

WOODBRIDGE ST MARY



Annual Report 2023



Parochial Church Council (PCC) 2023

Chair	The Reverend Nigel Prior ¹
Vice Chair	Mr Stephen Cole ¹
Churchwardens	Miss Veronica Howe ¹ Mr David Sharples ¹
Through the Diocesan Synod (<i>Ex-Officio</i>)	Mrs Penny Bird
Deanery Synod Representatives (until 2026)	Mrs Mary Hare (resigned) Ms Rita James Ms Patricia Ford
Churches Together in Woodbridge and Melton	Mr Stephen Cole Mrs Barbara Stear
Honorary Treasurer	Mr Philip Poole ¹ (to November) Mrs Annie Lines ¹ (from November)
Honorary Secretary	Mrs Catherine Eaden ¹ (from May)
Elected Lay Members	Mr David Berridge Mr Simon Morris
	To 2026
	Mrs Michelle Bullard Mr Stephen Cole Mrs Margaret Davidson Mr Jeremy Hawksley Mr Philip Poole Mrs Janice Poulson (resigned) Mrs Barbara Stear
	To 2027
	Ms Katharine Turner
	To 2028
	Mrs Catherine Eaden (from May) Mrs Annie Lines (from November)

OFFICER NOT ON THE PCC

¹ Members of the PCC's Standing Committee

Annual Vestry Meeting

Held on Monday 15th May 2023 at 7 pm in St Mary's House

Fr Nigel opened the Meeting. There was a Reading from St John's Gospel and prayers.

1. **Apologies for Absence** had been received from Kirsten Berridge, Michelle Bullard, Geoff English, Mary Hare, Heather Marshall, Sandra Schur, Sue Todd & Peter Wintgens.
2. **Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting** held on 17th May 2022 were considered, then proposed by Penny Bird, seconded by Barbara Stear and approved unanimously as an accurate record.
3. **Churchwardens' Accounts** – These were introduced by Veronica Howe, who expressed her thanks to David Sharples, for assuming responsibility for them; those present were asked to note the addition of valuations of investments. She said that the Churchwardens would welcome details of any instances of need and not just at Christmas time. With the loss of Tony Hubbard, Michael Bizzey had kindly examined the accounts. All present were invited to sign the ancient ledger at the end of the evening.

4. Election of Churchwardens

The Rector said that two names had been offered:

David Sharples – Proposed by John Davis

Seconded by Alison Wintgens

Veronica Howe – Proposed by Anna Jenkins

Seconded by Jill Richardson

There being no further nominations, both candidates were elected unanimously.

The Rector said that this would be the last time Veronica would be standing for election, as she would be completing her sixth year this time round. All were asked to offer thoughts and prayers about some of her roles and a successor.

5. **Any Other Business** - Rita James asked that inside the front cover of the Annual Report her title should be corrected.

There being no further business, the Vestry meeting closed at 7.21 pm

The Churchwardens' Accounts - St Mary's Church Woodbridge

Churchwardens' Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 2023

St Mary's Church Woodbridge

Churchwardens' Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 2023

JOHN SAYER'S CHARITY (incorporating Sayers Gift)

Bank Balance at 1 January 2023	£2,331.88
Income	£369.80
Interest	£22.13
Expenditure	(600.00)
Bank Balance at 31 December 2023	£2,123.81
Charitable Fund Valuation at 1 January 2023	£ 12,336.76
Charitable Fund Valuation at 31 December 2023	£ 13,470.39
Gain/(Loss) on Charitable Fund	£1,133.63
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	£15,594.20

WALTER BLOXSOME'S GIFT

Bank Balance at 1 January 2023	£1,952.04
Income	75.19
Interest	86.94
Bank Balance at 31 December 2023	£2,114.17
Charitable Fund Valuation at 1 January 2023	£ 2,507.46
Charitable Fund Valuation at 31 December 2023	£ 2,738.61
Gain/(Loss) on Charitable Fund	£231.15
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	£4,852.78

Signed..... VA Howe, Churchwarden

Signed..... JD Sharples, Churchwarden

Signed..... NJ Prior, Rector

These accounts have been examined and found to be correct.


Signed

MICHAEL BIZLEY
HON. EXAMINER

Date: 12/5/24

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Held on Monday 15th May 2023 following the Annual Vestry Meeting

- 1. Minutes of the Annual Church Meeting** held on 17th May 2022 were considered, their acceptance proposed by Caroline Hawksley, seconded by David Berridge and approved unanimously, as an accurate record.
- 2. Election of Lay Member to the Parochial Church Council** – The Rector said that he had received one nomination, namely that of Cath Eaden – proposed by Veronica Howe and seconded by David Sharples. All approved her election and the Rector said he was very pleased to welcome her as PCC Secretary.
- 3. Election of Lay Representatives on the Deanery Synod**

Patricia Ford – had been proposed by Annie Lines and seconded by Liz Prior

Mary Hare – had been proposed by Alison Wintgens and seconded by Marion Clarke

Rita James – had been proposed by Veronica Howe and seconded by Janice Poulson

All were elected unanimously and the Rector thanked them for their willingness to stand.

- 4. Parochial Church Accounts** – Phil Poole referred all to the printed report, but drew attention to some high-lights. The shop had boosted income. By the middle of the year, there had been a sharp fall in income from individuals, but a great improvement overall in the latter half meant that the outcome was better than anticipated previously.

Voluntary income was substantially down in 2022 and indeed the most worrying aspect of the accounts.

The Church Shop profit was just over £8,000. There had been a substantial increase in hiring, fund-raising income improved and there was an increase in investment returns. With regard to expenditure, most costs were larger than in 2021 with substantial increases especially within the St Mary's House Project, funded from the Harper Legacy. There had been a benefit from a fixed-price electricity deal, while the gas deal had been renegotiated, as the previous supplier had gone bankrupt.

The overall position showed an excess of expenditure over income, but not a deficit in the general account, which was in surplus of just over £3000. This was partially as a result of Gt Bealings stepping up their Parish Share commitment to 15%, as agreed previously.

Phil said that reserves against contingencies were currently deemed adequate. They were now invested with an investment management firm called Flagstone – bonds supported by the Government – so that, with the church's bank accounts, the finances were generally in a healthy state. He warned that all must be aware of the pressures, but overall a commendable result had been achieved.

He thanked Michael Holland, who had compiled the accounts, Linda helping day-to-day and supported by Hannah Pauley; questions were sought. Veronica Howe observed that our funds were in safe hands.

Gerry Toplis – asked about the existence of a PCC reserves policy; Phil said that there was no discrete policy, but as a matter of good practice, contingencies were kept in mind and reaction made to needs. He added that the Harper legacy was designated, rather than restricted. David Sharples added that there was no fixed amount, but that £40-60,000 has been deemed appropriate.

The Rector invited acceptance of the accounts, which was proposed by David Sharples, seconded by Roger Burgess and supported by all. He expressed thanks to Phil and the team.

5. **Appointment of Account Examiners** Phil reported that, while there had been a small increase in their fees, he would recommend the re-adoption of the LB Group for the coming year. That proposal was offered by Jeremy Hawksley, seconded by Penny Bird and approved unanimously.
6. **Report on the Electoral Roll** – The Rector referred all to the printed report. Margaret Davidson had been busy as the new officer. There had been 196 on the roll when she started, a few had been removed and 27 new members added, making 216 to date. He thanked her for her work.
7. **Report from the PCC** – The Rector expressed his thanks to Jo Lovett for the report and for all the worked she had done until stepping down in November 2022.
8. **Report from the Deanery Synod** – Again, all were referred to the Annual Report. Father Nigel mentioned that the role of Rural Dean would now be shared by Katrina Dyke (based in Grundisburgh) and Giles Tulk (in Orford), each of whom had responsibility for multiple parishes of their own. He said also that the new Archdeacon of Suffolk, Rich Henderson, had been installed the previous day.
9. **Report on the Fabric and Ornaments of the Church** – David Sharples reported that he was in the throes of updating ‘the documents’ (i.e. Inventory, Terrier and Logbook). The Inventory was to be updated with e.g. pictures of items in the Treasury. Other matters to be included appropriately were the electrical hardwiring report for SMH, while – subject to access - the Church would also be assessed. Father Nigel added that the NADFAS report would be due in Autumn and would provide a fantastic historical document in its own right. Courtesy of East Suffolk Council, the churchyard gates were to be re-instated nearer to the church to avoid the effects of the plane tree.

Thanks was given to Darren Darby, who had taken up the Maintenance role and was making good progress.

Penny Bird repeated her previous offer of updating the information on Rupert Corbould the artist of the painting in the Epiphany Chapel.

10. **Chairperson’s Report** - Father Nigel read his report:

A big thank you to the small team of people, who have written up their reports and shared their activities and interests with us over the past year. They are sure signs (as in my sermon yesterday) that God is alive and active in this place and that we are as inclusive a worshipping

community as we can be. At our recent meeting of Elders, though, we only seemed to talk about the frail, vulnerable and most elderly, which is why, perhaps, our pastoral outreach (if Elders are unable to help) really needs to be reaching out more to young families also, especially those with no background of 'church'...even Baptism enquiries remain very few over the last year, so perhaps we need to make this area for outreach and care, a priority in the year ahead?

One of the ways I know is to develop a First Communion programme for children (Priority 2 in our PFG – Plan for Growth - to the new Archdeacon) so that we can appeal to our local schools and their parents (who are crucial in their support and involvement in this programme). Our new PCC will have to look at this and separately, I believe, what kind of 'working relationship' we can have with our *Girlguiding* groups, who are the biggest users of SMH, but the least involved in normal everyday 'Church'. When they do appear and take part, as at the recent memorable 'Coronation' Sunday Eucharist, they make a huge difference to the feel and atmosphere of our regular worship so, going forwards as they say, we must encourage occasions like this more, in fact, insist on them!! As you know, I do not believe in the romantic hope that children are the future of the Church; they are or should be part of our present life and witness, as Jesus encouraged all children to be. Please pray for more young parents to step up and become helpers and leaders; we are not looking for 'experts', but we are looking for 'encouragers', 'supporters' to help share and spread the load.

