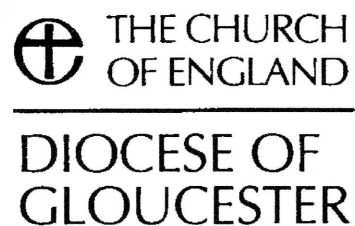


The Parochial Church Council of
St Mary, Woodchester



Annual Report and Accounts

Year ended 31 December 2023



Trustees Report

Administrative Information

St Mary's Church is situated in Woodchester. It is part of the Diocese of Gloucester within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Revd Peter Francis, *The Rectory, Walkley Hill, Rodborough GL5 3TX*.

The website address is www.stmaryswoodchester.org.uk

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2023 until the date this report was approved are:

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Post</i>
<i>Incumbent</i>	Revd Peter Francis, Rector	Ex-officio
<i>Curate</i>	Revd Sarah Haslam	Ex-officio (until June 2023)
<i>Readers</i>	Mr Richard Spencer	Ex-officio
<i>Churchwardens</i>	Dr David Pouncey Mr Nicholas Ardagh-Walter	Ex-officio Ex-officio
<i>Secretary</i>	Mrs Elizabeth Macdougall	Elected
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mr Andrew Pemberton	Ex-officio
<i>Deanery Synod</i>	Mr Andrew Pemberton Mrs Jenny Bernard	Ex-officio Ex-officio (from May 2023)
<i>Elected Members</i>	Mrs Elizabeth Macdougall Mr David Hood Mrs Susan Pouncey Mrs Gail Birch Mrs Liz Hale Mrs Liz Cole Mrs Helen Jackson Miss Alyson Rogers (+1 vacancy)	3 rd year, 2 nd term 1 st year, 2 nd term 1 st year, 2 nd term 2 nd year, 1 st term 2 nd year, 2 nd term 2 nd year, 1 st term 1 st year, 1 st term 1 st year, 1 st term

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Objectives and Activities

St Mary's, Woodchester PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, Revd Peter Francis, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the St Mary's Church and associated property.

Achievements and Performance

Church attendance

There are 79 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, which was revised in preparation for the 2023 Annual Parochial Church Meeting. The average weekly attendance was 50 compared with 47 in 2022, but this number increased significantly on special occasions such as Christmas and Remembrance Sunday. On Christmas Eve there were 70 adults and 90 children at the Crib Service and 200 people at the Carol Service.

Review of the Year 2023

The PCC met six times during the year. Business was also conducted between meetings via email correspondence. Safeguarding was an agenda item at every meeting and all PCC members have undergone safeguarding training at the appropriate level for their involvement. A procedure has been put in place to be followed in the event of a concern being raised. The PCC has appointed two parish safeguarding officers.

2023 was a busy year in which we sadly lost a number of the older members of our congregation. In June we said goodbye to our curate Revd Sarah Haslam who moved on to minister in The Beacon Benefice.

Worship and Prayer

The pattern of Sunday services this year was Morning Worship on the first and second Sundays of the month, an all-age service on the third Sunday, Holy Communion on the fourth Sunday and a benefice service on any fifth Sunday. The monthly Wild Worship service for families held outside on a Sunday afternoon continued for part of the year but as attendance was variable it was replaced with an occasional outdoor all-age worship service on a Sunday morning, retaining the ideals of Wild Worship. Some special services were held aside of the main festivals including an evening service for All Souls with hymns chosen by the congregation in memory of their loved ones, a service to commemorate the Coronation of Charles III and an all-age pet service. In March St Mary's hosted the service for the World Day of Prayer prepared by women from Taiwan. There were sermon series throughout the year e.g. 'These are the days of Elijah' and 'Who is Jesus?'.

During the week small groups met in the parish for study and prayer: the Monday Mums, a Wednesday prayer group and a Thursday evening Bible study on ZOOM.

Increasingly services and small groups are benefice-wide: Monday Morning prayer on ZOOM, a Tuesday evening Bible study on ZOOM and the fortnightly lunch-time 'Soul Food'. A new benefice Service of Celtic Worship on a Wednesday morning at Rodborough was started this year. People were encouraged in personal prayer by a Lent Course on the practical technique of Lectio Divina and through taking part in the 'Thy Kingdom Come, Pray for Five' initiative. There is a confidential email prayer chain to enable prayer for those in need.

