to one of us. We are here to help!

As I write this, we are in the season of Lent when traditionally St Mary's doesn't have flowers in church but soon, we will be decorating the church with white Easter lilies and other flowers to welcome the dawn of Easter Sunday, celebrating the Risen Christ. It is a privilege and a joy to beautify this wonderful church through the seasons so if you love flowers – come and join us!

Margaret Harnden

Liturgy Group Report 2023

Not meeting during interregnum.

Music Secretary's Report 2023

Music, as usual, has played a large part in the services held at St Mary's and we are grateful to all those who have made it possible including Mary Morris who has managed to recruit priests for all our regular services. Thanks also go to Susi Thornton and Andy West in preparing the church for every service and to Andy West, Lionel Pike and Jane Carter who have assisted me in setting the services. We are fortunate to have two superb organists, David Howard and Lionel Pike, to lead us and thank them for their dedication and beautiful music. The new organ has been gratefully received and beautifully played at all services.

Thank you too to our choir who give up their time to rehearse and sing at many regular services, festivals and four weddings, two baptisms and two funerals. We also thank members of Hythe Singers for joining us at major services including Mayor Margaret Harnden's Thanksgiving Service.

We were asked to sing at four funerals at St Paul's Church in Addlestone, and All Saints Woodham joined us for our Patronal Service and we reciprocated. We were sad to lose choir member Linda Williams and sang at her funeral.

Our family services held on the first and third Sunday of the month at 11.30, led by Susi Thornton, Margaret Harnden and Claire Cobbold, have been enhanced by our organists and energetic singing.

It is a pleasure to sing at St Mary's and if you would like to learn more about our choir please contact me.

Music Secretary, Jill Collinson

Social and Fundraising Team Report 2023

We continue with a strong social and fundraising committee and have been joined by our Churchwarden, Diana. We continue to host Tea and Talk on a monthly basis, which has been very successful with some very interesting guest speakers.

In March we held our annual quiz which is a good fundraiser (£900 net).

In May we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles. This involved viewing the actual coronation on the big screen and the Committee provided a sumptuous royal lunch. A large cake was the centrepiece and a coronation quiche, coronation chicken, gammon and salmon were our main course. It was a thoroughly successful and enjoyable experience and we were delighted to welcome our German visitors. We even made a small profit!

On Sunday 9th July we held our usual fayre in the Church Grounds which was quite well attended and we made a profit of around £1,000.

Our next event was the Patronal Festival held in September when we provided lunch for 40 people including a good contingent from Woodham. It was a lovely day and we all sat outside enjoying the sunshine and savouring the delicious lunch.

In October, to celebrate the harvest, we held a barn dance in the Church – the chairs were moved back to provide the space and Karen was the caller. We provided a two-course supper and those who came gave us good feedback. However, the numbers were disappointing.

There were several events over the Christmas period. The Egham Band concert was very successful and we did well on the catering, selling out of mulled wine. The licence carried through to the Lessons and Carols but we had disappointing numbers and very few came back after the service for refreshments. We also catered for the crib service and it was so nice to see the young families all gathered together.

This year we hosted a Mardi Gras celebration and provided a two-course meal including pancakes. David and Naomi played foot tapping piano duets and Susi organised some fun and games afterwards. A small profit was made.

We are looking forward to our next Quiz and a Blues evening in April and continue to look for more fundraising opportunities.

Jenny Bright

Eco Church 2023

We have not had any formal meetings and I would recommend that we disband this Group for the time being.

Unofficially we look after the Church Environment with our boxes (thanks to Pete), and Tea and Talk has had a number of talks covering animals and their preservation and care: Recent talks have been undertaken by The Harper Asprey Sanctuary and Zoological Society caring for Endangered Species. Both talks were enthusiastically received and attendees have expressed their further interest.

Susi Thornton

Thorpe Church of England Primary School Report 2023

We are very grateful for the close partnership with St Mary's PCC through the Church wardens. Our partnership has been further strengthened having Andy West and Diana Lees joining our governing body.