Another priority for us is to have another 'go' at finding a new Choral Director, who can join Sarah and our musical team. It is well known that singing is a great 'way-in' to church life and we are promising to pay singers pocket money for any weddings and funerals, so please relay that message of welcome and learning which good catholic music and worship can provide. Holy Week was a treat in that regard and a great reflection of different styles and moods of music-making to match different liturgies. With the help of Brother Marc, we also had some glorious plainsong.

On the Church shop front, we need to record our thanks to Sue Todd and our congratulations to Jackie Shipley for taking on the mantle and so enthusiastically. Despite the crash of *Traidcraft*, new Fairtrade suppliers are helping us and indeed the wider Town is seeking to get back its Fairtrade status. So, thank you, to all our increasing numbers of shop volunteers and those of our congregation, who buy from us on a regular basis. Congratulations and thanks to Rita also for securing our Bronze Eco award recently. She is also looking for some extra hands-on supporters for managing our churchyard and plans for new wildlife areas and a heritage path running through...and even bird feeding needs practical weekly help, like sorting out the bins or any other household chore! Best-laid plans never really work out, do they, without more troops on the ground? I would go further and say that we do not need more discussion about improving our overall environmental goals, but we do need more players to make them happen.

If I may mention the expansion and improvement of our church and SMH facilities, we have reached something of a final 'watershed' moment. Recent soil and arboriculture reports have confirmed that the huge and beautiful cedar tree has seriously compromised our plans for the undercroft, so the architect has had to go back to the drawing board on the pressing issues of access between both buildings, as well as the sad lack of toilets which we need, especially

when St Mary's is at capacity, as it was for the recent memorial service for Dame Clare Marx. Whatever final decisions we make, there will need to be a full public presentation with costings, as well as the will to succeed. I will recommend to the new PCC that, like appointing a new Music Director, we should make this coming autumn our deadline for getting going. I really don't want to consider the alternative of shrinking back from all the hard work and planning that has gone on for so long now. We must bite the bullet.

I suspect the same is true about where we are heading as a united benefice; tomorrow night's annual meeting will, I think, also be a watershed moment about whether we just stagger on as we are, or whether we plan to make GB a 'Festival Church', as has happened elsewhere in the Diocese. This would mean the Church will still be maintained and separately financed by their PCC, but open for public worship on just a few chosen Festivals each year. I would still exercise pastoral support there and conduct any baptisms, weddings and funerals, as before. But any final decisions rest with our shared conversation, under God's guidance and care. Positively, we are sharing our Feasts of Title and keeping these occasions together. In Woodbridge it will be on July 2nd for 'Lady Day' and in Great Bealings, it will be on September 10th, 'The Birth of the BVM'. Hopefully there will be food afterwards at both and everyone will 'muck in'. Another diary date for you is our Summer Fair here, on Saturday September 2nd and, (a bit of a theme here), we still need an organising team, as Veronica has also said! If it is anything as varied as the Fair in Elmhurst Park yesterday, it will be great fun and a great draw. Please sign this volunteer list, if you would like your say!

Final thank yous to my very supportive and busy wife, Liz, to a retired but equally busy colleague, Peter, for his support and to Linda in the Parish Office who is doing a really great job on behalf of us all.

I haven't mentioned the 'C' word at all in this brief review because this virus is probably never going to go away completely. The Church locally and nationally needs to look forward now to give people a fresh focus and resolve to 'and bear fruit', because the good news of Easter and Pentecost is just that and it is our duty and joy to pass it on. Thank you all.

11. AoB

- (a) **Defibrillator** – Janice Poulson asked about potential training, but there was a consensus that instructions would be given on dialling 999, when a code would be issued and code and guidance through the process.

- (b) **Cedar tree** – The roots had been found to be so extensive and vast that the proposed undercroft would not be possible. More would be known very soon, as the architect was considering a revised approach. Concerns were expressed about the cost involved, but David Sharples said that various surveys would have been necessary anyway and some may be reusable. The St Mary's House Project group were trying for the most cost-effective way forward.

A discussion ensued about the impacts of cedar and plane trees.

- (c) **Flowers in Epiphany Chapel** – Anna Ashton asked whether the practice of arranging flowers in memory of loved ones could be resumed? The Rector was not in favour, but

asked if she would be prepared to organise a rota. Anna said that she had done it in the past and implied that she would be willing to do so again.

- (d) **Potholes in Churchyard** – Jean Waller asked whether East Suffolk Council were planning repairs and the Rector said that they formed part of a plan, being followed by Norse, on behalf of the Council, and that the Church had much for which to thank them.
- (e) **Tombs** – Penny Bird mentioned that some of the tombs might possibly have grants access.
- (f) **Solar Panels** – When Tony Waller asked about any progress on these, the Rector told him that they had been in the plans for a while.
- (g) **Locking the Church** – Janice Poulson expressed a concern that, on several occasions, she had found the South Door unlocked in the evening.
- (h) **Children and Families** – Father Nigel re-iterated his oft-stated view that children should be the church of today, not just that of the future. Caroline Hawksley mentioned how packed are the lives of families with young children nowadays, stressing that the whole business of ‘fitting in church’ was a vast subject.

Stephen Cole pointed out the APCM as a time for strategic thinking. He said that all parishes were fighting over the children and he instanced 300+ children belonging to the Rugby Club.

David Berridge spoke about the need for the parish to have inspiration about families and that he would welcome other forums for discussion, recognising the vital need for youth involvement. He cited St Johns – packed with children, Quay 50-100 children church on Sundays.

Penny felt that a critical mass was required.

Further discussion ensued. Stephen Cole said that children are pulled in by music and ‘the right’ Choir director was needed. Father Nigel spoke about the need for more helpers and mentioned that the stress on some people was unbelievable. Inroads were being made, but a small group was needed. Liz Prior said it was a massive subject and too big for the current meeting. Penny Bird warned against separating children from adults. Show and Tell was appreciated. Liz said that - whenever she spoke to parents – a shorter, more appropriate service to them (at for example 11 am) was requested.

David Sharples said that the matter reflected the problems being experienced in populating several of our groups. He stressed the importance of forming a group to help sort this out. He issued an open invitation for the young to help the servers, in whatever capacity was appropriate.

David Berridge was of the opinion that such a forum for discussion should happen more often.

(i) **Any Other Business** - Father Nigel concluded by inviting all present to 'Sign the book!'

The Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Reports for 2023

The PCC has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

Safeguarding

The past year has seen a gradual increase in the number of St Mary's volunteers who have undertaken all the required on-line safeguarding training. Approximately 70% of all church volunteers have done at least 'Basic Awareness' training, and the remainder were encouraged to do soon. All senior persons have the correct training and (where needed) have completed DBS checks, (including all members of the PCC).

On Safeguarding Sunday in November, the Deputy Safeguarding Officer and myself drafted a pamphlet on safeguarding, which was circulated to the congregations, and I gave a short talk about the importance of safeguarding to the main service. To encourage the full take-up of the safeguarding training, we soon will be asking group leaders to ask their volunteers to sign a generic role description form, which will include the need to do appropriate safeguarding training.

I have taken advice, as needed, from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer who has been very helpful. Also, I have met with the Choir and with the Bellringers to explain the importance of safeguarding training.

Submitted by: Jeremy Hawksley

Charities supported by St. Mary's in 2023

During 2023, the following charities were supported:

- The Children's Society (from Christingle Service - December 2023) £180
- UNICEF (from Christingle Service - December 2023) £180
- Kagera (Lent) £261.00
- Christian Aid Week £2,214.95
- Suffolk Historic Churches Trust £2,109 (through Ride 'n' Stride)

Donations in kind from the 'Toy Service' went to the Suffolk Refugee Association and Home Start.

Submitted by: Linda Rumbold

Christian Aid Week 2023

Churches Together now has a settled routine of delivering only of envelopes encouraging donations in the envelopes or online. Envelopes are returned to our shop or St. John's Old

Vicarage. Online giving will have gone up as more and more people find that is the easiest way. St. Mary's had 27 deliverers yielding just under £2,100 of cash and cheques including gift aid plus £400 given on line via our church website. This included several substantial donations. This is an encouraging indicator that it is well worth the effort. (If you would like to join the team for 2024 please email anjwaller@uwclub.net or ring 013943 86786)

Submitted by: Tony Waller

St. Mary's PCC Secretary's Report 2023

The PCC met on a monthly basis (save for the month of December) throughout the year and, as is always the case, deliberated and made decisions on a wide variety of topics. Phil Poole announced his intention to resign as Treasurer and his desire to continue as a member of the PCC. After Joanne Lovett had resigned at the end of 2022, the role was filled temporarily by Veronica Howe, and then assumed by Cath Eaden from May onwards. Michael Holland also gave notice of his intention to step down as Planned Giving secretary once Phil's successor as Treasurer had been appointed and had become established and the annual report and accounts for the financial year 2023 finalised. Mary Hare stepped down during the course of the year as Deanery Synod Representative. Janice Poulson also resigned at the 2023 Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). The PCC's sincere thanks go to Janice, Joanne, Mary, Michael and Phil for their hard work and contributions to the work of the PCC.

Sarah Dodds worked tirelessly throughout the year while the search for the Music Director continued. In addition to serving both St. Mary's, Woodbridge and St. Mary's Great Bealings as organist, she valiantly continued to lead the choir and did her utmost to keep the musical life of both churches vibrant in the absence of a Director of Music.

Having led the work to win the Bronze Award in 2022, Rita James continued with the Eco Church project, with others, set her sights on the Silver Award.

A three-phased development proposal was developed during the course of the year relating to:

- (1) the conservation, repair and refurbishment of St. Mary's House;
- (2) the enhancement of the facilities in the church building; and
- (3) enhancing the access to and biodiversity of the churchyard and its natural habitat.