Welcome and Community Engagement

As well as welcoming people to services, St Mary's is keen that the building should be a centre for the community. It provides a quiet haven for prayer and contemplation in the centre of the village, and the church has been open every day of the year for this purpose. Prayer materials are available and there is a tree for hanging written prayer requests. The Church of course has been there for baptisms, weddings and funerals. There have been 5 baptisms, 1 wedding and 12 funerals during the year.

The building has been available for use by community groups including the Woodchester Historical Society, the Parish Council and the Five Valleys Voices Choir. This choir staged their summer concert in the church in June, as did the Capriol Chamber Orchestra. The school has used it for assemblies and their leavers' service.

Groups run by the Church for the wider community have continued to thrive. Lunch-with-Friends meets monthly and is a gathering for older and more isolated members of the community to enjoy good conversation, company, and a home-cooked meal. This is attended by 45-50 guests, so together with helpers about 60 meals are served. This year's highlight was a very British afternoon tea to celebrate the coronation of the King, who attended in the form of a life-sized cardboard cutout, for photo opportunities!

Messy Church, also held monthly, has continued to attract many children after school for a very lively session of crafts, Bible stories and songs, and of course, cakes! With an average attendance of 64 adults and 80 children attending each session, the church is full! Every Monday morning during term-time the Little Stars Toddler Group has also made the most of the space the building offers, and the churchyard too when the weather is warmer. Families have also been encouraged to explore the churchyard by following a trail at Easter called 'Dotty the Donkey' and a 'Small but Mighty' nature trail in the summer.

Other community events in church have been a Christmas craft evening and the Village Carol Singing which walked the streets of Woodchester, ending up in the church for mulled wine and mince pies.

All these events have been advertised to the community through the school, Woodchester Word and the monthly Common Ground magazine and also via the church website and achurchnearyou.com. The latter had just over 4,000 views in the last year. Easter and Christmas cards were delivered to every household inviting all to services. The church has canvassed opinion from the wider community, through Woodchester Word and a drop-in session, on its plans to create a 'flexible space' to make the building adaptable in the future to a wider range of community activities.

The Church values its links with Woodchester Endowed C of E School. A noticeboard display in church and the school newsletter informs church members of all that is happening. As well as the school using the church for services, activities and learning church members have taken part in the 'Open the Book' presentation of Bible stories in school assemblies, and assemblies have been conducted by clergy and lay members. 'The Cake Bar', a joint church/school fund-raising event has taken place monthly. The PCC has given copies of 'The Children of God Storybook Bible' to all reception children. Recruitment of Foundation Governors has been difficult, but with the help of the Chair of Governors, two new governors have been appointed and the Chair re-appointed for a further term of office. The Chair of Governors has reported to each PCC meeting.

Initiatives in Special Areas

St Mary's has an enthusiastic team of bellringers which has enjoyed success this year. Woodchester was the winning tower team in the Stroud branch of the Gloucester and Bristol Association of Bellringers annual striking competition. The youngest member of the team was chosen to represent Great Britain in the Ringing World National Youth Striking Contest. The team was proud to be ringing on the day of the King's Coronation before all the ceremonies in London commenced.

A new and successful initiative this year has been 'Eco-Church'. Interested members from across the benefice have met regularly for breakfast and worked through the 'A Rocha' questionnaire, discussing environment and climate and how our churches could help achieve the C of E commitment of 'net zero by 2030'. Their findings, ideas and advice were communicated via the Common Ground magazine and a noticeboard display in church. In October St Mary's achieved the Eco-Church bronze award.

Progress was made this year in the area of benefice administration which tends to take up the incumbent's time which could be spent in ministry. The benefice has joined the 'Gloucester Funerals' scheme which takes on the administrative tasks involved in organizing funerals. Towards the end of the year the editor of 'Common Ground' kindly volunteered to take on some part-time administration work.

There were social events this year for the whole benefice: a walk in April, a weekend away for the ladies and a weekend at Lee Abbey in November. A group also attended the new wine Christian festival and a small group travelled to Sweden in September to renew the link covenant.

Giving and Fund-raising

The need for increased giving to meet outgoings and the parish giving scheme have been publicized at Sunday services and through Common Ground. A 'Teas on the Green' event was held on a sunny day in the summer to raise money for church funds; the police even joined in for a cuppa! Alongside the regular giving arrangements, some £3,770 was collected during the year via the two card-reader devices the church has in operation (one for use at events, the other unattended for use by church visitors).