Our school has joined a new partnership with the Runnymede Learning Partnership. The schools in this partnership are St Ann's Heath Junior School, Trumps Green Infant School, The Hythe, Manorcroft, Thorpe Lea Primary School and us. We are also working with Lyne and Longcross to enhance our Christian Distinctiveness provision for our Worship Committee. We are working with the wider school community in North West Surrey.

We are committed to safeguarding children's welfare and all checks on regular helpers are carried out. Our Single Central List is checked by our Safeguarding Governor, Mr Bryan Nixon, every term. We have undertaken a Safeguarding Audit by the Diocese. Headteacher trains governors and every member of staff on an annual basis and visitors who volunteer also have training before they work with children.

FOTSA has raised a lot of money - they work hard, often with other job roles, for the benefit of all the children in the school. Recent purchases have been a bank of laptops and a trolley, BeeBots for IT work, new gym equipment and £250 per class to spend on enrichment activities. We are very grateful to all our parents who work so hard for our children.

We have a very successful Breakfast Club - Earlybirds, starting at 7.30am. After School Club – Owl Club (from 3pm to 5.30pm). We also have a variety of other clubs; dance, coding, football, cookery, art and dodgeball. Again, we would love Faith n Fun to return to Thorpe when St Mary's has capacity, especially for our infant children.

Opal Play continues to support children with their play but this needs regular replenishment with donations of various items such as sand, dressing up clothes, construction items.

We are very pleased with the admissions to our school for 2024 and although we have seen quite a bit of movement to and from school; children have joined our school and settled well. Infant classes are full and we have 8 spaces across the Junior classes.

If you have any questions, or would like to come for a visit, please do not hesitate to contact me. 01932 562329 or head@thorpe.surrey.sch.uk



Mrs Helen Southgate, Head teacher Faith, Love and Excellence

God's Kingdom in our School
Faith – Love – Excellence

Runnymede Foodbank 2023

Sadly, the Foodbank is still a vital resource in our area and St Mary's continues to give generously to this cause. A monthly list of "needs" is received from the Foodbank and displayed within the Church and Rutherwyke Room. Donations delivered to the Foodbank during the last year, weighing 342.55kg, were delivered from St Mary's.

The following was received:

"That is a fantastic total and we thank you for all of your effort and kind donations.

This is enough food (by weight) for approximately 200 meals for our clients.

Thank you very much." *Steve Foodbank Runnymede*

In addition, financial contributions are often made and I know many of you make a direct debit to the Foodbank which enables them to purchase specific needs.

Many thanks to you all.

Jill Collinson

Tea and Talk 2023

This is a very worthwhile monthly activity. The mission of the group is to bring people together, hearing from some very interesting speakers, whilst gaining some financial support.

The speakers enjoy the friendliness of the people that attend and everyone enjoys the wonderful cakes Allison provides.

Numbers are increasing month on month. The topic to be covered by the speaker each month is advertised on the weekly news sheet and those already attending receive regular email updates on events

Susi Thornton

Part 2

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary's, Thorpe – Charity No: 5116755

Annual Report & Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

St Mary's Church, Thorpe entered a period of vacancy on January 15th 2023, and is seeking to appoint an Interim Priest in Charge as soon as possible.

The Parochial Church Council and Responsibilities

St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with and assisting the Vicar in promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission to which Christ Jesus calls his Church; worship, pastoral care, evangelistic outreach, fellowship as well as engaging fully within our local Deanery of Runnymede. Our PCC has responsibility for the fabric of St Mary's Historic Medieval Church, the Rutherwyke Room with Wallace Room (Parish Office) and closed churchyard surrounding the church buildings (including the Leigh Bennett Enclosure, and the southern end of Church Approach including the lych-gate, flowerbed and entrance to the Vicarage in Church Approach). By agreement St Mary's PCC maintains the Vicarage front garden for use as a church car park. This land remains the property of the Diocesan Parsonage Board and the agreement allows for car parking on the red gravel area only (approximately 13 spaces). The asphalt part of the driveway must always be kept clear for emergency vehicles and access to the Vicarage.