The PCC sought pre-planning approval for the latest plans for the refurbishment of St. Mary's House. St Mary's House plays a central role in supporting the church building in its mission by offering facilities and a sanctuary for a wide range of activities - lunches, public consultations, yoga classes, leisure activities, meetings, the Ukrainian Hub, parties, bereavement counselling, Poppy's Pantry café, The Prince's Trust (Inspire Suffolk), birthday parties, Girlguiding, receptions, private meetings, etc. The Church Shop is there, as is our Benefice Office.

The poor state of repair of the building worsens with every year that passes and it is not easily accessible to everyone. The work on preparation for refurbishment has been a key part of the PCC's work during the years and will continue to be so in 2024.

Progress has been slow on the work on the gates and piers at the top of Church Street because the site is difficult and the restrictions numerous. We hope to obtain planning consent in 2024 and for the work to be carried out.

Other community projects that St. Mary's has been involved in are the 'warm room' project

over the winter months. A £2,000 grant was given to St. Mary's from the late County Councillor Caroline Page to buy equipment, food and pay for utilities. A big thank you to Veronica Howe and other volunteers who ran this once a week on a Thursday.

Submitted by: Katharine Turner, on behalf of Cath Eaden

Altar Guild and Church Cleaning

This past year has seen a steady flow of work by a wonderful team of Altar Guilders who have responded by being in church every Friday morning. The care of the silver and linen used at the services has been well maintained and the Altar area cleaned. Great care of the Epiphany Chapel has been taken to maintain a quiet place for prayer and meditation.

Grateful thanks go to Janice Poulson and Gillian Gurdon; Judy Foster; Anna Jenkins and Lesley Whitehead; Kirsten Berridge and Annie Lines for their continuing service to the Altar Guild over the past twelve months. You make my job such a pleasure.

During 2023 the care of the church pews has been managed by five people on the dusting rota, who have kept our wooden areas in the church beautifully clean. They work independently and are responsible for their own section of the church to dust twice monthly.

Further thanks to Gillian Gurdon, Michelle Bullard, Caroline Hawksley, Anna Jenkins, and Sandra Schur.

Four times during 2023 the brassware in the church has been cleaned and polished by two workers: Judy Foster and Jenny Harris. In August, Bernard Chamber joined the team and is a great asset for reaching the cross above the High Altar and the many brass panels around the church. Thank you so much to you all.

Submitted by: Barbara Stear

Bell Ringers

We now have a dedicated team of some 12 bellringers. Just before last Christmas the faulty tenor clapper was returned from the bellfounders and re-fitted. So once again we can ring all the eight bells both on practice nights, and more importantly on Sundays. To swing the 25cwt tenor bell into the upside-down position ready for full circle ringing still requires two experienced ringers, but once it has been inverted every member of the band is able to ring it single handed.

For the first time for many years, we met in the Tower on New Year's Eve and rang the "Old Year" out and the "New Year" in. On the stroke of midnight, the tenor bell was tolled 12 times, with all the eight bells joining in afterwards. We followed this with a party to celebrate the event.

Whereas last year for our annual Spring Ring we went by train to Norwich to ring at four different churches there, this year we went to Cambridge where we rang in three different towers. We travelled by car before catching the Park and Ride into the City Centre.

Six or seven of our ringers have been regularly travelling to Campsea Ashe on Saturday mornings to assist their ringers on their practice day. This too is a very social event as following their practice we most of us adjourn to the Station Cafe there for coffee (and in

some cases bacon rolls).

Now that our recent influx of novices have advanced to the stage where they are no longer novices, if there is anyone who would like to learn the art of bellringing, come along on Tuesday evenings to see at first-hand what it is all about.

Submitted by: Bruce Wakefield

Choir

The past twelve months have been an interesting time for the choir and, in the absence of a musical director, we have been grateful to Sarah Dodds, our organist, who has acted as our choir leader.

We have also enjoyed working with an expert voice coach and visiting organists, who have assisted with the singing.

Choir members have remained positive with attendance at Sunday services being sustained at a reasonable average of 10 singers throughout the year. Sarah has done an excellent job in selecting suitable music for a smaller choir and even arranging some pieces for a choir lacking in male voices. Wherever possible, singing in four-part harmony was encouraged, although this was not always possible. The choir has been able to sing a different anthem for each of the Sunday morning Eucharist services, which was appreciated by the congregation, who also enjoyed the variety of music on offer. The hard work put in by Sarah must be recognised and appreciated.

The choir has sung at weddings and funerals when requested, plus on the Market Hill and at the Seckford chapel at Christmas. A smaller choir has helped out at Great Bealings church when this has been appropriate.

After a prolonged period of advertising for a new Musical Director, Mr James Davy applied for the post and was successful in being appointed. James has been a choir master in several different churches in the UK, most recently as the Musical Director at Chelmsford Cathedral. He began work with us early in February 2024, while Sarah continues as our organist.

We are hoping to enlarge the choir by recruiting new members, particularly male voices.

Under the direction of James, the choir remains positive and enthusiastic in its singing within the church and we look forward to the future.

Submitted by: Peter Shipley

Christian Meditation Group – St. Mary’s

The World Community for Christian Meditation belongs to a long tradition that encourages us to seek out silence where we consent to God’s presence and in that silence to do some intense listening. Our meditation group at St Mary’s belongs to that tradition and has now been meeting for four years every Tuesday at 5 pm. We follow a very simple formula that aids our silence, beginning with a short prayer and reading and then we meditate for half an hour. We respond gently to one another at the end, listening to any responses that may have emerged and end with the Grace. Belonging to a group like this, gives members support and encouragement and, as John Main has said, ‘it is a source of sustenance to our pilgrimage’.

New members are always very welcome, indeed this year we have grown to be a group of eleven. In addition to our Tuesday evenings, we have a Summer and Christmas informal social gathering.

Submitted by: Alison Davis and Caroline Hawksley

The Church Shop

It has been an interesting year! On Sue Todd's retirement as the Shop Manager, a small Management Team was formed and, together with a very loyal band of volunteers, we have been able to open the shop every week day from 10am to 4pm, every Saturday morning and Sundays after the 10am Eucharist.

There have been some challenges, not least the demise of Traidcraft, who were our main supplier of Fairtrade foods. We are now using another wholesaler, although they are not able to provide some of the most popular items we used to have on the shelves.

Over the year we have been able to give the shop a bit of a revamp, giving it a more spacious and modern look, which has been enhanced by David Berridge's imaginative and creative window displays.

We are well known in Woodbridge for our excellent range of greetings cards, which remain our biggest seller, but we have also been able to stock a wider range of sustainably sourced or locally produced gifts and stationery, which change on a regular basis, particularly as the seasons change.

St Mary's Shop is not only a source of additional income for St Mary's, but also acts as a hub for ticket sales for events for instance, a meeting point and even as a place where people can call in just for a chat!

Our thanks go to Sue, for her support, advice and encouragement and to all those who in whatever way, support the shop.

Submitted by: Jackie Shipley

Churches Together

During 2023 church representatives from our eight churches in Woodbridge, Melton & Great Bealings have met four times.

Good Friday 2023 Walk of Witness and service in Elmhurst Park. We were reminded that the walk is both a witness to the town and a Christian unity. The walk was quicker, as there was no stopping at individual churches. In 2024, the Methodist church volunteered to serve hot cross buns and drinks after the service (*This has taken place and was well received*).

Sunrise Service. It was estimated that 50 people gathered at dawn to watch the sun rise over the river Deben. They said, "There is no better way to start the Easter celebrations".

Big Family Day Out - 2nd July 2023 on Kingston Playing Field went well. As the event is from 10.30am, it is difficult for some churches to attend when their own services are taking place.

Harvest Fair stall in Whisstocks Place on 7th October, 2023 Leaflets about ECO churches and ways to improve our carbon footprint were distributed and some bibles.

Rough Sleeping in Churchyards information card. This has been updated and circulated to all the CTWA churches.

Christmas Services Information and Card were distributed online, with the Ukrainian Community providing a service picture, with thanks to Doug Waller.

Submitted by: Barbara Stear

Communications - Benefice Website, Social Media, Inside Out and St. Mary's Live-streaming

Benefice Website

Our benefice website provides our most comprehensive and useful way of communicating with regular congregants, interested people within the wider community and potential visitors to our church. Weekly updates provide online information on what is happening - parish e-news, posters, dates and times of future events, sermon transcripts, useful contact links, courses, videos etc.

Linda, our Parish Administrator is making effective use of poster and social media templates from Canva, an online design and visual communication platform, (also used on our Facebook page). Our news blog on the website isn't updated as frequently as we would like, and it would be really helpful if more people would send relevant photos and brief write-ups of news items or events (emailed to Parish Office or St Mary's Webmaster) to add to the blog and make it properly newsworthy.

E-News

The benefice e-news contains all the weekly 'notices' and is emailed from the Parish Office to a long list of recipients each Friday. More can be added, by request. It can also be accessed via the website. Some printed copies are available in church on Sundays.

Social Media

St Mary's Facebook page has around 220 followers and is regularly updated with photo news of recent activities and upcoming events.

Inside Out Parish Magazine

After three years and thirteen issues of our parish magazine 'Inside Out', it was decided that the December 'Christmas' edition should be the last. Other work pressures have intervened and the editorial and design team (Fr Nigel and myself) decided reluctantly it could no longer be continued. The three issues since the last APCM featured an illustrated two-page article about the King's Coronation, news of several of our out-reach projects within the local community, Fairtrade information, and a forecast of future plans for renovating St Mary's House and the churchyard.

Live-streaming

At their September meeting the PCC supported a desire expressed by Fr Nigel to stop live streaming. Although unwelcome news to parishioners who have difficulties in getting to church in person it was agreed to make the change at the end of September. Two memorable services live streamed earlier in the year were the special Sung 'Coronation' Eucharist on Sunday 7 May and the Parish Eucharist for Sunday 2 July, Feast of Title when our preacher was Canon Philip Banks, Precentor at the Cathedral. The live-streaming equipment is still there as a facility and is occasionally operated by technicians working for funeral directors or wedding specialists.