The Church has continued to tithe its income to support mission societies – the Church Mission Society, Interserve, TEAR Fund and Scripture Union. Interserve partner Martin Hickey attended a benefice service in June to speak about his work. A donation was made to A Rocha on completion of the bronze Eco-church award. Money was raised for The Children's Society through the Messy Church Christingle session. The Church sponsored 'Book Blest', a Christian book festival in Stroud. Harvest donations were given to The Food Bank.

The Church has also given in more practical ways. Shoeboxes were filled to be sent to eastern Europe by the T4U organization for children living in extreme poverty. Knitters had been busy making hats, scarves and mittens to fill the boxes and they also knitted chicks at Easter to help the school with their fund-raising. A very sociable evening was spent packing Christmas cards to be sold in aid of the Stroud Women's Refuge.

Caring for the Church and Churchyards

During the year work has been carried out as advised by the last quinquennial survey. Repairs to the stained-glass windows have been completed. A specification has been drawn up for repairs needed to the masonry on the spire and to apply mesh to the

openings to prevent birds entering and nesting. Following complaints about the noise of the bells from a neighbour, approval has also been sought for 'sound-shadow boarding' for the bell-chamber and also to replace mesh there to keep the birds out. The PCC agreed to allocate funds for work on the base of the tower so that it can be open during the day to allow the public access to the Huntley monument and window there, which will happen once the spire and belfry work is complete.

Inside the church, the stonemason has repaired the stonework in the chancel where the rood screen had been removed. Here a new screen was installed as part of the audio-visual system, which is hidden from sight above the chancel arch when not in use.

Planning has continued on the creation of 'flexible space' to give more scope for Lunch-with-Friends, Messy Church and any future community activities. The PCC is aware that this may affect the current heating system and an alternative form may be required when the current boilers need replacing; the churchwardens attended a diocesan workshop on church heating systems.

The Tuesday Gang have continued to do a fine job in maintaining the churchyard. The area of concrete at the west end of the church was extended to provide a much-needed parking area and space for bins. An attractive tree-planting scheme has been devised for the churchyard. If someone wishes to contribute funds for a memorial tree, they can make a donation to the tree planting scheme via the PCC. Stroud District Council has continued to maintain the Old Churchyard.

Financial Review

Total receipts on ordinary unrestricted funds were **£63,432** and are detailed in the financial statements. Designated funds show an income of **£1,901** as a result of bank interest received and reclaims for VAT on building repairs under the Listed Places of Worship scheme. Receipts for restricted funds amounted to **£21,391**. Total income was therefore **£86,724**.

Total outgoings in the year were **£109,033**. The largest item of expenditure was **£49,394** on the Parish Share (for 13 months – including Dec 2022) which is a payment to the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance to enable it to provide the parish with clergy and support services. The next largest item of **£22,811** was for work on the church building which included the new video projection system, and the roof and window repairs recommended as priority items in our latest Quinquennial Inspection report.

The net result for the year was an excess of payments over receipts of **£22,309**.

End of year balances

The unrestricted funds balance at end of year was **£6,188**.

There was some **£37,209** in designated funds (money from legacies set aside from routine running costs, but the use of which the PCC has not yet decided on).

Restricted funds consist of money given for specific purposes, and which totalled **£46,447** at year end. These funds and their values are detailed in Note 10 to the Financial Statements.

Approved by the PCC on 11th March 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Andrew Pemberton VICE
..... Chairman

Independent Examiner's Report to the Members/Trustees of the Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Woodchester.

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the period ended 31st December 2023, which are set out in the attached Annual Accounts.

The trustees of the Charity are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011, but that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- (i) Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- (ii) To follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- (iii) To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

Independent examiners statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention which give me cause to believe that in any **material** respect:

- (i) the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Charities Act; or
- (ii) the accounts did not accord with the accounting records;
- (iii) the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts & Reports) Regulations 2008.

I would draw attention to the fact while the fund balances on the endowments are listed in the notes to the accounts, the investment gain or loss is not shown in the statement of financial activities. This gain is approximately £18,000 in 2023.

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.