Governance

Churchwardens are elected at the Vestry Meeting (meeting of parishioners) and serve for a period of no longer than six years. They are then disqualified from being churchwardens for the next two years, after which they are free to stand for another term of six years. In 2008 the APCM voted to allow an extension of up to two years' service before disqualification under the rules. Members of the PCC are either elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) or ex officio in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Up to 2018 elected members have served on a three-year term for up

to two terms, before being disqualified for a year, as agreed by a previous APCM. This was reviewed at our 2018 APCM and a motion carried for a change to block elections for the PCC annually.

From 2019 APCM all those intending to stand for the PCC need to complete an application form and be proposed and seconded in the customary way. If there are more proposed people than places an election will be held. Additional members may be co-opted at the PCC's discretion for a specific purpose, up to two at any one time. Membership and Governance is managed under the provisions of the Church Representation Rules, details of which may be found on the Church of England website. <https://www.churchofengland.org/>

Parish Share Calculation

See Financial Report for 2023 for details.

The Parish Share calculation is made up of two component parts:

- 'Ministry Costs' which include stipends, pension liabilities (including historical pension costs), housing, training (including curates) and the cost of maintaining vicarages, etc.
- 'Shared Costs' which include money for mission and the National Church, church schools, diocesan costs and much more besides.

Church Attendance

Congregation numbers attending services have still not returned to their pre-Covid levels which is the case with many churches across the country. There was a drop in numbers attending when Fr Damian left in January, but our numbers have stabilised during the year and we saw a slight rise in the week-on-week attendance as we approached year end.

GDPR & Privacy Notice

Your privacy is especially important to Thorpe PCC and we are committed to keeping your information and data secure and safe. Visit our website to read our Privacy Notice: <https://www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk/>

Church Development Plan (CDP) for Thorpe

Approved at our November PCC 2022

As we look to the future, we always hold in mind that:

"Unless The Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain." *Psalms 127:1*

We turn to the Trinity of love in faith for inspiration. All our discussions are rooted in prayer and trust in the God from whom all good things come in the first place. (See 1 Chronicles 29:14)

During this period of vacancy, it has been agreed by the PCC to postpone some of the work towards these priorities until the appointment of a minister to lead our efforts.

Vision Priorities:

- i. Work to ensure the musical tradition of the church is maintained with a working organ.
- ii. Secure a children and families worker part time to lead Lego Club and re-introduce Faith & Fun activities on a Sunday morning and after school club at Thorpe Primary.
- iii. Establish new WhatsApp groups and a bible study group. (End use of the Workplace communication platform before charging begins).
- iv. Develop discipleship and personal evangelism with continued courses.
- v. Migrate financial management over to the Planned Giving Scheme.
- vi. Eco-Church - strive for the Gold Award.

Gift Aid

As a charity this is especially important in meeting the costs of ministry and the maintenance of our historic medieval church here in Thorpe. We ask every member of the church family who can do so, to complete and sign an annual Gift Aid declaration. Thank you for your help and support.

St Mary's Church, Thorpe
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

General Receipts & Payments

Receipts

	2023 £	2022 £
<i>Regular Giving</i>		
Planned giving	27,277	30,474
Collections and other giving (non gift aid)	20,404	52,576
Collections and other giving (gift aid)	8,186	12,206
	55,867	95,256
<i>Other Voluntary Receipts</i>		
Donations/ <i>In Memorium</i>	-	2,095
Charities	-	199
Wall boxes & Candles	154	231
	154	2,525
<i>Receipts from Fund-generating Activities</i>		
Fund-raising Events & Activities	7,277	19,771
Hire of Church and Rutherwyke Room	2,010	3,012
	9,287	22,783
<i>Receipts from Church Activities</i>		
Fees (Banns, Weddings, Funerals)	8,600	11,513
Refreshments	879	1,131
Noah's Ark	830	739
Flowers	305	224
Books	-	-
Sundry (Stall, Cards, Gifts etc.)	17	448
	10,630	14,055
<i>Receipts from Investments</i>		
CBF Dividends	508	505
	508	505