Wide screen TV

The large screen Smart TV continues to provide a very useful extra facility, and most recently providing photo illustrations for Rev'd Gail Minter's talk on her recent visit to our link parish of Kagera in Tanzania.

Submitted by: Rita James

Deanery Synod

During the first part of 2023 the role of Rural Dean was shared between me and Reverend Katrina Dykes. Following my appointment as Rural Dean in June my main focus has been to ensure the Deanery Synod meetings were seen by those attending as:

- relevant
- helpful
- opportunities to share good practice (and challenges being faced)
- and lasted no longer than one-and-a-half hours

With this in mind our Deanery Synod meetings in 2023 each had a specific focus, in addition to the short business meeting:

2nd February at St Felix Rendlesham

Presentation by Hilary Wordsworth Sewell - Diocesan Children's & Families Officer on 'growing younger', followed by questions and answers.

15th June at Clopton Village Hall

'Information Sharing Groups' on the subjects of (a) green churchyards, (b) setting up a 'friends of' group and (c) running a baby/toddler group in a small village setting.

19th October at St John's Church, Woodbridge

Presentation by Julie Podd (Parishes Resources Manager) and Emma Denton (Parish Giving Advisor) on (a) launching a successful Parish Giving Scheme, (b) digital giving, (c) legacy giving and (d) grants and funding. The presentations were followed by the chance for those present to ask questions and take away information.

In addition, a special meeting of church treasurers and incumbents was held on **7th November in Melton Church Hall**, chaired by Archdeacon Rich, to discuss the Woodbridge Deanery Parish Share and its allocation. Clive Willetts deserves a special mention for ensuring that our Deanery finances are in a relatively healthy position, and that we do not lose our focus on this important but often sensitive area which is key to the future life and mission of our churches.

Thank Yous

I would like to thank Mary Hare - Lay Chair, Clive Willetts - Deanery Treasurer, and Mike Morris – Deanery Secretary, for their dedication to ensuring the smooth running of our Deanery. Thank you also to Linda Cooper, who stepped down as Deanery Secretary in 2023, and to Rita James for maintaining the Deanery website and being our Deanery ‘green champion.’

I would also like to thank all the Deanery Synod Reps and my clergy colleagues who make the time in their busy schedules to attend Deanery Synod meetings. Rev’d Katrina Dykes announced her resignation as Rector of the Carlford Benefice in the Autumn of 2023, and we thank her for all she has achieved in that benefice, plus in her time as Co-Rural Dean of Woodbridge Deanery, and wish her the very best in her new benefice.

As I will be leaving my current role as Team Rector of Wilford Benefice after Easter, to return to the Diocese of Hereford, may I thank you all for your support in my time as Rural Dean and to assure you of my best wishes and prayers for the future of Woodbridge Deanery?

Submitted by: Reverend Giles Tulk, Rural Dean

Eco Church

Each church within our Diocese is encouraged to register with the Eco Church scheme run by A Rocha UK. The scheme is designed to motivate and resource churches in establishing ways of caring for God’s Earth as an integral part of their everyday work and witness. It provides an online survey to help gauge how ‘green’ their ways of doing things are. In January 2023 our ‘greenness’ qualified us for the first level Eco Church ‘Bronze’ Award and over the past year we’ve been making slow but sure progress tackling some of the key areas and actions required in our ambition to apply for a ‘Silver’ Award. These actions have included:

1. The Churchyard - researching and bringing together wide-ranging background information on our churchyard in order to create a structured Management Plan (which was presented in draft at the June and November PCC meetings), and a notional illustration of how the churchyard layout and heritage trail could be developed. (Restoration of the main churchyard gates and the southern boundary wall will impinge temporarily on progress).
2. Some of the easier tasks have already been put in place, e.g., providing a bat box, bird nesting boxes, bird feeders, pollination friendly flowers for bees and butterflies in porch planters.
3. The leader of Suffolk Wildlife Trust Woodbridge Group visited in June to help us identify existing wild flowers in the churchyard that could be propagated for future wildflower meadow areas.
4. Participation in several Zoom Webinars on churchyard wildlife and land management for climate and nature, hosted by the Church of England, Suffolk Wildlife Trust or A Rocha UK
5. Electricity supply - the new contract for electricity supply to our church premises has recently been switched to Octopus 100% green energy tariff.
6. Participation in several Zoom Webinars on Net Zero Carbon, church heating options and solar panels. In person session on solar panel heating with DAC Advisor, Oliver Clarke.
7. Church Lighting - traditional light bulbs have been replaced with LED bulbs in all the

overhead fittings.

8. Cleaning Products (planned and soon to be implemented) - we will be using eco friendly cleaning products in the kitchens and toilets in St Mary's House.

Submitted by: Rita James

Elders

During this past year Patrick Lovett retired as an Elder; we were all very grateful for the service he had given to the church since he was commissioned, especially conducting Morning Prayer at Great Bealings, taking Extended Communion to two local care homes, and his role in organising rotas. Currently, the Rector and PCC are well on the way to supporting the appointment of a new Elder to our team.

Elders continue to visit local Care Homes and those in 'supported living' accommodation (Grove Court, Haughgate House, Seckford Care, Tanyard Court and Woodbridge Lodge) where they administer Extended Communion, take Morning Prayer and lead services at Christmas and Easter and other times. Elders also undertake home visits and will administer home communion to members of our congregation who are too unwell / infirm to attend church in person.

Earlier in the year Elders were invited to attend a training session in Stowmarket. This had been re-scheduled following a cancellation due to flooding in the Autumn. Unfortunately, not as many Elders were able to attend this session as had originally signed up. There was an introductory talk by Archdeacon Rich and a choice of two workshops – 'Liturgical' and 'Pastoral'. Attendees commented on the positive aspect of meeting Elders from other parishes and appreciated the opportunity to 'network'.

Weekly Saturday Morning Prayer has continued on Zoom and is led and regularly attended by Elders, plus a couple of other members of our congregation. This service continues to be invaluable enabling us to worship together regularly, keep in touch, support each other, as well as keeping us up to date with the names of members of our congregation who need our prayers.

Elders continue to welcome people as they arrive in the church building for worship, prepare and lead the intercessions, administer the chalice and may also be on the rota to read the Lesson. From time to time, Elders take Evening Prayer and Compline, and occasionally act as Verger at funeral services.

Submitted by: Alison Davis

Electoral Roll

Margaret Davidson took over as Electoral Roll Officer at the beginning of April just in time for the Annual Revision of the Electoral Roll, which was taking place between 16th April and 30 April. At the beginning of the period there were 196 people on the Electoral Roll. During the Revision of the Roll 7 names have been removed for various reasons and 27 additional names added. The total on the Electoral Roll as of May 2023 is now 216.

Numbers define our representation on the Deanery Synod, so all who fulfil the criteria should consider signing up. Forms are available at the back of the church.

Submitted by: Margaret Davidson

Fabric Committee

The Fabric Committee, consisting of eight members of the church, including the Rector and the two church wardens, has met for five meetings in 2023. The main areas of discussion are the Quinquennial Report, the lightning conductor and energy saving in the church and SMH. The work required on the church structure recognised by the Quinquennial report has gone to tender and work will start soon. The organ shutters and swells have all been repaired and a new softwood frame for the front of the organ. The second lightning conductor has been approved and to be installed when the scaffolding is up for the tower repairs. The Churchyard design and structural details for St. Mary's gates being reset are underway and root excavations of the London plane tree have taken place, so the position of the roots is known before the gates are place. All the light bulbs in the church have been replaced to LED and Oliver Clarke, heating advisor for the Diocese, visited and reported on solar panels on the church and SMH.

In the coming year all priority A repairs in the Quinquennial report should be completed.

Submitted by: Barbara Stear

Fire, Health and Safety

A full Portable Appliance Test (PAT) for all the portable electrical appliances in St Mary's House (SMH) and the church building was carried out in September 2023 by Bayfield Electrical. The gas hob in SMH kitchen was safety checked and certified safe and a carbon monoxide monitor was fitted in the SMH kitchen - both in November 2023.

The fire extinguishers in SMH and church were checked by Fire Power on 1st March 2024 (after the end of the year).

Priorities for 2024 include the management and maintenance of the defibrillator.

Submitted by: Michelle Bullard

Flower Group

The year 2023/2024 has proved to be a testing time. The number of members still able to help, especially at important festivals, is diminishing due to age and infirmity. Our efforts to recruit new members proved a disappointment. After an initial flurry of volunteers, only two people remain who help. It is a constant concern how long we can go on supplying arrangements for the more important church festivals.

However, this year has seen Harvest, Christmas and Easter provided for without, hopefully, a diminishing of standards. It was a disappointment to me and, no doubt, Fr. Nigel, that we were unable to put a flower festival together as he requested.

There have not been so many weddings and funerals where we have been requested to provide flowers.

Our problems with transferring banking facilities to Helen Kidwell and Sue Smith-Lyte following the death of our Treasurer has now been resolved and we are solvent. Hopefully, I will be able to report in a more positive way for 2024/2025!

Submitted by: Sue Smith-Lyte

The Friends of St. Mary's Church

There are many highlights to report for the year including the refurbishment of the church organ (£12,500); the talk by Sir Nick Young on 'My Time at the Red Cross'; the delightful soiree in Gill Notcutt's garden on a very warm June evening (heartfelt thanks to Gill for lending us her beautiful garden); numerous servings of glasses of piping hot mulled wine at the Christmas Market and for Carols on Market Hill and several very well received gigs by Joyspring (twice) and Tango Innominado, plus a widely-acclaimed organ recital by Tim Patient, Director of Music at Eye Parish Church.

New Friends were made and Brenda Assing and Linda Rumbold were welcomed as new Committee members.

Since 2012, over £100,000 raised by the Friends has been spent on repairs to the North Porch, a stained-glass window and the church bells. There is currently a balance of £14,400 in the church account restricted for use on the church building and related items. Several events are planned and the programme will feature both musical gigs and some high-profile guest speakers.