Myn Cotterill

21st March 2024

Fellow of the Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants

Woodchester's Receipts & Payments Account

for the year ended 31 December 2023

Notes	General fund	Designated fund	Restricted fund	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources					
Voluntary income:					
Planned giving	36,813	-	-	36,813	38,765
Collections, donations & other giving	10,403	1,298	13,967	25,668	33,635
Income tax recovered	9,958	-	-	9,958	15,290
Legacies	-	-	-	-	-
Activities for generating funds					
Magazine/Bookstall sales/Hall Lettings etc	-	-	-	-	-
Income from other Properties	142	-	-	142	1,084
Annual Fete/events	517	-	-	517	-
Investment income:					
Interest & dividends	-	603	6,054	6,657	5,995
Income from charitable activities:					
Parochial fees	5,298	-	-	5,298	2,802
Other incoming resources:					
Insurance claims	-	-	-	-	-
Gain on disposal of fixed assets	-	-	-	-	-
Loans received	-	-	-	-	-
Other	301	-	1,370	1,671	659
Total incoming resources	63,432	1,901	21,391	86,724	98,230
Resources expended					
Charitable activities:					
Donations/Grants to charities	(5,861)	-	(1,942)	(7,803)	(8,613)
Mission & Evangelism	-	-	(1,032)	(1,032)	(629)
Parish Share	(49,394)	-	-	(49,394)	(41,412)
Clergy expenses	(133)	-	(468)	(601)	(684)
Church running expenses	(7,182)	-	(120)	(7,302)	(6,339)
Churchyard maintenance	(1,533)	-	(182)	(1,715)	(1,390)
Cost of raising funds	-	-	-	-	-
Running costs:					
Support costs	(36)	-	(324)	(360)	(504)
Administration costs (inc. staff costs)	-	-	-	-	(103)
Other	(5,386)	-	(12,629)	(18,015)	(9,772)
Governance costs					
-	-	-	-	-	-
Major expenditure					
Repairs to church buildings	(3,841)	(5,568)	(13,402)	(22,811)	(3,324)
Repairs to other property	-	-	-	-	-
Capital purchases/additions	-	-	-	-	-
Loan repayments	-	-	-	-	-
Total resources expended	(73,366)	(5,568)	(30,099)	(109,033)	(72,770)
Net (outgoing)/ incoming resources	(9,934)	(3,667)	(8,708)	(22,309)	25,460
Transfers between funds	4,450	(3,600)	(850)	0	-
Net incoming/outgoing resources before gains	(5,484)	(7,267)	(9,558)	(22,309)	25,460
Gains on investment assets	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	(5,484)	(7,267)	(9,558)	(22,309)	25,460
Funds brought forward at 1 Jan 2023	11,672	44,476	56,005	112,152	86,692
Funds carried forward at 31 Dec 2023	6,188	37,209	46,447	89,843	112,152

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 7th April 2024 and signed on its behalf by

[Signature] VICE-Chairman [Signature] Member

Statement of Assets and Liabilities 2023

Monetary Assets at 31.12.2023	General	Designated	Restricted	Total
Cash				
Lloyds Business Bank Account	£6,376.62	£0.00	£9,984.10	£16,360.72
Lloyds Business Instant Access Account		£37,209.28	£36,380.00	£73,589.28
In hand awaiting banking	£356.23	£0.00	£82.55	£438.78
TOTAL	£6,732.85	£37,209.28	£46,446.65	£90,388.78

GIFT AID UNCLAIMED at 31.12.2023

Income Tax not yet claimed on gift-aided donations and GASDS Oct-Dec 2023	£369.28
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INVESTMENTS: Valuation of Endowments 31.12.2023 31.12.2022

Pimbury Trust

For repair of church and churchyard, residue for Sunday School
85 shares in the COIF Charities Investment Fund - Income Units
at 1984.5p per share

£1,686.82 £1,542.69

William Cratchley Charity

For bellringers and choir
582 shares in the COIF Charities Investment Fund
- Income Units, at 1984.5p per share

£11,549.79 £10,562.89

Wise Trust

For old and new churchyards, Wise monuments and graves
344 shares in the COIF Charities Investment Fund
- Income Units, at 1984.5p per share

£6,826.68 £6,243.36

Allen Gift (within Gloucester Diocesan Fund)

Upkeep of stained-glass window, Allen graves and graveyard
406 shares in The CBF Church of England Investment Fund
- Income Shares, at 2066.05p per share

£9,177.75 £8,388.53

Evangelical Mission and Ministry Fund

To support mission and ministry of Woodchester Parish Church
80,069.39 shares in The CBF Church of England Equity Fund
- Income Shares, at 197.21p per share

£157,904.84 £142,715.68

St. Mary's Woodchester PCC
Notes to the financial statements
Year ended 31 December 2021

1. Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006.