Other Income

Works Account (inter a/c transfers)	44,869	24,723
Education Account (inter a/c transfers)	-	12,679
Tax reclaims (2022 Gift Aid)	12,795	29,816
Receipts from insurance	-	-
	57,664	67,218

Total Receipts

134,110	202,340
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Payments

2023
£

2022
£

Church Activities

Diocesan Parish Share	53,225	58,617
Parish Costs (Expenses, Travel, Telephone)	1,122	985
Organists	1,740	3,320
Cost of services	982	2,537
	57,069	65,459

Maintenance

Facilities maint. Cleaning, Fees etc	8,087	8,738
	8,087	8,738

Church running expenses

Insurance	2,927	2,672
Gas, Electricity, Water	6,675	5,163
	9,602	7,925

Administration

Admin, computer & office supplies	10,800	10,129
Bank charges	-	10
Postage	31	69
	10,831	10,209

Other Costs

Vicarage (Interregnum) utilities/repairs etc.	1,368	-
Books	-	10
Music & Subscriptions	46	91
Children's Resources	-	264
Charities	-	208
Parish Fees to Diocese	427	3,682
Events & Fund-raising costs	2,158	8,251
Refreshments	1,033	903
Marketing	1,633	1,655
Flowers	358	399
Tax repayment	-	11,394
Sundry payments (training, misc)	-	192
Fixed assets	42,950	36,100
	49,972	63,149

Fund Transfers

Transfer to Works Acc	10,000	43,938
Transfer to Education Acc	-	2,324
	10,000	46,262
Total Payments	145,561	201,741

Balance (Income less Expenditure)	(11,451)	599
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		2023	2022
Statement of Assets and Liabilities			
		£	£
Cash Funds			
at 29 Dec 2023	Bank: Current Account	1 12,309	23,760
	Bank: Business Reserve Account: Education	2 24,204	23,976
	Bank: Business Saver: Works	3 9,899	44,481
Investment Assets			
	CBF: Thorpe St. Mary PCC - value of shares <i>821.99 shares £22.6053 each on 31/12/23</i>	4 18,581	16,983
		64,994	109,201
Other Monetary Assets			
	Estimated refund for 2023 GA donations	5 10,245	12,985
		10,245	12,985
Breakdown of Cash Funds			
	Unrestricted (1+4+5)	41,135	53,729
	Restricted (2+3)	<u>34,103</u>	<u>68,457</u>
		<u>75,239</u>	<u>112,186</u>

Approved by the PCC on Monday 18th March 2024
and signed on their behalf by:



Mr. Andrew West
Treasurer



Diana Lees
Churchwarden



Allison Kelly
PCC Secretary





CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report
on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

THORPE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

On accounts for the year
ended

2023

Charity
no.

1176929

Set out on pages

1 & 2

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year end 31/12/2023.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

Independent
examiner's statement

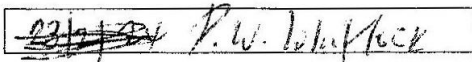
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect,:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:



Date:

23/2/2024

Name:

PAUL WHITLOCK

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Address:

47 ASHLEIGH AVENUE
EGGTON
SOMLEY TR 20 8LP

Sunday Worship at St Mary's

8am Said Eucharist

10am Sung Parish Eucharist

1st & 3rd Sunday monthly **11:30am Family Service**

2nd Sunday monthly **11am Healing Ministry**

Weekdays

11am Wednesday Said Eucharist

Check our newsletter for details of baptisms and other services

Tea and Talk

2nd Monday of the month

2pm for 2.15pm start

Guest speaker, delicious refreshments and friendly company

Noah's Ark

Thursdays during term time 9am to 11.30am

Our play group for babies, toddlers and pre-school children

with parents, grandparents and carers attending'

Includes fun action songs, a story, play time and refreshments!

(Please park cars at the Vicarage).