Submitted by: Nick Cottam

Girlguiding - 2nd Woodbridge (St Mary's) Rainbows

This unit meets on a Monday. They lost a set of leaders last January 2023 and we had a mum very kindly take over the unit and run it for a year with the support of parents. In October, her health forced her to step down as leader. Unfortunately, despite of lot of attempts, we have failed to find two leaders willing to take on the unit. So, at Christmas we had to suspend the it: six girls have joined the Wednesday unit and the remaining two who were unable to do Wednesdays are still waiting for the unit to re-open. There is currently a list of 20 girls waiting to join rainbows. Recently we have found two ladies willing to assist, but no one yet to take on the main role as leader.

Over the last year the girls have been busy working on unit meeting activities, making things, cooking, exploring the outdoors and they also took part in the Animal Fun challenge badge. We hope that we will be able to open this unit up again soon.

Submitted by: Alison Lavender

Girlguiding - 3rd Woodbridge (St Mary's) Rainbows

3rd Woodbridge Rainbows have enjoyed an eventful year. In the Summer Term, the unit tried to get out and about as much as possible taking part in a Bug Hunt on Fen Meadows, learning about all the different mini creatures that live there, a quiz in Market Square and a picnic, which we had to have indoors due to the weather turning on us. The girls who were nearly all 7 by this time were working really hard on gaining Skills builder Lead Stage 1 and interest

badges, before they went up to Brownies, some aiming for their bronze and silver awards, we had a lot of very proud parents attending one of our meetings when we presented the girls with these awards. Activities included making marble runs, Coronation party run by the Guides and a whole evening making a throne and running through our own coronation. Eight of the Rainbows went up to Brownies in September, so we had a whole new cohort of girls start and for the first time welcomed 4-year-olds into the unit, some of whom had only just started school. As so many were new, we worked on activities relating to the Rainbow Promise and a challenge badge called Animal Fun. Interspersing with activities from different Skills builders and unit meeting activities. The Animal Fun badge saw some fabulous creations – caterpillars made out of paper plates, snails out of celery and hedgehogs out of pinecones. We discovered a great game called Hedgehogs. The Guides assisted one evening by making a small fire where the Rainbows were able to put wrapped bananas with chocolate into the ashes. The girls attended the Remembrance Service on Market Hill and we had a Christmas Party. We welcomed Janet Glaister as a helper to the unit.

After Christmas we were joined by six girls from 2nd Woodbridge Rainbows as their unit has been temporarily closed. This meant that we needed more adult help and have been joined by Meg Cooke and Young Leader Rosie. The term has focused on Garden birds working towards the Brilliant bird badge and taking part in the Big Garden Bird Watch. The girls made some binoculars, learnt about some of the more common garden birds and made bird feeders in orange skins. With most gaining their Influence Stage 1 badge. Janet did a fab job making pancakes with the girls.

Submitted by: Alison Lavender (Badger)

Girlguiding - 3rd Woodbridge (St Mary's) Brownies

Brownies last year had a great time doing many adventures together in and around the church. We have done everything from growing our own sunflowers to practical skills such as using a compass, going on a treasure hunt and learning about grid references to building fires in the churchyard and toasting marshmallows as well as pitching tents. We made the most of the nice weather that we had throughout the year by spending a lot of time outdoors and had various meetings away from St Mary's exploring the sights and sounds that Woodbridge have to offer through walks, a crabbing competition and visiting Fen Meadow.

One of the main highlights of the year was the King's coronation in May where we made our own royal 'crown' chairs fit for any king! We very much enjoyed learning a song for the service too and singing this with the choir and children from the church – this was a unique occasion and something I'm sure the girls will never forget. We have had a very busy year at Brownies and we have been grateful for the continued support of the church, allowing us to use this space for all of the activities that we get up to.

We were sorry to say goodbye to Carole Chamberlain, who had led the Unit so well in recent years, to Sally Harrison, whose time with us was cut prematurely short by mishap. Unfortunately, work commitments forced me at the end of the year to move Section. I wish the new team well.

Submitted by: Jess Shire

Girlguiding – 2nd Woodbridge (St Mary's) Guides

The Unit continued to flourish throughout 2023, with additional events Tamsin supplementing the regular Monday meetings. Outdoor and residential opportunities included a library sleepover for the ultimate parts of a multi-faceted book challenge, a 'Give It a Go Day' of outdoor activities tasters at Hallowtree, Wet Weekend at Ramsholt, evening of challenges courtesy of PGL Bawdsey, attendance at County Camp, Thorpeness Water Day, a visit to Felixstowe for a ride on the ferris wheel and some chips on the sea front, a second sleepover at Ufford and, for two of our older girls, participation in a County 13+ event in Norwich.

Closer to home, the girls arranged the posies for Mothering Sunday, planned and ran a Coronation Party for St Mary's Rainbows and Brownies, as well as for Melton Brownies, and attended the Sunday service marking the Coronation. We observed Remembrance Sunday and ran a stall at the Church Christmas Market.

On Mondays, specific activities from the Girlguiding programme have been selected, alongside other challenges, games and welcoming visitors. This has meant that girls have worked towards badges and one, quite amazingly, has gained all twenty-four of the interest badges. By the end of the year, it was noticeable that confidence and resourcefulness skills appeared at last to be on the ascendant again 'post-Covid'.

We are most appreciative of the support of the parish, to enable the Leaders to offer a range of relevant and exciting experiences to the girls.

While Amelia moved away, I have continued to be grateful for the support of Alison Lavender and Meg Cooke and at the end of the year, we had welcomed a new potential Leader. Now, I am indebted to all three, for being willing to take the Unit forward, as I step down.

Submitted by: Veronica Howe

Junior Church - Children and Families

Since the last report of April 2023, the work and contact with children and families has followed the same pattern. We strive to reach out to children and their families in as many ways as possible and provide them with a welcome and a place within the church community.

Activities are always provided for children every Sunday at the service and additional Messy Church Saturday Mornings happen four times in the year.

Communication with families is kept up through parish formats and with the school.

Liz teaches choir in the school every Wednesday and this contact provides a vital link with the parents between school and church where quite a lot of events are able to cross over into each other with quite a few of the school choir children joining us for Messy Church and special services.

We have a regular number of children who attend the church services throughout the year and those numbers are supplemented now and again with children from the school for special occasions in the liturgical year.

The Sunday activities are linked to the Gospel of the day or/and the liturgical season; the children are encouraged to participate in the service wherever possible, and they share their work with the congregation at the end. They always enjoy refreshments with the parish

afterwards and take away a treat. One Sunday of the year, the children and parents were treated to a cooked breakfast.

The parents have suggested a preference for a monthly Eucharist that is slightly shorter in length where their children can be involved more in the service. We are managing to achieve this at some of the monthly 11am services where the children have taken part in the processions and led the intercession prayers. We need now to build more on this Family Eucharist approach ensuring the parents are well informed and we increase the children's involvement.

Some highlights of the year:

- March... Messy Church "Spring into Lent".
- Palm Sunday ... procession with Orlando the donkey, attended by a good number of children from the school.
- May ... the children joined in with the Coronation celebration service at church and joined with some of the Rainbows to sing the specially written Coronation song for children.
- July ... the children in the school choir performed the musical "The Selfish Giant" by Oscar Wilde for the parents and school community.
- July ... the children in the school choir sang at the end of term service and played the hand chimes.
- September ... a good few of our parents and children helped run children's activities at the Church fete, again confirming the growing relationship between school and church.
- October Harvest ... well attended by children who led the intercession prayers.
- November... Come and Sing Day, led by Sarah Dodds and Jennie Cassidy, three of our children joined it for an hour and led one of the songs they had learned.
- November 30th ... Woodbridge Council launched the Christmas Lights big switch on, and the children and the school choir sang some specially selected songs on Market Hill in front of large crowds.
- December ... Advent Messy Church "Follow the Star". Follow the Star was the Diocesan initiative to engage the churches in Advent prayer and preparation; throughout Advent and Christmas, the children were given "star" activities.
- December ... the school choir gave a Christmas performance for parents and school community.
- Christmas Eve ... the children presented the Crib and Christingle Service named "Follow the Star". They prayed, read, acted and sang to the lovely theme. This service was attended by at least 200 children, our regular children and many more from the school took part. We sang with our hand chimes again!
- Christmas Day ... again was attended by a few of the school children in addition to our

regulars. Four of the children came to the sanctuary during communion and led the carol “Away in A Manger.”

Ways forward:

- The children in the school choir have presented several concerts... it would be good to be able to bring these into the parish for the congregation to hear and enjoy.
- A team of helpers who could rota responsibility on Sundays is desperately needed!
- Further development of monthly Family Services to include more input from the children.

Many thanks go to Rachel Wade who shares the leadership for Junior Church and Messy. Also, to our ladies who generously help out in the kitchen when needed, and to the parents who are happy to “muck in” when necessary.

Biggest thanks of course to our children!

Submitted by: Liz Prior

Maintenance

The weekly maintenance of St. Mary’s House and of the church building has thrown up a wide array of challenge. The tasks and repairs on a very long list have ranged from cupboard doors in the kitchen that need to be replaced; sticking doors and faulty batteries in the smart flush in the WCs; replacing flickering light bulbs all the way to emergency ‘call out’ help to stop the roof leak above the organ motor.

Heavy rainfall presents us with problems. The drainage smells remain in St. Mary’s House remain and are most acute after heavy rainfall. Anglian Water has been asked to investigate. The guttering and drainage have also been major challenges during the year. Smart Call has supported us a number of times throughout the year and will provide gutter and drain maintenance. In the church building itself, the stairs to the bell tower are becoming insecure but remain safe. New muffles for the bells have been installed.

Submitted by: Darren Darby

Mothers’ Union (MU)

As a branch we have again been able to send donations of Seaman’s Hats / also Brightly-Coloured Hats to those currently on remand at HMP Highpoint. We have also put together ‘Bags of Love’ for those needing a boost for whatever reason. The Mothers’ Union have contributed both donations and monetary funds to local organisations in Ipswich and Bury. As a branch, we have contributed towards the Church Christmas Fair Raffle and recently the branch supported the Red Chair Project against Domestic Abuse. A new venture was ‘Knitted Breasts’ for Ipswich Hospital to support the training and work of Midwives, both Home & Health Visitors. The breasts are used, as a visual aid, for new mothers wishing to breastfeed their new-borns. Last, but no means least, the ‘Summer of Hope’ Appeal – raising funds for a very worthwhile cause within the MU.