2. Accounting Policies

The financial statements contain monetary transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible. They do not include the accounts of other Church groups that owe an affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of church members. Receipts are included as received and expenditure when irrevocably paid.

Endowment funds represent money that must be retained and cannot be spent, although the income arising from the fund may be used.

Restricted funds must be used for the purpose for which the money was given or donated. Unrestricted funds represent money that can be used for the general charitable purposes of the PCC; amounts that have been earmarked for specific purposes are called designated funds, which nevertheless remain unrestricted.

3. Income Tax Recovered

In addition to Gift Aid recovery through the Parsh Giving Scheme (PGS), Gift Aid claims were made for the periods April 2022-March 2023 and April 2023 to September 2023 for donations made via Gift Aid envelopes, qualifying one-off donations and the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS).

4. Fund Raising Events

A "Teas on the Green" event was held in September 2023 which raised £516.95. There were several "Cake Bar" events held in church which raised funds for the Woodchester Endowed (C of E) School governors' funds.

5. Fund Transfers

Following PCC agreement, £3,600 was transferred from the Designated fund to the Unrestricted (general) fund to pay for roof repairs. Minor amounts were transferred from Messy Church fund and the Lunch-with-Friends fund to general funds as contributions to church fuel costs.

6. Parish Share

The parish's share of the deanery apportionment is based on the cost per benefice of its clergy. During 2023 £49,394 was paid, representing the full amount (£45,629) of our pledged Parish Share for 2023 plus the £3,765 Parish Share for December 2022 collected late following our change of bank account.

7. Charities

Grants from general funds and special collections, including from Messy Church and Lunch with Friends, were made to charities in the year as follows:

10% Tithe on unrestricted income <i>(paid quarterly in arrears)</i>	
Church Mission Society (by fixed Direct Debit)	£1,488
Interserve	£1,428
Tearfund	£1,428
Scripture Union	£1,428
Home/Special Missions	
Friends of Gloucester Cathedral	£20
Gloucester and Bristol Church Bells	£20
The Children's Society (2022 Christingle)	£257
Crisis at Christmas	£189
Stroud Foodbank	£189
Tear Fund DEC Syria Earthquake appeal	£902
Book Blest Christian Book Festival	£250
A Rocha UK	£125
TearFund toilet twinning	£60
TOTAL	£7,784

(A donation to The Children's Society from Christingle collection was pending at year end).

8. Church Running Expenses

Expenses for the year were:

	2023	2022
Electricity & Gas	£2,828	£2,591
Insurance	£4,161	£4,175
Water <i>(after credit note from Severn Trent)</i>	£0	£0
Routine maintenance of building & churchyard	£3,006	£2,864
Music	£2,426	£2,073
Other Running Expenses	£1,719	£1,491
TOTAL	£14,140	£13,194

9. Clergy Expenses

It is the policy of the PCC to reimburse all ministerial expenses in full.

£601 was paid in 2023 for clergy expenses.

Our incumbent is expected to claim some additional 2023 expenses in 2024.

10. Restricted Funds

The balance held as a restricted fund consists of money received for specific purposes but not spent at the end of the year.

The amounts held are as follows:

Allen Gift (for upkeep of stained-glass window, Allen graves and graveyard)	£841.82
Cratchley Trust (for bellringers and choir)	£1,089.46
The Woodchester Evangelical Mission and Ministry Fund	£22,627.79
Pimbury Trust (for repair of church and churchyard, residue for Sunday School)	£661.12
Wise Trust (for old and new churchyards, Wise monuments, and graves)	£260.02
Men's Weekend	£267.15
Women's Weekend	£205.65
Interserve	£25.00
Church Mission Society	£25.00
Appeal (committed from Mission & Ministry fund)	£14,664.33
Administrator	£1,330.92
Bell Fund	£402.40
Children's Society	£253.73
Churchyard	£10.00
Flower Fund	£3.91
Flexible Space	£1,000.00
Handbell Ringers	£322.61
Little Stars	£18.82
Lunch with Friends	£1,302.81
Messy Church	£291.69
Outreach	£133.20
Reality Youth Group	£88.00
Reordering	£415.51
Remembering with lavender	£201.79
Toilet Twinning	£3.92

- End of Report -