During 2023 we lost 2 members – Joan Watkins and Janet Lavender. Kathy Blair completed 50 years of membership of the MU.

On a final note we have on our Notice Boards 2 leaflets – Away From It All (holiday or day out scheme) and School Uniform Grants (purchase of shoes/uniform). Please if you know of anyone who could benefit from this – take a leaflet and contact Mrs Val Jeffreys on – afiamusuffolk@gmail.com

Submitted by: Jean Cobb

St. Mary's House

Regular weekly and monthly bookings from groups who have used the facilities at St Mary's House for a number of years, including our own Choir, Mothers' Union, Christian Meditation Group, Time to Reflect, Friends' of St Mary's, Fabric Committee, Rainbows, Brownies & Guides, Rangers and external users such as Poppy's Pantry, Browsers Poetry Group, a Yoga Group, and a Professional Development Group. Newer, but regular, users are another Yoga Group (weekly), and a Women's Recovery Group (twice monthly).

The **Seckford Room** is used by some of the above, and for Bellringers and Flower Group annual meetings, planning meetings for the committee organising events such as the Summer Fair and the Christmas Market, whilst the Mothers' Union committee use the **Small Hall**.

Ad hoc bookings for private parties / social events, a dance class, musical theatre auditions, receptions following funeral or memorial services, AGMs/other meetings, a pop-up vintage clothing sale, a series of teaching classes for the Woodbridge Ukrainian Hub (until it outgrew our facilities and moved to Woodbridge School), National Childbirth Trust (& other) training courses, fundraisers, and most recently a four days a week for 12 weeks booking from Inspire Suffolk for a Princes' Trust personal development programme for young people, who are using the **Baden-Powell Room**. They ran two of these courses during 2023, and booked again for 2024, having found it a really convenient and ideal location the first time around.

Last winter we hosted a 'Warm Room' for several weeks on Thursdays in the **Small Hall**, and a Lenten Lunch in the main **Hall**, and planned more of the latter in 2024, with potentially a weekly 'soup & cheese' winter lunch in future.

We receive a number of enquiries that do not progress to actual bookings, and reasons given are lack of parking, accessibility issues (for example a chair-based Yoga Group), and the irregular shape of, and pillar in, the **Hall** prevented Hula Hoop and Mini Trampoline exercise classes from committing to SMH, despite (in those last three examples) all loving the space and light otherwise. It is hoped to resolve some of these issues with the refurbishment of SMH.

A request has been received for a future Bereavement / Counselling Group, which will be welcome since the Co-op no longer offer such support (and used the **Seckford Room**, then the **Small Hall** for some years).

Day	Hirer	Details	Room
Sunday	Women's Recovery Group	1 st Sunday 4.30pm-5.30pm	Seckford Rm
Monday	Inspire Suffolk Time to Reflect Rainbows Guides	9am-4pm 10am-12noon 5pm-6.45pm 6.45pm-8.45pm	BP Room Hall BP Room Hall
Tuesday	Inspire Suffolk Poppy's Pantry Yoga Christian Meditation Women's Recovery Group	9am-4pm 9.30am-2.30pm 3pm-5pm 5.30pm-6.30pm 2 nd Tuesday 6.30pm-7.30pm	BP Room Hall Hall Hall Seckford Rm
Wednesday	Inspire Suffolk Rainbows	9am-4pm 5.30pm-6.30pm	BP Room BP Room
Thursday	Inspire Suffolk Yoga Mothers' Union Choir Brownies Rangers Illuminati	9am-4pm 9.15am-10.15am 2 nd Thursday 2.15pm-4.15pm 6.30pm-8pm 6pm-7.30pm 7.30pm-9pm (fortnightly) 8pm-9.30pm	BP Room Hall Hall Hall BP Room BP Room Hall/Church
Friday	Browsers Poetry Group	3 rd Friday 7pm-9pm	Seckford Rm
Saturday	Professional Development Group	11am-2pm (bi-monthly)	Seckford Rm

Submitted by: Linda Rumbold

Servers

The Servants of the Sanctuary have continued to support Father Nigel and our Parish clergy during the Celebration of the Eucharist, and at other Liturgies and Festivals when required. We are a small and dedicated group of people, and it has been wonderful to see husbands, wives, mums, dads and daughters all serving together over the last year, sometimes at short notice. Our Servers fulfil the following roles at St Mary's:

1. Crucifer: carries the processional cross and leads the procession in and out of the church, and the Gospel procession.
2. Acolytes: carry the candles behind the processional cross and illuminate the Gospel. They also receive the gifts from the congregation.
3. MC or Master of Ceremonies: she or he assists the priest, sets the table for communion, washes the celebrants' hands, and carries the Gospel Book or Bible, and holds it open for clergy or deacon during the reading of the Gospel lesson for the day.
4. Thurifer: a vital role in helping the priest cultivate an environment in which worship may be celebrated with reverence and awe, by providing incense to symbolise our prayers rising to God.

5. Boat Person: carries the incense boat which holds the incense that will be used during the service.

We are proud that our serving team continues to represent the diversity and life of our parish and would welcome more volunteers. Serving is a wonderful vocation. It brings responsibility, teamwork, self-confidence, and perceiving what needs to be done and doing it; It helps to develop a deeper understanding of the Eucharist, by being part of it; and it supports the development of our church community, by being recognised, and recognising more and more people in the church, and building relationships.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the servers for their time, commitment and enthusiasm, and look forward to growing and developing the team as we move forward.

Submitted by: David Sharples

Sidesmen and Sideswomen

There are currently 20 regular helpers, together with 4 reserves, who carry out their duties monthly at the 8am and 10am/11am services and also at evensong, Christmas, Easter and any other extra services.

We thank them for their welcoming smiles, ensuring that anyone who comes into our church, through either door, is warmly greeted and given the correct hymn book and order of service. They take the collection, if required, during the offertory hymn and ensure that the Sanctus Bell is rung during communion. At the end of the proceedings, they are frequently the last to leave the building as they tidy the pews and count the collection.

This year, we must say a special 'Thank You' to Rachel Wade for the years she has spent helping. The arrival of their son is a blessing and in time to come, he too may be helping with the hymn books.

Jean Cobb

Stephen & Jane Cole

Geoff & Val English

Margaret Harper

Anna Jenkins

Janet Laight

Valerie Le Marchand

Sarah Lines

Andrew & Katherine Pickthorn

Sandra Schur

Cilla Steed

Jamie & Lucy Symons + Amelia

Katharine Turner

Stuart Wade

Lesley Whitehead

Reserves:

Michelle Bullard

Roger Burgess

Gill Cruikshank

Gerry Toplis

Submitted by: Val English

Social Events

Refreshments were provided on a planned basis after some Sunday 8 am, all 10 am Sunday services and monthly after the Thursday 10 am Eucharist. Towards the end of the year, the latter was being trialled for every week. The Pilgrim Cross (Essex Leg) was welcomed to supper on Palm Sunday.

Weather permitting - through most of the year - the early morning (free) 'Coffee Shop' at St Mary's School was run for busy parents/carers dropping off their children.

Events included the Coronation 'Royal café', 'bring-and-share' lunches, the Summer Fete and Christmas Market, each of which was well supported and the last two provided welcome boosts to our income.

The new 'Warm Room', which had been supported from her discretionary funds by County Councillor, the late Caroline Page, continued into 2023 and by the end of the year a similar 'Place of Welcome' scheme was being planned.

If you are willing to become involved in helping to run our social events, please do come forward! This is a very important part of our life and a new coordinator is required urgently.

Submitted by: Veronica Howe

Stewards

From May to September 2023 a friendly, but unobtrusive, presence was maintained for visitors by a small, but dedicated, group of volunteers, each taking one (10.30 -12.30 or 2.00 – 4.00) session or more per month.

More stewards would be very welcome. Names could be given to a Churchwarden, to the Benefice Secretary, or directly to Peter Shipley, who very kindly has assumed responsibility for the 2024 rota.

Submitted by: Veronica Howe

Time to Reflect Group

Time to Reflect has had a good year, with a steady attendance of 15 members, with up to 20 involved. The terms of reference address two of the benefice goals: developing the benefice as a worshipful community and underpinning and reinforcing opportunities to access the church and its facilities. The congregation as a whole is invited through e-News.

For the summer term we read 'Meeting Jesus again for the first time: the historical Jesus and the heart of contemporary faith' by Marcus J Borg, which was about personal faith in the world of today. Our second book, 'Twenty Questions Jesus Asked' by John Pritchard, covered topics such as 'Who touched my clothes' and 'Who do you say that I am'. This book generated plenty of discussion, often in small groups of two or three. The group enjoyed a really thorough look at these questions, particularly in the light of how they speak to our lives today, so we decided to continue reading it into the Spring.

Time to Reflect members were strongly represented in the three house groups arranged by the Rector for Lent. The book 'Tarry Awhile' by Selina Stone was the Archbishop of

Canterbury's Lent book and gave us an interesting, well written insight into black spirituality.

Time to Reflect organised a Quiet Day on 24th October in Brandeston, which provided a country setting with a view of the church. We enjoyed a day of contemplation led by Helen Randall on the theme of 'Whose service is perfect freedom'. We were encouraged to consider how we might know, love and serve God better.

We celebrated the end of the Summer term with a pleasant coffee under multi-coloured umbrellas at a coffee shop in Woodbridge and in December enjoyed a Christmas bring and share lunch.

Submitted by: Diane Milan

For further information please visit our website: www.stmaryswoodbridge.org

Or contact: St. Mary's Benefice Office, 11 Market Hill, Woodbridge, IP12 4LP

parish.office@stmaryswoodbridge.org

01394 388820

Financial Review

I am pleased to report that the overall financial outcome for St Mary's, Woodbridge for the year ended 31 December 2023 was sound.

Before addressing the key elements of the accounts, included are a couple of technical remarks to aid the understanding of their presentation.

As in 2022, the accounts in this report are set out on three different bases: unrestricted or general funds, which can be used for any purpose; restricted funds that can only be used for specifically defined purposes and designated funds that are technically unrestricted but have been designated by the PCC for specific purposes, the most important of which relates to the project to refurbish St Mary's House.

It should also be noted that only activities and funds that the PCC is legally responsible for are included so, for example, they do not include affiliated funds such as the bellringers or the flower fund (see note 12 for a list of funds that are included). The statement of Financial Activities which forms the first page of these accounts is a summary of the full picture and sums up to a net movement in funds across all the funds and activities for which the PCC is responsible. The detailed breakdowns of expenditure and income are set out in notes 3 and 2.

Income

On the income side, voluntary income, excluding legacies, which is the most important category in terms of contribution, was higher in 2023 at £119,657 compared to £108,774 for the previous financial year. This was mainly because of a generous donation from the Friends of St Mary's for the Organ Fund, to assist in renovation of the swell front. There is a breakdown of the various categories of income in note 2. There were no new legacies in 2023.

The good news on the income side is that fund generating activities (from concerts and other events) was up in 2023 coming in at £11,619 compared to £8,029 in 2022 as was the income from activities including the hire of the church and church hall. Income from investments was significantly increased from £3,055 in 2022 to £23,649 in 2023 due to general increases in interest rates over the year.

The PCC remains acutely aware of the problem facing all churches, as demands on household budgets increase at a time when congregations themselves are diminishing in number and the expenses of running our benefice increase.

Expenditure

Expenditure items are set out in detail in note 3. Overall levels are broadly constant, but it should be noted that funds expended on designated and restricted funds have been collected in this and prior periods.

The PCC remains acutely aware of the inflationary pressures on expenditure. Gas and electricity contracts are due for re-negotiation in 2024 and the post of Choir Director has now been filled.

Overall Position

Putting income and expenditure categories together, there was an excess of expenditure over income across all categories (unrestricted, designated, and restricted and including investment revaluation) of £14,147 (2022 £18,469)

Reserves

It is the policy of the PCC to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds to cover any unexpected expenditure that might arise. At the end of the year the balance of free reserves is considered adequate to maintain this policy.

The trustees do not believe there to be material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Risk Management

The PCC examines major risks that the Benefice faces each year during its normal business and establishes policies where appropriate.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the 2006 Charities Act to have due regard to guidance published by the Charities Commission on public benefit.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the full year outturn on the general account remains in decent shape with total funds carried forward of £883,821 (2022 £897,968).

The PCC recognises that the challenge remains to create a more predictable flow of income that will enable us to budget against expenditure and continue to balance our books on a day-to-day basis. Fund raising will, therefore, be central to the PCC's work over the next few months and years and is essential if we are to fulfil our objectives and discharge our responsibilities as Trustees.

The Treasurer and the PCC would like to thank Michael Holland for his help in the production of these accounts. We would also like to thank the Parish Secretary, Linda Rumbold, and Hannah Pauly, who assisted with the day-to-day bookkeeping for the Church.

Submitted by: Annie Lines, PCC Treasurer

Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted General Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022	Notes
	£	£	£	£	£	
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
Voluntary income excluding legacies	104,145	-	15,512	119,657	108,774	2
Fundraising, concerts and events	11,619	-	-	11,619	8,029	2
Church activities (including shop)	35,890	-	-	35,890	31,550	2
Income from investments	1,195	21,596	858	23,649	3,055	2
Other receipts	239	-	2,703	2,942	693	2
Total before legacies	153,088	21,596	19,073	193,757	152,101	
Legacies – general	-	-	-	-	31,000	2
Legacies – designated fund	-	-	-	-	4,631	2
TOTAL INCOME	153,088	21,596	19,073	193,757	187,732	2
EXPENDITURE						
Church activities (including shop)	85,628	-	19,172	104,800	85,537	3
St Mary's House project	-	38,879	-	38,879	56,861	3
Diocesan parish share	64,653	-	-	64,653	63,189	3
Major Church repairs	-	-	-	-	-	3
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	150,281	38,879	19,172	208,332	205,587	
NET INCOME/(DEFICIT) BEFORE INVESTMENT GAINS	2,807	(17,283)	(99)	(14,575)	(17,855)	
Gain/(loss) on revaluation of investments	-	-	428	428	(614)	
Transfer between funds	(25,000)	25,000	-	-	-	
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(22,193)	7,717	329	(14,147)	(18,469)	
Total funds brought forward	143,817	651,004	103,147	897,968	916,437	
Total funds carried forward	121,624	658,721	103,476	883,821	897,968	

The notes to the Financial Statements form part of these accounts.

There were no movements on the Endowed Funds during the year which remain at £314,543.

PCC OF ST MARY'S, WOODBRIDGE

Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2023

	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022	Notes
	£	£	
Land and buildings (St Mary's House)	314,543	314,543	
Church piano	21,000	21,000	
Church equipment	1,455	7,327	
	336,998	342,870	8
Investments – restricted fund	5,120	4,692	9
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	342,118	347,562	
Stock	5,035	5,680	
Debtors and prepayments	30,539	11,070	10
Legacies due at year end	-	30,000	10
Cash at bank and in hand (including £83,500 due after more than 1 year)	834,366	821,168	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	869,940	867,918	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(13,694)	(2,969)	11
NET CURRENT ASSETS	856,246	864,949	
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,198,364	1,212,511	
PARISH FUNDS			
Unrestricted general funds	121,624	143,817	12
Unrestricted designated fund	658,721	651,004	12
Restricted funds	103,476	103,147	12
	883,821	897,968	
Endowment funds	314,543	314,543	12
TOTAL PARISH FUNDS	1,198,364	1,212,511	

The notes to the Financial Statements form part of these accounts.

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 16/04/2024 and signed on its behalf by the Reverend Nigel Prior, PCC Chairman, and Annie Lines as Treasurer.

Reverend Nigel Prior, PCC Chairman

Annie Lines, PCC Treasurer

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The PCC is a public benefit entity within the meaning of FRS102. The financial statements have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 governing the individual accounts of PCCs, and with the Regulations' "true and fair" provisions, together with FRS 102 (2016) as the applicable accounting standards and the (2016) version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP (FRS 102)).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the inclusion of investments at market value. The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of Church groups that owe their affiliation to another body, nor those which are informal gatherings of Church members.

1.2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods

1.3 Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds

These represent the remaining income funds of the PCC that are available for spending on the general purposes of the PCC, including amounts designated by the PCC for spending on a future project and which are not included in its "free reserves" as disclosed in the trustees' report.

Restricted funds

These are income funds that must be spent on restricted purposes and details of the funds held and restrictions provided are shown in the notes to the accounts.

Endowment funds

These are restricted funds that must be retained as trust capital either permanently or subject to a discretionary power to spend capital as income, and where the use of any income or other benefit derived from the capital may be restricted and unrestricted.

1.4 Incoming resources

Incoming resources are recognised in the financial statements when the PCC becomes legally entitled to the benefit of use of the resource, the inflow of economic benefit is probable and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

- Legacies are recognised when probate has been granted, the amount receivable can be reliably measured and the Executors have notified their intention to make a distribution.

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

1 Accounting policies (continued)

- Donations collections and planned giving are recognised when received.
- Gift aid is included in the financial statements when the income to which it is related is recognised.
- Grants are recognised when the formal offer in writing of the funding is received by the PCC and payment is certain.
- Gifts in kind for the PCC's own use are included at their estimated fair value on receipt and expensed over their useful life.
- Statutory fees for weddings and funerals are recognised when the office occurs.
- Income receivable in return for selling goods or providing services is recognised either when goods are sold or the service provided.
- Income from the hire of the Church or St Mary's House is recognised when the hire takes place.
- Investment income (interest and dividends) is accounted for when receivable.
- Realised gains or losses on the sale of investments are recognised when the investments are sold and unrealised gains and losses on investments held at the year-end are accounted for in the Statement of Financial Activity.
- Government grants are accounted for when entitlement is established and the event giving rise to the grant has taken place before the year end.

1.5 Expenditure and liabilities

Expenditure is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation and settlement is probable and quantifiable.

- Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded where the award creates a binding obligation on the PCC.
- The Diocesan Parish Share is accounted for on an annual basis and reflects the allocation agreed by the PCC with the Deanery.

1.6 Fixed assets

Consecrated and beneficed property of any kind is excluded from the accounts by Section 10(2) of the Charities Act 2011. Movable Church furnishing held by the Rector and Churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a Faculty for disposal, are accounted as inalienable property unless consecrated. They are listed in the Church's inventory which can be inspected but are not included in the financial statements.

All expenditure on consecrated or beneficed buildings and individual items costing under £500 are written off in the year they were incurred.

Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity are capitalised at cost (or the estimated value of donated goods) and that amount, less any currently anticipated residual fair value, written off to the Statement of Financial Activities over their estimated useful lives as follows;

Land and buildings and Church piano	Nil (held at fair value)
Church equipment - IT related	33% straight line
Church equipment – other	25% reducing balance

No depreciation is provided on freehold buildings and the Church piano as the useful economic life of these assets exceeds 50 years and residual values are so high that potential depreciation would be immaterial, and it is the PCC's policy to maintain these assets in a continual state of sound repair. Provision will be made if regular impairment reviews indicate there has been any permanent diminution in value.

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

1 Accounting policies (continued)

1.7 Fixed asset investments

Investments are stated at market value at the balance sheet date and variations from the last valuation recorded in the Statement of Financial Affairs.

1.8 Stocks

Stocks are stated at their acquisition cost less any provision where sale is anticipated at a lower amount.

1.9 Leases

Rentals payable under operating leases, including any lease incentives received, are charged as an expense on a straight line basis over the term of the relevant lease.

1.10 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

2 Income and endowments

	Unrestricted General Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Voluntary Income</u>					
Planned giving	71,830	-	-	71,830	70,608
Other donations	12,542	-	-	12,542	16,585
Other donations – restricted	-	-	15,405	15,405	2,083
Gift aid recoverable	19,773	-	107	19,880	19,498
Voluntary income excluding legacies	104,145	-	15,512	119,657	108,774
Legacies – general	-	-	-	-	31,000
Legacies - designated fund	-	-	-	-	4,631
TOTAL	104,145	-	15,512	119,657	144,405
<u>Activities for generating funds</u>					
Fundraising, concerts and events	9,642	-	-	9,642	6,901
Advertising revenue	1,977	-	-	1,977	1,128
TOTAL	11,619	-	-	11,619	8,029
<u>Income from Church activities</u>					
Shop sales	17,910	-	-	17,910	16,865
Hire of Church and St Mary's House	12,722	-	-	12,722	10,537
Fees for weddings and funerals	5,258	-	-	5,258	4,148
TOTAL	35,890	-	-	35,890	31,550
<u>Income from investments</u>					
Bank interest	1,195	21,596	717	23,508	2,915
Dividends	-	-	141	141	140
TOTAL	1,195	21,596	858	23,649	3,055
Other receipts – building grants	239	-	2,703	2,942	693
TOTAL income and endowments on all funds	153,088	21,596	19,073	193,757	187,732

There was no income received by the Endowed Funds during the year.

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

3 Expenditure

	Unrestricted General Fund	Unrestricted Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>Ministry Costs</u>					
Clergy expenses	2,225	-	-	2,225	1,391
Salaries and honoraria	3,250	-	-	3,250	2,500
Other costs	2,458	-	-	2,458	1,980
Other costs – restricted	-	-	1,632	1,632	1,515
TOTAL	7,933	-	1,632	9,565	7,386
<u>Church Costs</u>					
Utilities	15,389	-	-	15,389	15,335
Repairs and maintenance	2,450	-	-	2,450	6,312
Repairs and maintenance - restricted	-	-	16,425	16,425	1,871
TOTAL	17,839	-	16,425	34,264	23,518
<u>St Mary's House Costs</u>					
Utilities	5,666	-	-	5,666	4,490
Repairs and maintenance	1,993	-	-	1,993	3,814
Other costs	77	-	-	77	119
Shop purchases for resale	13,398	-	-	13,398	8,807
TOTAL	21,134	-	-	21,134	17,230
<u>Other Costs of Charitable Activities</u>					
Salaries and pensions	19,944	-	-	19,944	18,361
Newsletter	2,575	-	-	2,575	2,094
Fundraising costs	485	-	-	485	172
Office costs	6,019	-	-	6,019	5,333
Professional fees	1,800	-	-	1,800	1,544
Depreciation	4,757	-	1,115	5,872	6,221
Bank charges	1,132	-	-	1,132	731
Miscellaneous costs	2,010	-	-	2,010	2,947
TOTAL	38,722	-	1,115	39,837	37,403
TOTAL CHURCH ACTIVITIES EXPENDITURE	85,628	-	19,172	104,800	85,537
St Mary's House project	-	38,879	-	38,879	56,861
Diocesan parish share	64,653	-	-	64,653	63,189
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	150,281	38,879	19,172	208,332	205,587

There was no expenditure from the Endowed Funds during the year.

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

4 Staff costs

	Cost 2023	Cost 2022
Remuneration	£	£
Wages and salaries	19,446	17,983
Employer social security costs	-	-
Employer pension costs	498	378
Total staff costs	19,944	18,361

The average number of employees throughout the year was 2 (2022; 2).

No person received remuneration in excess of £60,000.

The Charity contributes to a defined contribution pension scheme for eligible employees. The assets of the scheme are held and administered independently of the charity.

5 Related parties

None of the Trustees, or any person connected with them, received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year. Any sums received by the PCC for the benefit of other groups or organisations are passed to the relevant body and not reflected in these financial statements.

Expenses paid to licensed clergy amounted to £2,225 (2022; £1,391).

There have been no payments to related charities during the year, but the PCC has received financial support from the Friends of St. Mary's (an independent charity) in respect of the cost of certain repair and building work to the Church. All donations are reflected within the relevant restricted fund.

The Churchwardens are Trustees of two independent Trusts set up to relieve poverty in the Parish. There were no transactions between the PCC and these trusts during the year.

From 1 January 2021 St Mary's, Woodbridge and St Mary's, Great Bealings were formed into a joint benefice. Each Church operates its own PCC and prepares separate accounts but, from time to time, transactions relating to one Church pass through the books of the other and such amounts are periodically settled with any amounts outstanding at the year-end included in debtors or creditors. The Parish Share for the joint benefice is allocated between each PCC but some smaller administrative costs are borne by the PCC since any attempt at quantification is considered out of proportion to any benefit.

6 Governance

The Unrestricted Fund bears the cost of the Independent Examination of the financial statements. This amounted to £1,750 (2022; £1,434).

7 Operating lease

The charity is committed to a payment of £2,845 (2022: £2,845) per annum under an operating lease that expires in 2025.

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

8 Tangible Fixed Assets

	Freehold land and buildings	Church piano	Church equipment	Total Fixed Assets
	£	£	£	£
Cost or valuation				
At 1 January 2023	314,543	21,000	39,458	375,001
Additions at cost	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2023	314,543	21,000	39,458	375,001
Depreciation				
At 1 January 2023	-	-	32,131	32,131
Charge for the year	-	-	5,872	5,872
At 31 December 2023	-	-	38,003	38,003
Net book value				
At 31 December 2023	314,543	21,000	1,455	336,998
At 31 December 2022	314,543	21,000	7,327	342,870

The freehold land and buildings comprise St. Mary's House, Market Hill, Woodbridge and is stated at its 1997 fair value. Consecrated and benefice property is excluded from these accounts.

The PCC considers that the realisable value of the Church piano is in excess of the net book value shown above.

9 Fixed Asset Investments

	Restricted Funds
	£
Market value 1 January 2023	4,692
Revaluation deficit	428
Market value 31 December 2023	5,120

There was no change during the year in investments held, which continue to comprise COIF units acquired from a bequest.

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

10 Debtors

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
	£	£	£	£
Tax recoverable	3,199	68	3,267	6,243
Prepayments and accrued income	2,046	-	2,046	2,394
Other debtors	3,120	2,085	5,205	2,433
Interest earned on bank deposits	20,021	-	20,021	--
Debtors and prepayments	28,386	2,153	30,539	11,070
Legacies due at year end	-	-	-	30,000
TOTAL DEBTORS	28,386	2,153	30,539	41,070

The legacy due at the year end is accounted for as required by accounting policy 1.4. Probate was granted before the year end and the Executors have provided a reliable estimate of the amount to be received after the date of these accounts.

11 Creditors falling due within one year

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
	£	£	£	£
Accruals for utility and other costs	13,850	200	14,050	3,108
Other creditors	(356)	-	(356)	(139)
TOTAL	13,494	200	13,694	2,969

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

12 Statement of funds

Unrestricted funds are not subject to any donor restrictions and can be spent as the PCC decides.

The PCC has designated all funds due from the Harper legacy for the upkeep, maintenance and improvement of St. Mary's House, and its linkage with the Church.

Restricted funds are required to be spent on specific purposes determined when created by the terms of their gift. The Restricted Funds and their purposes are: -

Grace Howe Bequest - for Sunday School activities.

Choir Fund - for the maintenance of choir equipment and music.

Chapter Fund - for Churchware and plate to upkeep services.

Fabric Fund - for major building works on the Church buildings.

Vestment fund - for the repair and replacement of vestments.

Church Sound System - for the maintenance of the Church sound system.

Organ Fund - for repairs to the Church organ.

Endowment funds are required by the donors to be invested and the income spent on specific objectives

The Endowment Fund comprises St. Mary's House in Woodbridge.

Summary of all funds

Fund income and expenditure and final balances are as follows:

	Balances 1 Jan 2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfers/ Revaluations	Balances 31 Dec 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds					
General Fund	143,817	153,088	(150,281)	(25,000)	121,624
Designated Fund – St Mary's House project (Note 14)	651,004	21,596	(38,879)	25,000	658,721
TOTAL GENERAL FUNDS	794,821	174,684	(189,160)	-	780,345
Restricted Funds					
Grace Howe Bequest	8,262	173	-	428	8,863
Choir Fund	16,706	958	(1,632)	-	16,032
Chapter Fund	455	-	-	-	455
Fabric Fund	68,506	3,302	(380)	-	71,428
Vestment Fund	832	-	-	-	832
Church Sound System	1,115	-	(1,115)	-	-
St Mary's House project	2,380	-	-	-	2,380
Organ Fund	4,891	14,640	(16,045)	-	3,486
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	103,147	19,073	(19,172)	428	103,476
Endowment Funds					
St. Mary's House	314,543	-	-	-	314,543
TOTAL PARISH FUNDS	1,212,511	193,757	(208,332)	428	1,198,364

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

13 Net assets by fund

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	22,455	-	314,543	336,998	342,870
Fixed assets investments	-	5,120	-	5,120	4,692
Current assets	771,384	98,556	-	869,940	867,918
Current liabilities	(13,494)	(200)	-	(13,694)	(2,969)
TOTAL	780,345	103,476	314,543	1,198,364	1,212,511

14 St Mary's House Project

In 2020 the PCC was advised it had been left a substantial legacy and designated the amount to the St Mary's House Project to develop the linkage between St Mary's House and the Church. By 31 December 2023 a total of £768,616 (2022; £722,020) had been designated including a further legacy and interest on designated deposits. Of these funds £109,895 had been expended by 31 December 2023 (2022; £71,016) on professional fees. Unexpended funds at 31 December 2023 amounted to £658,721 (2022; £651,004).

PCC OF ST MARY'S WOODBRIDGE

Independent Examiner's Report

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS/TRUSTEES OF THE PAROCHIAL
CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY'S WOODBRIDGE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**